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TEACHER DEVELOPMENT IN PROMISING SCHOOL TURNAROUND EFFORTS

By

ANDREW SWANSON

A doctoral dissertation submitted to the
College of Education
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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in Organizational Leadership

Southeastern University
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TEACHER DEVELOPMENT IN PROMISING

SCHOOL TURNAROUND EFFORTS

by

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DEDICATION

This work is the culmination of many tired and sleepless days and nights not just for me but for my entire family. In one sense, I hope this work is just another step in a continuing generational, educational journey for my family. On my mother's side, I dedicate this work to my grandfather, Joseph Bellandi, the son of Italian immigrants. He sacrificed and persevered, moving his family to a better neighborhood so his daughters could have an education he was deprived of. Though I never met him, I hope Grandpa Bellandi knows that without his sacrifices, my opportunities would not exist. On my father's side, I dedicate this work to my Grandma, Ruth Duncan, who raised four boys by herself and pushed them all to more than they thought they could be. I will never forget as a 14-year-old, watching her earn a bachelor's degree at the age of 75, as determined as anyone I have ever met. I also dedicate this work to my parents, lifelong educators who taught me the value of hard work, education, standing up for what you believe in, and standing up for those who cannot stand for themselves. More than anyone else, I dedicate this work to my amazing wife, Tara, who gently pushed, prodded, and sacrificed to make this a reality, while taking on the lion's share of raising our four kids while I toiled away typing for endless nights and weekends. Finally, I dedicate this to Myelle, Adalynn, Bria, and Jacob. May you see this as a step that you will far surpass, a benchmark that will serve just as a stepping stone for you as you pursue greater things than I can imagine, and as permission to dream big and use your incredible gifts to help and serve those who need you.

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Thank you to Lindsey Jaeckel and the entire school turnaround team at the Colorado Department of Education for helping me gain access and working with me through survey development and completion as well as serving as great colleagues in school turnaround.

Thank you to the leadership, faculty, and staff at Abraham Lincoln High School for serving as the real-life example of this work in action and letting me serve alongside you in trying to pursue greater education for all kids.

Finally, thank you to the turnaround school leaders across the state of Colorado for not just helping me by providing information, but for working tirelessly for kids who need advocates, kids who need hope, kids who deserve a better future. May we continue to believe they are worth it.

ABSTRACT

The study was developed to examine the teacher development efforts utilized by leaders of low-performing schools that had shown promising gains in student achievement. A researcher-created quantitative survey sent to school leaders in one state was utilized to analyze the perceived use and effectiveness of various teacher development efforts in supporting student achievement gains at their schools. Overall, the results showed school leaders focused heavily on teacher development to support their school turnaround efforts and that teacher development was effective in improving student achievement. Classroom walk-throughs were found to be an integral strategy in school turnaround and the results also indicated teacher collaboration and teacher coaching as positive strategies as well. Teacher evaluation was found to have no perceived value in teacher development and may have a negative impact.

Keywords: School turnaround, teacher development, school improvement, professional development, teacher coaching, teacher collaboration, teacher evaluation, classroom walk-throughs, learning walks, low-performing schools, achievement gap, school leadership, instructional leadership

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I. INTRODUCTION

The following chapter is an introduction for a dissertation that details the findings from a study on teacher development in low-performing schools showing initial improvement. In this dissertation, the researcher reports a study of school leader perceptions of the effectiveness of teacher development methods and strategies utilized in schools having undergone promising initial school improvement efforts to turn around low-performing schools. The study consisted of a two-step quantitative approach. First, the study entailed using school performance data to identify schools having undergone a school improvement effort with promising initial student data. The administration of a quantitative survey of the principals of those schools followed the identification of promising school improvement efforts. The purpose of the study was to identify the trends of school principals' perceptions of how teacher development efforts supported the school's improvement efforts. This introduction includes a brief background of relevant literature followed by an explanation of the purpose of the study. The methodology, including research design, questions, data collection, and procedures, is discussed. The introduction concludes with a discussion of the study's limitations and key terminology.

Background of the Study

The study follows a long history of research and practice aimed at improving student achievement outcomes for all students across the United States. Historically, students who are

minority, of low socioeconomic status, have disabilities, or are English language learners achieve academically at a much lower rate than their White, affluent counterparts (Zinskie & Rea, 2016).

An achievement gap between various student groups exists across the country. The achievement gap is more pronounced in schools that serve predominantly disadvantaged students than in schools that serve a diverse population (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006). For decades, researchers and practitioners have used scores of efforts aimed at reversing pervasive low achievement of students in low-performing schools that serve primarily disadvantaged students (Duke, 2015). The reality of a substantial gap in achievement levels between schools serving differing demographics of students has caused many reformers to focus their efforts on finding ways to support reforms at schools that serve a majority disadvantaged population of students (Duke, 2016).

The concept of quickly improving low-performing schools that primarily serve disadvantaged students initiated a wide variety of reform efforts that are commonly referred to as school turnaround efforts (Duke, 2012). School reformers borrowed the term *turnaround* from the business sector in which failing businesses would undergo dramatic structural and methodological reforms to regain success, or turn around their failing efforts (Murphy & Bleiberg, 2019). School turnaround refers to systemic reform efforts designed to achieve "quick dramatic gains in academic achievement for persistently low performing schools" (Herman, 2012, p. 25). Unlike failing businesses that quickly go out of business if they fail to achieve success, schools serve as necessary institutions for the public good and, therefore, often remain in existence through years of low performance (Murphy & Bleiberg, 2019). In both business and school turnaround, a high failure rate overshadows the few cases of success (Murphy & Bleiberg,

2019). In most cases, schools that have persistent low performance continue to struggle to gain or maintain higher achievement results for students (Hochbein, 2012).

As a result of the lack of success across low-performing schools in the previous decades of school reform, a continuous search for viable reform solutions has revealed many possibilities at the federal, state, and local levels (Duke, 2016). Often, the solutions proposed by state and federal governments included drastic reform efforts (Murphy & Bleiberg, 2019). These reform efforts typically diluted the authority of teacher unions, increased school choice options, provided mechanisms for external takeover and management of schools, or incentivized school districts to dramatically overhaul the staff and programming in chronically low-performing schools (Murphy & Bleiberg, 2019).

Bold, aggressive, structural reforms do not constitute or guarantee increased student achievement (Meyers & Smylie, 2017). Within structural reforms, schools and districts need to focus on specific key areas to improve outcomes for disadvantaged students in pervasively low-performing schools (Duke, 2012). In 2008, the United States Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences (IES) developed a guide for school turnaround. Four recommendations within the IES's practice guide on how to focus school turnaround efforts were to "1. Signal the need for dramatic change with strong leadership… 2. Maintain a consistent focus on improving instruction… 3. Make visible improvements early in the school turnaround process… 4. Build a committed staff" (Herman et al., 2008, p. 8). Along with *Turning Around Low-Performing Schools* by Herman et al. (2008), governmental, not-for-profit, and political think tank organizations have compiled school turnaround guides, many of which extend the same guiding principles, including the need for strong, focused instructional leadership (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2018; Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007; Connecticut State

Department of Education, 2018; Desravines, Aquino, & Fenton, 2016; Hitt & Meyers, 2017). A focus on instructional leadership in school turnaround coincides with a needed shift of attention away from structural reforms and toward improving teaching and learning within low-performing schools (Trujillo & Renee, 2015).

Purpose Statement

Although literature provides a solid framework for a general understanding of the strategies employed by schools to support teacher development, there is little evidence of how leaders in a school turnaround setting utilize teacher development techniques effectively (Hitt & Meyers, 2018). The researcher conducted the study to examine the types of teacher development methods that school principals believe support promising school turnaround and improvement efforts in low-performing schools. The purpose of focusing on principals' perceptions was to provide further guidance to school and district leaders in school turnaround settings. Leaders could use the information to make more informed decisions as to how to develop their teachers and improve instruction and outcomes for underperforming students. Leaders of low-performing schools have to deal with shifting assessments, varying accountability frameworks, and deadlines for significant improvement. Further study is needed to ascertain what worked to support teacher development in turnaround schools that achieved success in improving outcomes for students.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher designed the study to identify and analyze how various teacher development strategies are utilized in schools showing initial success in their turnaround efforts. Because the purpose of school turnaround is to rapidly increase student achievement results of students in an underperforming school, the study identified schools based on increases in student

data on summative state assessments. The researchers of studies identified the impact of successful leadership in school turnarounds commonly recognized efforts on growing and developing teachers as critical components of school turnaround efforts (Meyers & Hitt, 2017). Therefore, studying schools that show promising student achievement results revealed teacher development practices worthy of replication across other turnaround schools.

All teachers are required to complete training to gain credentials for teaching within American public schools. Bastian and Marks (2017) note that the initial training received by pre-service teachers is inadequate to support teachers in mastering the complexities and nuances of teaching. Also, compared to student achievement results in classes taught by veteran teachers, newer teachers tend to have lower performance levels (Bastian & Marks, 2017). In schools that serve mostly minority students and students of low socioeconomic status, teachers are four times more likely to lack the basic credentials for teaching (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). Also, teachers in low-performing schools who do have the requisite credentials tend to be newer and less effective than teachers with credentials in higher-performing schools (Bastian et al., 2017). Since the teachers in low-performing schools tend to lack the necessary training and have minimal experience, turnaround schools must provide high-quality teacher development to support teachers in effective instruction for their unique school setting.

A survey of school leaders was utilized with quantitative analysis to understand the details of how turnaround schools have implemented successful strategies. May and Supovitz (2011) utilized surveys of teacher perception to study school leaders' efforts at school improvement in a manner similar to the study. Also, Moore and Kochan (2013) used a survey with items like the survey in a study to determine principals' perceptions of professional

development. Therefore, the study utilized an appropriate methodology to study teacher development strategies in promising school turnaround efforts.

Significance of the Study

The federal government, most states, and many school districts and individual schools across the country are all attempting to find school reform strategies that may lead to better outcomes for historically underserved populations of students. More studies are needed to obtain data of school improvement efforts across all areas of school improvement to understand what is working currently in schools that are raising achievement rates for all students. Not enough evidence exists to support school leaders in turnaround settings to inform leaders on effective strategies (Hitt & Meyers, 2018). Many schools in need of drastic reform employ inexperienced teachers who need rapid, substantial improvement in all areas of instruction (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). Therefore, low-performing schools across the country need more information on the best strategies to quickly develop and retain high quality teachers.

The study provides evidence of effective strategies and tactics used by schools that recently transformed outcomes for students to develop teachers' abilities to meet the needs of students in a turnaround school context. A better understanding of the strategies that support teacher development can augment the improvement efforts of schools across the nation and across K-12 education levels in multiple ways. The information gained could support teacher professional development offerings within struggling schools by highlighting strategies that school leaders can focus on to maximize the effectiveness of teacher development efforts. Because of limited resources and many areas to tackle, school leaders in low-performing schools must narrow their focus to a few priorities. The results of the study provide necessary guidance on which strategies to use and how to implement those strategies effectively.

Leaders of school leader preparation and credentialing programs can benefit from the results of the study as well. Curriculum developers for school leader preparation programs can use the results to refine training methods and to equip future school leaders better in how to develop teachers in low-performing school settings. Similarly, district leaders can use the results of the study to design school leader professional development programs to guide leaders better toward teacher development strategies that are most effective.

Overview of Methodology

The study was a quantitative, non-experimental, survey-based research study. The researcher utilized a purposive sampling technique and administered a survey to selected school principals in K-12 public schools in one state. The identified principals had successfully led their schools out of low-performance for at least one year. Publicly available state assessment and accountability data were analyzed to determine school principals eligible for the study. Qualified school principals were invited to answer an online survey. The survey consisted of Likert scale questions about how the principals utilized different common forms of teacher development to support the school improvement efforts at their schools. The results of the survey were analyzed to answer the study's research questions.

Research Questions

The research questions that addressed the dissertation's topic and problem statement are as follows:

1. Overall, do study participants perceive teacher development efforts to have been effective in fostering a successful school turnaround effort?
2. Overall, do study participants perceive teacher development as a key focus of the school's turnaround efforts?

3. Considering the five identified teacher development strategies, which strategy of teacher development activity reflected the greatest degree of effect regarding the notion that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school improvement efforts?
4. Considering the five identified teacher development strategies in the study, which strategy manifested the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with the notion that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school turnaround efforts?
5. Considering the five identified teacher development strategies in the study, which strategy manifested the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with the notion that teacher development efforts were a key focus of the school's turnaround efforts?
6. Considering the elements within each of the five teacher development strategies, which element was most associated with study participant perception that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school turnaround effort?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the purpose statement and research questions stated above, the research hypotheses were as follows:

H_0 1: There will be no statistically significant effect for study participant perception that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering a successful school turnaround effort.

H_0 2: There will be no statistically significant effect for study participant perception that teacher development efforts represent a key focus in fostering a successful school turnaround effort.

H_a 3: The strategy of Collaboration within teacher development activities will reflect the greatest degree of effect regarding the notion that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school improvement efforts.

H_a 4: Considering the five identified teacher development strategies in the study, the strategy of Collaboration will manifest the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with the notion that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school turnaround effort.

H_0 5: Considering the five identified teacher development strategies in the study, the strategy of Collaboration will manifest the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with the notion that teacher development efforts have been a key focus in fostering successful school turnaround effort.

H_a 6: The element of Impactful within the domain of Collaboration will be most associated with study participant perception that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school turnaround effort.

Analyses

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses were conducted before advanced analyses based on each research question. The preliminary analyses were conducted in the areas of evaluations of missing data and internal consistency (reliability) of participant responses. Analysis of missing data was completed through descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The researcher utilized

Cronbach's alpha (α) in order to analyze the internal consistency of participant responses and determine the variance of answers. The preliminary analyses were used to prepare the data for the subsequent advanced data analyses based on each research question.

Data Analysis by Research Question

The descriptive statistical techniques used to analyze the results of each of the research questions consisted of a variety of descriptive, associative/predictive, and inferential statistical methods. The primary descriptive statistical techniques used were frequency counts (*f*), percentages (%), measures of central tendency (mean scores), and variability (standard deviations). These techniques characterized the descriptive statistical methods used for each of the study's research questions.

The study's six research questions were addressed using two different types of analyses. The researcher used a one sample *t* test to evaluate the statistical significance of participant responses for research questions one and two. Research questions three through six utilized multiple independent predictor variables because the questions were associative and predictive. In order to properly analyze the results of these questions, multiple linear regression tests were used to evaluate the predictive robustness of each independent variable. Then the researcher applied ANOVA Table *F* values to the data to assess predictive model fitness, and effect size was established through R^2 values transformed to a Cohen's *d*.

Limitations

The study had a number of limiting factors that cause its use and generalizability to be limited. Because the study was targeted to a group of school leaders that met a specific set of criteria, the study only had 37 participants opt in. Had more school leaders participated or the study have been conducted across multiple states, the results would have been more

generalizable. The initial criteria for identifying eligible school leaders utilized accountability data from one state, meaning that the results may not be generalizable to other schools from other states since the accountability systems and state assessments differ from state to state. Similarly, the accountability measures and timeline utilized may not account for true school turnaround or sustained student outcome gains. For this reason, the language included in the report is clear that the study participants led schools that show initial school improvement and turnaround success, not that the schools have been fully turned around. Also, the study was completely anonymous so no further demographic data was available to use in analysis except for the initial criteria from which the participant list was created. Finally, the participant surveys were sent to eligible participants during the spring of 2020, in the middle of mandatory school closures across the host state due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is unclear how this unique situation may have impacted both participant completion rates and the accuracy of participant responses.

Definition of Key Terms

Classroom walk-throughs are systematic, structured, brief and routine observations of classrooms that are non-evaluative. Instead, classroom walk-throughs have a clear focus on learning about teaching and learning within a school and involve a collaborative reflection with a focus on next steps (Feeney, 2014; Protheroe, 2009). Sometimes classroom walk-throughs are referred to as learning walks (Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2014).

Observation and feedback is a specific teacher coaching model that involves a leader or coach completing quick, observations of instruction followed by providing clear, unambiguous next steps to the teacher in a face-to-face meeting with accountability and follow-up (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2016).

Professional development sessions refer to episodic workshops designed to increase teacher knowledge and skill in instruction with the purpose of teacher application in the classroom (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Kennedy, 2016)

School turnaround refers to any process of school reform in a low-performing school designed to bring rapid and dramatic increases in student achievement (Hitt & Meyers, 2017). Typically student achievement is measured by assessments and accountability measures imposed by a governing organization such as the school district, state government, or federal government (Hitt & Meyers, 2017).

Teacher coaching refers to a strategy of teacher development in which a peer or school leader will observe a teacher and follow up with a one-on-one meeting to support the teacher in understanding and implementing a strategy or skill that will support the teacher's effectiveness (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018).

Teacher collaboration refers to intentional structures and times for teachers "working together, sharing knowledge, skills and experience to improve student achievement, and the well-being of both students and staff" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 1).

Teacher development may be used interchangeably with the term professional development and refers to "those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students" (Guskey, 2000, p. 16).

Teacher evaluation refers to a formal assessment of teachers in order to gain necessary information about ability and performance for the purpose of employment decisions (Hallinger, Heck, & Murphy, 2014).

Summary

The introduction provided an overview of the current status of school turnaround efforts and the importance of teacher development within those efforts. A background study was developed to explain and provide context of school turnaround efforts and the role of teacher development therein. The introduction outlined a study to identify schools indicating positive turnaround successes and studying the teacher development strategies employed in the turnaround process in those schools. The chapter discussed the research problem, questions, process, and methodology that were utilized in the study. The chapter concluded with a short discussion of limitations and definitions of key terms.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature outlines the relevant literature regarding teacher development in low-performing schools undergoing turnaround efforts. The chapter begins with a description of the historical reality of school underperformance and the development of various strategies to improve student achievement within underperforming schools. The chapter continues with an explanation of the current understanding of how underperforming schools improve and the role of teacher development within these efforts. The chapter progresses with a summary of the conditions necessary for teacher development. The chapter concludes with a summary of the major types of teacher development strategies used by schools.

History of Low-Performing Schools

Student demographics have long been the dominating factor in student achievement results (Coleman, 1966; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006), and the proposed solutions over time have been inadequate to solve the issue of low student achievement (Duke, 2015; Duncan & Murnane, 2011; Hess, 2010; Leithwood, Harris, & Strauss, 2010). The origins of research aimed at identifying and solving the gaps in achievement of students with various characteristics across the country started with the federally commissioned report, Equality of Educational Opportunity (Coleman, 1966), which is often referred to as the Coleman Report. The Coleman Report was a

seminal work commissioned by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and was the result of a lengthy study of the country's schools that consisted of a survey of elementary and secondary schools across the country with the purpose of investigating the variance of education between White and Black students (Kantor & Lowe, 2017). The primary purpose of the Coleman investigation was to examine the differences in resources and the quality of the implementation of educational programming between schools, but the report went further and highlighted the differences in student outcomes at schools serving students of different races (Kantor & Lowe, 2017). The Coleman Report first highlighted the lack of achievement and opportunity for Black students versus their White counterparts across the United States due to de facto segregation and the lack of resources available to schools serving primarily Black students (Coleman, 1966). Coleman, however, failed to define the schools' role in the relative lack of achievement of Black students, and cited communities and students' families as major factors in student achievement (Downey & Condron, 2016). According to Rivkin (2016), in the decision of *Milliken versus Bradley* in 1974, the United States Supreme Court ruled that de facto segregation as a result of families moving to different school boundaries on their own accord was constitutional because the acts were by private citizens and not government coercion. In an analysis of school segregation over time in America, Rivkin (2016) noted that school districts in America still battle de facto segregation due primarily to housing choices.

By analyzing data of student achievement by race and ethnicity across the country, Coleman (1966) reported the primary conclusion—minority students vastly underachieved compared to their White peers (Coleman, 1966). The disparity of student achievement outcomes between White and Black students is still a focal point of many policies and educational research and is commonly referred to by researchers and policy makers as the achievement gap (Quinn,

Desruisseaux, & Nkansah-Amankra, 2019). The federal government has expanded the definition of achievement gap to include also the gap in student achievement for any minority students, students with low socioeconomic status, students with disabilities, and English language learners (Zinskie & Rea, 2016). Even with the focus of efforts for over fifty years in alleviating the achievement gap, the achievement gap persists between White and Black students (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006). According to Hanushek and Rivkin (2006), school achievement results for Black students have failed to significantly improve, young Black adults are significantly less likely to be gainfully employed or have a college degree, and Blacks are much more likely to be incarcerated.

Over the course of the last few decades of education reform, the achievement gap has been dissected and analyzed from a multitude of angles in an attempt to find avenues for strategic reform. The achievement gap may be analyzed in two distinct categories: the gap of student outcomes between student groups within a school and the gap of student outcomes between schools due to de facto segregation (Duke, 2015). First, the achievement gap between different students refers to how minority students and students in poverty achieve in academics compared to their more affluent White peers even when attending the same school (Murphy, 2010). Conversely, the between-school achievement gap refers to the gap in student achievement between schools with a population of primarily disadvantaged students and other schools that are predominantly White and more affluent (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010).

Multiple studies indicate the between-schools gap has a larger negative impact on underserved student populations. Results of a study by Hanushek and Rivkin (2006) indicate that the within-school achievement gap is smaller than the between-school gap, highlighting

some inherent disadvantages for schools that serve a population of mainly low socioeconomic and minority students. Duncan and Murnane (2011) stated, "children attending schools with mostly poor classmates have lower academic achievement and graduation rates than those attending schools with more affluent student populations" (p. 13). Bohrnstedt, Kitmitto, Ogut, Sherman, and Chan (2015) completed a study that identified lower achievement rates by all students at schools where most of the population was minority students compared to the achievement of students at majority White schools. A study of the impact of the end of desegregation policies in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina showed evidence of renewed de facto segregation of schools as well as students of all races achieving at lower rates when attending a school with majority non-White students (Billings, Deming, & Rockoff, 2014). De facto residential segregation causes a concentration of historically disadvantaged students within particular schools and may lead to larger achievement gaps than in areas where schools are less segregated (Downey & Condron, 2016).

The immense pressure placed on a school to provide the level of support necessary in struggling communities means reform efforts are not just difficult to implement but are also difficult to sustain and systematize. In order to be successful working in a school in a struggling community, teachers must work longer hours and place greater commitment to their jobs than their peers (Muijs, Harris, Chapman, Stoll, & Russ, 2004). Teachers and leaders serving in struggling communities predictably face a higher turnover rate compared to teachers and leaders serving in less challenging communities often due to more difficult student needs and behaviors as well as a poor and deteriorating physical environment (Swain, Rodriguez, & Springer, 2019). In many cases, teachers leave struggling schools not because of a lack of a will to teach at that location but because of an often highly political, under-resourced, incredibly difficult working

condition that most teachers and leaders find unsustainable for long-term professional success (Ferlazzo, 2015). This relative instability within the school only serves to exacerbate the flux students often also feel at home and in their community (Muijs et al., 2004). Therefore, schools in struggling communities tend to be impacted by the struggles within those communities more than serving as a solution to the struggles.

Recent achievement data and research on school conditions show that the between-school gap is an alarming issue, and recent demographic data also highlight a need to pay particular attention on the between-school gap since it impacts a growing number of students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), 57% of Black students attend schools with at least 75% minority students compared to 52% ten years earlier. Similarly, 60% of Hispanic students attend schools of at least 75% minority students, up from 58% in 2004 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Overall, schools that serve over 75% minority students now comprise 30% of all schools in the country (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Therefore, de facto segregation or poor and minority students is growing and impacting a larger number of students.

Across the nation, de facto segregation continues to spread, and schools with a majority minority population comprise the majority of the achievement gap (Sundquist, 2017). During the 2012-13 school year, the percentage of public-school students living in poverty rose to above 50%, which is a trend likely to continue to impact more schools serving a majority disadvantaged student population (Layton, 2015). In one study, the test scores in 1,047 elementary schools with students exhibiting low performance in reading and math were tracked, and student achievement results were analyzed over the following five years (Aladjem et al., 2010). Aladjem et al. (2010) identified only 47 of those schools were able to make and sustain dramatic achievement gains

(Aladjem et al., 2010). Currently and historically, low-performing schools serving a majority disadvantaged student population do not make necessary achievement gains, or if they do, the gains are not sustained (Hochbein, 2012; Murphy & Bleiberg, 2019).

The host state for the study reflects the national statistics of a pervasive achievement gap. Results from a recent study by the Education Equality Index (2016) showed that three major cities in the state ranked in the bottom 90% of cities in the country in closing the achievement gap. Also, results from the same study indicated that the state's largest city was one of the only major cities in the country not to have at least ten high poverty, high minority schools that had minimized or closed the achievement gap (Education Equality Index, 2016). The relative lack of existing successful high poverty, high minority schools shows a great need to focus on closing the between-school gap in the state.

School Turnaround

Despite decades of research and practice, educators have been unable to fix the myriad issues causing pervasive inequitable academic outcomes for disadvantaged students (Hess, 2010). The concept of quickly improving low-performing schools that primarily serve disadvantaged students has led to a wide variety of reform efforts commonly referred to as school turnaround efforts. The term "turnaround" comes initially from the business sector and was used to focus efforts to support the success of failing businesses through aggressive, market-based reforms (Murphy & Bleiberg, 2019). The concept of what constitutes a school turnaround situation as well as what comprises success within a school turnaround has varied definitions across organizations and researchers (Huberman, Parrish, Hannan, Arellanes, & Shambaugh, 2011). As Meyers and Hitt (2017) explain, within the wide variety of turnaround definitions "nearly all written pieces on achieving turnaround assume rapid and dramatic improvement on

test scores, primarily in language arts and mathematics" (p. 39). Nationally, as declared by then Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in 2009, a concerted effort to turn around the nation's lowest 5% of schools guided the federal government's two large school improvement initiatives at the time: School Improvement Grants and Race to the Top (Peurach & Neumerski, 2015). Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, and Tallant (2010) explain "even as the means continue to be debated, the term 'turnaround' has quickly gained traction and is now used broadly to describe a movement to positively transform the performance of chronically failing school systems and schools" (p. 13). Despite the traction gained in the use of "school turnaround" as common nomenclature, skepticism as to the viability of turning around existing low-performing schools at the necessary scale to solve the nation's achievement gap issues abounds (Murphy & Bleiberg, 2019; Smarick, 2010). Some policy-makers argue the country is more likely to solve the issues in pervasively low-performing schools by closing them and opening new schools than by trying to turnaround existing, failing schools (Smarick, 2010).

In response to the difficult challenges faced by schools in need of dramatic, systemic improvement, politicians at all levels have sought to use education policies to reform schools through measures such as accountability, money, and flexibility. Accountability measures aimed at incentivizing the improvement efforts of low performing schools have often consisted of local, state, or federal monitoring of the school, firing school staff and leadership, or forcing the external management, chartering, or closure of the school (Duke, 2016). State and federal grant moneys have also been utilized to support schools make necessary reforms to increase student achievement (Duke, 2016). Finally, the federal government, as well as many states, have utilized flexibility from state law, collective bargaining agreements with teachers' unions, or district

policy as ways to support new and innovative approaches by schools to solve their student achievement issues (Duke, 2016).

Recent History of School Reform

The passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2001 added new accountability measures and shone an unforgiving spotlight on the nation's lowest performing schools (Duke, 2012). When George W. Bush signed the NCLB into law in 2001, he declared a main goal of the law was to raise the level of achievement across the country by use of the mechanism of school accountability (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). School accountability was to be designed by each state through developing their own set of state standards each student must learn at each grade level and administering an annual assessment designed to evaluate whether schools had adequately prepared their students that year. Schools failing to meet set requirements for student achievement would face various penalties depending on how each state chose to structure its accountability rules (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

Although all states are required to craft accountability measures for schools since the passage of NCLB, each state had a unique legal and political context through which to craft their own accountability system. Thus, accountability systems vary greatly from state to state. Some states have the ability to completely take over a school or district when it fails to meet state expectations for student achievement (Wong & Shen, 2003). Initial data showed state takeovers to have negligible impact, but more recent case studies have shown state takeover of schools or districts may be an effective accountability strategy (Schueler, Goodman, & Deming, 2017; Wong & Shen, 2003). For example, the state of Massachusetts took over the perennially failing Lawrence School District in 2011. The state of Massachusetts appointed an external organization to govern the district, implement aggressive reforms to increase school

accountability and autonomy, focus on better talent management, and execute other previously elusive reform efforts, and these reforms have shown initial gains in both reading and math in the district (Schueler et al., 2017). Regardless of these anecdotal improvements, six years into the accountability era of NCLB, 2,790 schools failed to achieve the required improved student outcomes and were still in need of corrective action for underachievement (Duke, 2016).

In 2010, the Obama administration tried a different tactic by focusing on strategies incentivizing bold action and, with the School Improvement Grant (SIG), granted large sums of money to the schools in need of substantial improvement (Duke, 2012). SIG was designed to incentivize districts to take bold reform actions regarding their lowest performing schools with the federal government providing $3.5 billion to states to fund the reform efforts in schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The required bold reforms varied in scope and strategy, but every possible pathway required the replacement of school leadership and possibly the entire school staff (Duke, 2012). The final impact of SIG had "no statistically significant impact on test scores, high school graduation, or college enrollment" (U.S. Department of Education, 2017, p. 60). Despite the continual reemergence of new efforts to reform and turn around failing and underperforming schools, the plight of students in failing schools has continued across the country with thousands of schools continuing to be labeled by local, state, and federal guidelines as needing dramatic turnaround (Duke, 2016).

Instructional Leadership in School Turnaround

As part of broader school turnaround efforts, high-quality instructional leadership is a pivotal component of successful school turnarounds (Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013). Government efforts such as SIG focused on aggressive removal of leadership and staff as a basis for school turnaround. The lack of success of SIG, however, suggests that replacing teachers and

leaders will not typically lead to better teachers and leaders being hired. In schools that replaced their leaders during the SIG process, roughly half of those schools' teaching staffs stated the new school leader was more effective than the prior dismissed leadership (Le Floch et al., 2016). Most low performing schools struggle with recruiting teachers; therefore, full staff turnover can lead to a downgrade in teacher skill and expertise (Meyers & Smylie, 2017). Many times, replacing an entire staff leads to less experienced teachers in the school; less experienced or qualified teachers tend to have fewer gains in student achievement (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007). In one study, researchers of Chicago schools undergoing aggressive reforms leading to staff and leadership dismissal across multiple low-performing schools found "the teacher workforce after intervention across all models was more likely to be white [*sic*], younger, and less experienced, and was more likely to have provisional certification than the teachers who worked at those schools before the intervention" (De la Torre et al., 2013, p. 3).

Although drastic staffing turnover has shown negligible positive impact on low-performing schools, utilizing the school principal primarily as an instructional leader has led to positive results (Goldring et al., 2015). Principals exert an indirect impact on students' performances through their ability to change school and classroom conditions to support teacher effectiveness (Neumerski, 2012). Holmes, Parker, and Gibson (2019) suggest that "principals in low-achieving or high poverty, minority schools tend to have a greater impact on student outcomes than principals at less challenging schools" (p. 30). Effective instructional leaders tend to align all aspects of the school toward a common mission and creating a culture of continuous improvement toward increasing student outcomes (Hallinger, 2005). Bambrick-Santoyo (2016) stated, "great instructional leadership isn't about discovering master teachers ready-formed. It's about coaching new teachers until the masters emerge" (p. 7). In many cases, low-performing

schools have low teacher retention because of the lack of systems, structures, and supports provided by high quality instructional leadership (Holmes et al., 2019). Thus, principals serving as high quality instructional leaders can create the conditions and structures to support teacher development in direct support of greater student outcomes.

Nature of Teacher Development

Guskey (2000), a recognized leader on teacher development research, defined teacher development as "those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students" (p. 16). Many terms are utilized in literature when referring to teacher development. Terms often used interchangeably with teacher development include professional learning (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009), professional development (Guskey, 2000), and lifelong learning (Carr-Chellman & Kroth, 2019). Hill, Beisiegel, & Jacob (2013) explained that decades of extensive research on teacher development have led many scholars to agree on a consensus of necessary attributes for high quality teacher development, but "disappointing results from recent rigorous studies of programs containing some or all of these features have turned this consensus on its head" (p. 476). A study of three urban school districts by Jacob and McGovern (2015) showed that these districts annually spent nearly $18,000 per teacher, and that 19 full school days were dedicated annually to teacher development. Nationwide, through Title II, billions of federal dollars have been allocated to teacher development activities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Despite the large allocation of time and money to teacher development, "most teachers do not appear to improve substantially from year to year—even though many have not yet mastered critical skills" (Jacob & McGovern, 2015, p. 2).

Overall, many factors, including poor design, lack of coherence with teachers' day-to-day realities, or lack of time for teachers to successfully master and embed skills into their teaching, may be responsible for the ineffective results of common teacher development strategies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). The need to focus on supporting teachers in improving their instructional effectiveness is well-established in literature and the field of school turnaround. The issue is with the nebulous nature of what it means to support teachers in improvement and in identifying the skills and knowledge teachers need to be successful. The lack of specificity has caused some researchers to argue for the need to "define 'development' clearly, as observable, measurable progress toward an ambitious standard for teaching and student learning" (Jacob & McGovern, 2015, p. 3). With all the time and attention given to teacher development with little to no system-wide results, an analysis of research-based best practices is essential to improve teacher effectiveness within turnaround schools.

Developing Teacher Knowledge and Skills

Effective instructional leaders focus on developing the pedagogy of teachers already in service to improve outcomes for students (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2016). Teacher pedagogy is defined as the wide variety of skills and attributes teachers utilize in instructing students (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Teacher pedagogy includes teachers' content knowledge, means of relating to and connecting with all students, and the ability to develop and manage effective activities in the classroom to benefit all students (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Teachers have the greatest direct impact on student learning, and it is through impacting teachers' pedagogy within the classrooms that principals can exert their indirect influence on student outcomes to the greatest extent (Neumerski, 2012). In order to increase teacher effectiveness, turnaround leaders

must ensure teacher-development activities purposefully increase the knowledge base of teachers (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010).

Teacher development of knowledge and skills is necessary in all schools, and is more important and must be more focused in a low-performing school. Most students in low-performing schools enter school underprepared in skill and content-knowledge (Duke, 2015). Most low-performing schools have a majority of students in poverty (Duke, 2015). Duke (2015) identified that when a school population consists of a majority of students from poverty, a high percentage of students tend to lack the familial and community structures with the knowledge, skill, and ability to support their success. A teacher in a low-performing school must have the skill to be able to utilize student data to adapt their instruction and provide the necessary components of schooling to enable students who are well below grade level to learn at a faster rate to close the gap with grade level proficiency (Herman et al., 2008). In a study of instruction in five school districts across the country, The New Teacher Project (TNTP; 2018) researchers noted "when students who started the year behind had greater access to grade-appropriate assignments, they closed the outcomes gap with their peers by more than seven months" (p. 23). A teacher in a low-performing school must also have the classroom management skills and ability to teach socioemotional skills to support students who need extra support in learning the social norms and functions of contributing to a classroom environment (Duncan & Murnane, 2011). In many cases, schools with a predominantly disadvantaged population of students also have a high percentage of students who have a history of trauma (McInerney & McKlindon, 2014). Teachers who serve a student population dealing with trauma must also have the knowledge and skills to support students who have significant socioemotional and trauma-related needs (McInerney & McKlindon, 2014). Most students in pervasively low-performing schools

are minority students of a different culture than predominantly White teaching staffs, requiring teachers to have a broad base of culturally responsive teaching strategies, habits, and mindset to effectively teach students from different cultures (Hammond, 2015). Therefore, teachers in low-performing, high-needs schools need additional development above what is necessary for teachers in a traditional, high-functioning school environment.

Increasing the knowledge of teachers can be done in a variety of ways and often can include formal and informal means that are aligned to the explicit purpose of increasing professional knowledge and skills (Leithwood et al., 2010). The increase in knowledge of teacher pedagogy should also include an expansion of teachers' repertoire of skills and abilities (Duke, 2015). Teacher development guides like *Get Better Faster* (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2016) focus on developing new teachers while also acknowledging that veteran teachers are in need of support. Many experienced teachers plateau in their skills and effectiveness, and studies show it is possible that half of the nation's teachers with over ten years of experience are not effective in some standard teaching practices such as supporting students in developing their critical thinking skills (Jacob & McGovern, 2015).

Developing Teacher Belief in Change Efforts

One of the reasons veteran teachers may stall in their instructional improvement may be due to skepticism toward the effectiveness of improvement efforts. In a school facing turnaround conditions, teachers must agree with the reform efforts of the school and foster true beliefs in line with the direction of the school in order for the school to be successful (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). Similarly, teachers must have a personal stake in the turnaround effort, otherwise they may comply with some behavior changes within the classroom but will never

conceptualize the change in a way that transforms classroom instruction effectively (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010).

In a school turnaround effort, teacher commitment to the school and students must increase in order to increase buy-in to the change process (Leithwood & Strauss, 2010). Teachers who are committed to the school and its students are more motivated to work with the school's turnaround effort and implement the necessary changes within their classrooms (Hitt & Meyers, 2017). In order to increase the level of commitment of all teachers, principals need to focus on motivating teachers to stay committed to the reform efforts (Hitt & Meyers, 2017). One way to encourage collective buy-in from all teachers is to encourage teachers to take risks, to challenge the status quo, and to be open and transparent about their struggles and beliefs (Leithwood et al., 2010). School leaders can support teachers' belief in the viability of the turnaround effort and inspire trust through the cementing of strong relationships among the staff and between teachers and leadership (Duke, 2015).

Building Teacher Efficacy

One major roadblock, besides belief in the turnaround efforts themselves, is ensuring teachers' perceptions of efficacy in their ability to successfully implement the desired changes. In order for teachers to be able to take in new learning and successfully implement needed changes in their classrooms, they must believe they can successfully implement the change and believe they have the ability to impact the learning of students in new and positive ways (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). Therefore, low-performing schools facing possible sanctions or corrective action should be "emphasizing and encouraging instructional practice changes and cultivating teacher efficacy beliefs with the context of teacher learning" (Cosner & Jones, 2016, p. 48).

Building the perception of efficacy within teachers is especially crucial in a turnaround environment where years of low performance coupled with the threat of drastic accountability have often led to demoralized cultures with staff who no longer believe in their own efficacy (Duke, 2015). Even though the push within turnaround environments is often to tighten control over instructional decisions, one way to increase teacher efficacy may be to provide certain levels of autonomy to teachers as professionals and to allow them the space to feel successful again (Leithwood et al., 2010). Schools with faculties exhibiting high feelings of collective teacher efficacy tend to have higher student performance rates compared to schools with low collective teacher efficacy (Mosoge, Challens, & Xaba, 2018). Higher collective teacher efficacy within a school leads to more teacher persistence, a stronger teacher work ethic, and stronger planning by teachers (Mosoge et al., 2018). Therefore, it is imperative school leaders work to develop a high collective teacher efficacy to support the school turnaround effort.

Fostering a Culture of Performance

Tied to feelings of efficacy and a belief in the change efforts is the need to develop a culture throughout the school that exhibits a common belief that the school and everyone in it can and will perform at a high level. In most turnaround schools, developing a strong, collective culture requires a change in deep-seated teacher attitudes (Leithwood & Strauss, 2010). Successful turnaround leaders utilize every resource possible to provide psychological supports in multiple ways to support teachers in pursuing the goals of the school (Leithwood & Strauss, 2010). Two ways that leaders provide psychological support for teachers are by setting clear teacher performance expectations and providing multiple development opportunities to support them in meeting the established expectations (Hitt & Meyers, 2017).

Another way of fostering a culture of belief in high achievement of all students is to ensure teachers have an accurate view of their performance compared to the established standard. Jacob & McGovern (2015) found in large urban school districts that less than half of teachers believed they had any instructional weaknesses. In concert with the inability to name a weakness, "more than 60% of low-rated teachers still gave themselves high performance ratings" (Jacob & McGovern, 2015, p. 2). Teachers' lack of understanding of their own weaknesses or knowledge of their own ratings is unsurprising given that less than one percent of teachers receive an unsatisfactory rating and close to 75% have no identified areas for improvement in their evaluations (Koedel, Li, Springer, & Tan, 2019). Regardless of the reason, teachers' false beliefs and overconfidence in their own abilities do not foster a culture of high achievement (Jacob & McGovern, 2015). The false sense of confidence simply codifies the status quo as successful and creates a culture of low expectations across the school (Jacob & McGovern, 2015).

Fostering a culture of high achievement also requires insisting on a belief by all teachers within the school community that the school can support higher levels of student achievement (Hitt & Meyers, 2017). Researchers for TNTP (2018) stated "when teachers have high expectations for students' success against grade-level standards, it [expectation for student success] informs their choices about the content they put in front of students, and the instructional practices they employ" (p. 41). Since teachers have the largest school-based effect on student achievement, especially in schools serving predominantly low-income students (Stosich, 2016), supporting teachers' beliefs in student ability and translating that into practice is essential to transform student outcomes.

The Role of the Principal in Teacher Development

The shift of the principal's role from being a school manager to becoming an instructional leader started with Edmonds's (1979) seminal work, in which he stated "urban schools that teach poor children successfully have strong leadership and a climate of expectation that students will learn" (p. 15). The primary focus of effective instructional leaders is to increase teacher skill and ability in instruction (Neumerski, 2012). In order to foster teacher growth, school leaders must be able to establish the necessary conditions to counteract the poor teaching conditions that exist pervasively in turnaround school settings (Duke, 2015). School principals are in a unique position to exercise the necessary vision and authority to drive change for teachers (Leithwood et al., 2010).

Essential Leadership of the Principal

Different change agents can support school turnaround and improvement efforts, including district leadership, teachers, external partners, and the community at-large (Neumerski, 2012). Many different people must work to support teacher development, and the principal plays a key role in this task (Leithwood et al., 2010). A substantial relationship exists between school leadership and student achievement - positively when a school leader is directly involved in curriculum, assessment, and instruction, or negatively if focusing on incorrect or misaligned practices (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Principals who focus on changing instruction, developing community and trust, and communicating vision and goals produce a positive change in teacher practice (Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010). The active involvement of principals in instructional leadership also increases the amount of student-centered teaching and differentiation that happens in classrooms (Neumerski, 2012).

Principals are key in providing leadership beyond simply making changes to structure. Structural changes alone, such as changes to the school schedule or the programming of curriculum at the school, cannot create the necessary changes to propel the turnaround efforts of a school (Neumerski, 2012). Part of the work of the principal "involves creating conditions that foster growth, not finding quick-fix professional development solutions" (Jacob & McGovern, 2015, p. 3). All in all, the work of instructional leadership in successful turnaround schools is primarily carried out by school leaders, not by district leaders or outside groups (Leithwood et al., 2010).

Development over Accountability

One aspect of the principal taking the lead in fostering conditions for teacher growth is in explicitly and implicitly prioritizing teacher development above teacher accountability. One study of high achieving, high poverty schools showed that one common thread among these schools was the principals' relentless focus on teacher development instead of teacher accountability (Reinhorn, Moore Johnson, & Simon, 2017). Effective principals provide support and encouragement for teachers to aid in teacher development and perseverance (Leithwood et al., 2010). Successful school turnaround leaders act more as guides and coaches than dictatorial leaders, even though the latter is often the role of a turnaround leader in a business setting (Leithwood et al., 2010). Conversely, too much teacher oversight and focus on performance instead of allowing teachers to exercise judgment robs teachers of the feelings of professionalism and efficacy (Biesta, 2015). Instead, successful turnaround principals often focus on building strong teams through the use of professional development and provide ample time for those teams to engage in development opportunities (Leithwood et al., 2010). Thus, primarily

focusing on teacher development over teacher accountability and evaluation has a greater long-term positive impact on teacher growth and student achievement.

Clear Vision and Goals

A principal's ability set a clear vision for the work of the school is essential and possibly the most impactful role a leader can play in instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2005). A principal's ability to communicate goals and a vision positively impacts teacher performance at the school (Supovitz et al., 2010). The vision for instruction for the school must fit the school's context appropriately. The school's context can include the school's accountability status and requirements (Cosner & Jones, 2016) as well as the size, grade levels, educational programming, student cultures, and desired educational outcomes of the community. Other contextual factors that school leaders need to take into account when crafting a vision for change are the constraints, resources, and opportunities available to the school (Hallinger, 2005). The instructional vision must also remain the focal point of all school improvement efforts through establishing clear expectations for all teachers within the building (Chapman & Harris, 2004). Ultimately, in order to align the school instructional system and support the raising of achievement for all students, the principal must set an instructional vision within a turnaround setting explicitly to seek to establish an orderly learning environment to align all instruction to standards, thereby creating coherence across classrooms and initiatives (Duke, 2015; Hochberg & Desimone, 2010).

The instructional vision set by principals in low-performing schools, however, is only effective in building momentum for the turnaround effort if coupled with specific expectations and opportunities to practice and gain greater understanding of how to implement those expectations within their classrooms (Meyers & Hitt, 2017). Goals with feedback provide

teachers with a clear understanding of their performance and ensure teachers avoid an overinflated view of their own abilities (Jacob & McGovern, 2015). Use of goals, especially SMART goals, can provide clarity to all teachers as to what outcomes the school is trying to achieve and to identify each teacher's role in reaching shared and individual goals (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, Many & Mattos, 2016). SMART goals refer to goals that are strategic, measurable, attainable, results oriented, and time-bound, and are a common goal-setting practice of schools to focus efforts across all personnel (Conzemius & O'Neill, 2014).

Teachers who receive regular performance feedback tend to have greater implementation of the change efforts being implemented at the school compared to teachers who do not receive feedback (Reinke, Stormont, Herman, & Newcomer, 2014). As Duke (2015) observed, "a vision is no substitute for a clear and focused set of 'next steps'" (p. 67). Schools with mission-aligned personnel have mission and vision statements with a set of long-term goals, various objectives tied to those goals, and a clearly articulated set of next steps for teachers to guide teachers' work on a day-to-day basis (Duke, 2015). Clear next steps for teachers to implement within their daily instruction can support teacher development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). A system connecting a vision with goals and regular feedback can be a powerful tool to support the development of teachers in the implementation of effective instruction.

Establishing a Strong Teacher Culture

Successful leaders of low-performing schools focus on establishing a strong teacher culture built on collaboration and a learning orientation (Leithwood et al., 2010). Building a strong teacher culture with a focus on teacher collaboration requires strong instructional leadership by the school principal (Goddard, Goddard, Kim, & Miller, 2015). In a school turnaround context, a strong teacher community with teachers unified around the school's

mission is crucial because the influence of peers is more likely to cause teachers to change how they teach than the influence of school leadership (Supovitz et al., 2010). Successful leaders of low-performing schools restructure the school to provide ample opportunities for teacher collaboration in order to establish a culture that fosters a high level of collaborative work (Leithwood et al., 2010). Collaborative work can help create strong teacher teams that are necessary to establish a strong learning community (Chapman & Harris, 2004; Duke, 2015; Leithwood & Strauss, 2010). Strong teacher teams give teachers important opportunities to discuss and to practice new instructional moves at the school (Chapman & Harris, 2004). Strong teacher teams can help develop the school into a learning community where all teachers exhibit a learning orientation to grow and change (Chapman & Harris, 2004).

Consistent Expectations

A condition necessary for strong teacher growth in a turnaround setting is to establish common expectations across classrooms and among all teachers (Chapman & Harris, 2004). Common expectations support the development of crucial alignment of systems and structures throughout the school (Hallinger, 2005), and enable principals in turnaround schools to expect commitment from every staff member and develop a common culture and understanding for teachers and students alike (Desravines, Aquino, & Fenton, 2016). School leaders expecting common growth and development from all teachers also supports the increased development and effectiveness of all teachers (Devine, Meyers, & Houssemand, 2013). Overall successful school turnaround is predicated on a system of collaborative and collective learning that can only take place if everyone is held to the same standard and same expectations (Devine et al., 2013).

A common issue in low-performing schools is misalignment of time, people, and resources (Duke, 2015). Often, the curricula utilized throughout the school do not align across

content areas or grade levels and are often not aligned to state standards (Duke, 2015). In order to align curricula to proper expectations, school leaders in turnaround settings must establish consistent expectations for all teachers so all students are exposed to and held to the high standards necessary for their success (Duke, 2015; Leithwood et al., 2010). At other times, when curricula do align to state standards and expectations, in pervasively low-performing schools, teachers often make implementation decisions that lower the level of work expected of students (TNTP, 2018).

Expectations of student behavior are often misaligned within a low-performing school resulting in a lack of school discipline and safety (Aladjem et al., 2010). Referring to case studies of successful turnaround schools, Aladjem et al. (2010) stated, "Several schools addressed student management early on by establishing clear, consistent schoolwide behavior rules and expectations; conveying those expectations to staff, students, and families; and establishing unambiguous consequences for misbehavior" (p. 32). Therefore, common curricula and behavior expectations across a school can support a successful school turnaround effort.

Methods of Teacher Development

School leaders utilize teacher development methods in order to produce "changes to teacher knowledge and practices, and improvements in student learning outcomes" (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017, p. 2). Analyzing the successful use of methods to develop teachers within a turnaround context will provide crucial data to inform leaders on the best method to support teacher development. Although current research generally aligns with the necessity of instructional leadership to support teacher growth, the manner and means utilized by leadership to best develop teachers have not been fully discovered (Neumerski, 2012). The broad concept

of instructional leadership lacks the necessary specificity and overall has not shown gains in positively impacting teacher and student performance (May, Huff, & Goldring, 2012).

Researchers identify disparate conclusions when deciphering the details of how principals execute their instructional leadership. Teacher coaching, evaluation, and a focus on the education program may have the greatest impact on teacher development and student learning (Grissom et al., 2013). Other research indicates high quality teacher development is the key to creating high performing schools (Moore & Kochan, 2013). Alternatively, schools may benefit from a focus on a "multifaceted system for teacher learning and cultivating social resources that support this learning system" (Cosner & Jones, 2016, p. 48). Certain common characteristics of professional development, such as duration, quality of engagement, content focus, relevance, and consistency, result in improved teaching and student outcomes (Blank & De las Alas, 2009). Therefore, more research is needed to determine the effectiveness and applicability of different teacher development strategies in school turnaround efforts.

Within the K-12 education community, most school leaders and professionals believe utilizing a teacher development strategy can support instruction improvement within a school (Kennedy, 2016). Teachers across the country report receiving teacher development in their content area at some point throughout the school year (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). The vast majority of schools engage in regular professional development for teachers, but these efforts vary widely in scope, type, coherence, and focus (Blank & De las Alas, 2009). In a successful turnaround school, teacher development may be the main focus of school leaders (Leithwood & Strauss, 2010). In order to be effective, a teacher development program must help teachers align their knowledge, beliefs, and practice (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). Only about 40% of

teachers, however, consider teacher development a helpful and meaningful use of their time (Jacob & McGovern, 2015).

Overall, effective teacher development programs involve the delivery of targeted content over a long period of time to allow teachers to have an opportunity to learn deeply and to practice the content (Blank & De las Alas, 2009; Chapman & Harris, 2004). The delivery of teacher development content should be completed within a significant number of contact hours to increase the likelihood of teacher implementation (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Specifically, focused teacher development of 6 to 12 months with 30 to 100 contact hours could have a considerable impact on student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). In contrast, teacher development with only 5 to 14 hours of contact hours may show little to no statistical impact on student learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). In many schools, teacher development consists of a single, three-hour session at the beginning of the school year (Aguilar, 2013). A majority of teachers report that they participate in two days or less of professional learning in any given years, well short of the duration necessary to make substantive changes in the classroom (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Teacher development of high intensity and long duration may not correlate to impact teacher pedagogy or student achievement in all cases. Teacher development focused entirely on prescriptive methods may fail to produce results regardless of intensity and duration (Kennedy, 2016). Also, in order for teacher development to produce results in classrooms, it must be contextualized to the specific needs of the school, teachers, and students (Chapman & Harris, 2004).

Teacher development may be most beneficial if the primary focus is on specific subjects and content areas instead of teaching strategies that can be utilized for any content areas.

Teacher development focused on single content areas such as math or literacy may lead to greater implementation and impact on student learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Around 60% of teachers may find content-related professional learning helpful for instruction, and less than half find use for content-agnostic professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Teacher development in turnaround schools may be most effective by focusing on supporting the teachers' understanding of their content including how students learn, common student misconceptions, how to address those misconceptions, and how to interpret and utilize data to plan targeted instruction (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010).

In another study, however, researchers identified that teacher development tailored to specific content areas is only effective when that training is "under a broader goal such as helping teachers learn to expose student thinking" (Kennedy, 2016, p. 971). Similarly, Bambrick-Santoyo (2016) focused teacher development on teaching strategies in the primary areas of classroom management and classroom rigor. Bambrick-Santoyo's (2016) professional development framework included specific strategies that teachers can use to support students in mastering rigorous tasks; these activities include methods such as checking for understanding for all students and crafting strong, standards-based lesson plans.

Classroom management techniques are designed to establish a classroom environment where students know and meet clear, high expectations for their behavior. Teachers using effective classroom management techniques do not spend much time correcting student behaviors, and can therefore maximize their time and attention on instructional tasks during class time (Lester, Allanson, & Notar, 2017). Classroom management techniques include giving clear, whole-class directions and effective redirections for off-task students (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2016). High quality teacher development that school leaders design to support teachers with discipline

of Black students may reduce the disciplinary referrals of Black students, a student population prone to a disproportionate amount of disciplinary action across schools (Gregory et al., 2016). In a school turnaround context, teachers tend to work with more students who are below grade level and from different cultural backgrounds, therefore, developing teacher pedagogy of instruction tailored to student needs may be just as important as deepening content knowledge (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010).

A common approach of leaders who are effective in supporting school turnaround efforts is utilizing teacher development strategies to provide consistency to the instructional system and program across the school (Hitt & Meyers, 2018). Regardless of the specific content of a school's professional development, it is essential that all teacher development activities align to school goals (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Teacher development activities may also prove more effective if a whole school or at least departments or teacher teams participate together. Collaborative professional development can change teacher practice, improve teacher beliefs and attitudes about the school's turnaround efforts, and lead to student achievement gains (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Most teachers, however, are not provided opportunities to participate in long-term learning opportunities within collaborative teams (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Collaborative professional learning can be effective as a foundation to support school improvement and individual teacher development.

Many of the previously mentioned traits are highlighted in the literature as positive aspects of teacher development, but there are discrepancies in the research as well. Most schools undergoing turnaround efforts report an increase in intensity of teacher development activities than in previous years (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). Overall, teacher development as a comprehensive school reform strategy has shown positive impacts on low-performing schools,

but individual teacher development methods, have not been found to be statistically relevant (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003). The difficulty in identifying what creates for effective teacher development may be due to the current research thrust of "observing randomized trials of specific professional development programs have not enhanced our knowledge of effective program characteristics, leaving practitioners without guidance with regard to best practices" (Hill et al., 2013, p. 476).

Evaluating teacher development overall is difficult because of the wide variety of training contents, types, foci, and strategies utilized by schools (Popova, Evans, & Arancibia, 2016). Researchers also lack a common set of indicators researchers use to evaluate teacher development activities (Popova, Evans, & Arancibia, 2016). The wide variety of school turnaround efforts and contexts only adds further complexity to any studies. Ultimately, the lack of coherence in literature along with the lack of specificity as to how schools should be providing teacher development activities leaves leaders of low-performing schools without clear direction for using teacher development to best support teachers.

Professional Development Sessions

High quality professional development sessions contain active learning components for all participants. Teachers can implement practices from professional development when they have had an opportunity to see the specific practice change being learned and have had an opportunity to actively engage in those practices (Cosner & Jones, 2016). All professional development sessions should include explicit time for teachers to practice implementing the new techniques before trying them out on students. Teachers who have had an opportunity to practice a technique within the sessions are more likely to utilize that technique in their classrooms (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2018). Effective practice includes specific feedback in the moment and an

opportunity to practice again (Lemov, Woolway, & Yezzi, 2012). School leaders often focus on providing ample reflection time for teachers in professional development sessions, but using that time instead to provide multiple rounds of practice with feedback can produce faster results for teachers as they learn new skills (Lemov et al., 2012). The techniques learned by teachers should be easily integrated into the daily work of teachers and presented in an engaging way, instead of presenting new information and requiring teachers to memorize and implement new knowledge (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

In turnaround schools, active professional development sessions that focus on tactical techniques can provide teacher development that is practical and relevant to the immediate teaching needs of teachers (Chapman & Harris, 2004). Similarly, high quality professional development sessions are connected to specific teacher practices, and these sessions can also contribute to quality collaboration between teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). High quality sessions also include specific goals to enable teachers to measure their success both during the session as well as in practice in the classroom (Lemov et al., 2012). In high-poverty schools, professional development sessions may help improve teacher practices when utilized in concert with support and accountability of implementation as a component of the school's improvement strategies (Stosich, 2016). In turnaround schools, professional development sessions that focus on supporting teachers' use of student data to drive instruction can have a positive impact on teacher practice (Aladjem et al., 2010).

Teacher Coaching

Teacher coaching, although similar to professional development, is a teacher development strategy that is used when a leader is working with teachers one-on-one to obtain similar results as professional development. Teacher coaching occurs when "coaches or peers

observe teachers' instruction and provide feedback to help them improve" (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018, p. 548). Teacher coaching is a main component of many schools' teacher development strategies and typically has similar common characteristics with high quality professional development sessions (Blazar & Kraft, 2015). Unlike most other teacher development strategies, teacher coaching is typically highly individualized, spans a long period of time, and focuses on individual growth in specific, concrete skills (Kraft et al., 2018).

Teacher coaching can have an impact not just on teacher practice but also student achievement. Neumerski (2012) completed an analysis of teacher coaching across multiple studies and identified a positive impact that coaching can have on literacy instruction and student achievement in literacy. Teacher coaching specifically focused on the implementation of research-based intervention programs showed an increase in teacher fidelity in program implementation as well as increased student academic outcomes for students who utilized those programs (Reinke et al., 2014). Similarly, a meta-analysis of teacher coaching studies over 20 years showed teacher coaching improved overall teacher practice (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). Teacher coaching can also be effective as a follow up strategy for implementation of strategies learned in professional development sessions (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Some highly successful, high-poverty schools use teacher coaching with a focus on providing regular, specific feedback to teachers as a key strategy for teacher development (Reinhorn et al., 2017). Gregory et al. (2016) suggested that teacher coaching on specific behavior support strategies has been shown to reduce the number of behavior incidents by Black students and may effectively support the future elimination of the pervasive disproportionality of discipline events for minority students, which is a major issue in most low-performing schools. Overall, principals can effectively develop teachers by focusing on teacher coaching (Grissom et al., 2013).

The methods school leaders employ to implement teacher coaching can have a positive effect in a school turnaround setting. Overall, the growth of teachers is supported in a school turnaround environment where leaders prioritize the coaching of teachers by using individualized supports and providing regular feedback (Hitt & Meyers, 2017). Frequent coaching, at least once per month, may support academic results in some subjects in low-performing schools (Bastian & Marks, 2017). In a school turnaround setting, the use of coaches and a coaching model can also support teachers in implementing and taking ownership of key aspects of the school's turnaround strategy (Mayer, Woulfin, & Warhol, 2014).

How coaches utilize their coaching sessions can cause a major difference in the effectiveness of teacher coaching. Coaches who focus on evaluating teachers according to their compliance to a rubric showed little to no effectiveness, but those coaches who collaborated with teachers in coaching, lesson planning, and modelling were more effective in changing teacher practice (Kennedy, 2016). Coaches who model sound teaching practices for teachers within coaching sessions are impactful, especially in turnaround schools where the practice of modelling may result in greater teacher impact (Leithwood et al., 2010). School leaders who provide coaching aligned to specific and clear criteria can support teacher improvement in schools undergoing significant improvement efforts (Hale, 2011). Schools with high teacher mobility where coaches focused on developing content-specific pedagogy may have greater success in growing teachers and in increasing teacher enthusiasm for coaching opportunities (Matsumara, Garnier, Correnti, Junker, & Bickel, 2010).

Coaching can be valuable as a standalone teacher development strategy as well as a follow up and support mechanism in conjunction with professional development sessions (McCollum, Hemmeter, & Hsieh, 2011). Teemant (2014) completed a mixed-methods study of

successful teacher coaching as a follow up to professional development in diverse, urban settings. The holistic development model consisted of multiple workshops totaling 30 hours and followed up by seven coaching cycles, including pre-observation conferences, observations, and post-observation conferences (Teemant, 2014). The post-observation conferences focused on analyzing the implementation of the training and students' reactions (Teemant, 2014). Ultimately, the use of coaching as follow-up to professional development led to significant and sustained increase in effective pedagogy (Teemant, 2014).

Teacher coaching can be implemented to ensure the leader or coach controls the content and focus of the coaching sessions. Bambrick-Santoyo's (2016) coaching framework of specific and intense teacher coaching has been used by urban, diverse schools across the country to develop teachers. The model, called *Get Better Faster*, was created to develop teachers through coaching sessions focused on actionable next steps and a model of planning, practicing, and consistent follow up (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2016). Teacher coaching that is focused on improving specific, concrete skills of teachers may lead to teacher development that is applicable across content areas (McCollum et al., 2011).

Other coaching models focus on utilizing a teacher's own reflection and desire to improve as the guiding impetus for the focus and structure of the coaching sessions. *Cognitive Coaching* (Costa & Garmston, 2016) is a coaching model in which the coach is a facilitator who asks questions to support reflective teachers identify their areas for growth. Costa and Garmston (2016) stated that empowering teachers to own their improvement can foster a self-motivating cycle of improvement within teachers. Aguilar (2013) argued that whether coaching should be more directive or facilitative is dependent upon the teacher and the skill, and the job of the coach is to facilitate the session in the manner most appropriate for learning. In many cases, coaches

adopt and adapt various strategies and forms of coaching depending on the context and the teacher being coached (Brown, Harrell, & Browning, 2017).

Teacher coaching shows great promise in supporting the development of teachers in all settings, but there are concerns as to its viability and overall impact. High-quality coaching has resulted in substantial improvement in teacher effectiveness on a small scale, but may not be scalable to large systems (Blazar & Kraft, 2015). The lack of scalability may be due to the tendency to water down intensity and frequency with large numbers or simply the difficulty in finding the number of high-quality coaches necessary to coach large numbers of teachers (Kraft et al., 2018).

The overall cost of a strong teacher coaching system is another barrier to implementation in turnaround schools. The estimated costs associated with teacher coaching models ranges from $2298 to $5220, which is a cost approximately six to twelve times the costs of other teacher development activities (Knight, 2012). Finally, the overall effectiveness of teacher coaching is difficult to determine. In one study, two cohorts involved in teacher coaching showed disparate results for unknown reasons, highlighting the difficulty in pinpointing why some coaching works well and other coaching does not (Blazar & Kraft, 2015).

Classroom Walk-throughs

Although the primary thrust of professional development and teacher coaching are teacher development, classroom walk-throughs and teacher evaluations attempt to support teacher development secondarily with a primary focus on evaluation. Classroom walk-throughs can be utilized to obtain a sense of what is happening across the school, to evaluate school climate, to develop collaboration between teachers and leadership, and to provide students a sense that leaders and teachers are instructional experts (Protheroe, 2009). Effective walk-

throughs may include features like stating a specific purpose, implementing frequent walk-throughs at regular intervals, allowing time for reflection, and identifying specific actions (Protheroe, 2009).

The implementation of classroom walk-throughs varies in practice, but primarily "are brief, structured, nonevaluative observations followed by collaborative conversations" (Feeney, 2014, p. 23). One adaptation of classroom walk-throughs is to create learning walks where teachers collaboratively observe instruction across the school and reflect on the instructional practices observed (Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2014). Utilizing classroom walk-throughs as learning walks may decrease teacher isolation, increase teacher instructional practice, and result in higher levels of student engagement (Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2014). Even though walk-throughs may be valuable in gathering information as to the overall instruction of the system, principals who prioritize this practice for the bulk of their instructional leadership may find it has no effect on classroom instruction (Grissom et al., 2013). Grissom et al. (2013) found that in Miami-Dade County, walk-throughs dominated leaders' instructionally focused time but paled in comparison to the impact of teacher coaching on improving instruction.

Teacher Evaluation

Even though little evidence suggests that walk-throughs can positively impact instruction, teacher evaluations may have a positive impact. Evaluations designed primarily to develop teachers rather than hold teachers accountable to a set standard can positively impact teacher development (Reinhorn et al., 2017). Strong evaluation systems lead to the growth of teacher skill, an increase in teacher effort, and an increase in student learning over multiple years (Taylor & Tyler, 2012). Rigorous, high quality evaluations can support both new and veteran teachers in

evaluating their own performance and in developing new skills well beyond the typical career plateau in teacher effectiveness (Taylor & Tyler, 2012).

Teacher evaluation practice and effectiveness varies across the country. Taylor and Tyler (2012) stated that most schools' "evaluations are short and infrequent (most based on two or fewer classroom observations totaling 60 minutes or less), conducted by untrained administrators" (p. 34). Other schools use a more robust evaluation system designed to include multiple rounds of observations and feedback along with goal-setting and self-assessment (Reinhorn et al., 2017). In some cases, "value-added" measures are a part of a teacher's evaluation. Value-added measures are student achievement results tied to specific teachers in an attempt to determine the impact a teacher had on student learning in a given year (Taylor & Tyler, 2012). Schools, including high poverty and low-performing schools, that prioritize using teacher evaluation to improve instruction over holding teachers accountable may be more effective in improving teacher practice and student outcomes (Reinhorn et al., 2017).

Teacher evaluation can also be an effective tool for shifting roles and teaching assignments of teachers in order to ensure the best teachers are strategically placed in the most crucial areas of the school (Duke, 2015). While analyzing teacher effectiveness, principals should go beyond just looking at past teacher evaluations and look at the student achievement rates associated with teachers. Combining teacher evaluation results, credentials, and student outcomes can provide principals with the necessary information to provide students the teachers who are the best fit to help them achieve (Duke, 2015). Beyond shifting teacher caseloads to match better student needs, effective teacher evaluation can also improve school culture by identifying team members who are unwilling or unable to commit to the new shared values and beliefs of the school (Cosner & Jones, 2016). Many school leaders, however, are hesitant to

utilize teacher evaluation mechanisms as the basis to remove teachers because they risk losing teacher trust and may lack support for the decision by district leadership (Donaldson & Mavrogordato, 2018).

The impact of teacher evaluation on school improvement efforts may not be substantial (Hallinger, Heck, & Murphy, 2014). The evidence of the impact of teacher evaluation is not yet strong despite the push by policy-makers at state and national levels for harnessing teacher evaluation to improve low-performing schools (Hallinger et al., 2014). Despite some promising evidence, evaluation feedback may have little to no impact on teacher activity or improvement practices (Koedel et al., 2019). Often, instead of providing clarity to teachers, teacher evaluation can also bring confusion regarding expectations for teachers and can lead to teacher demoralization and an erosion of teacher efficacy (Bradford & Braaten, 2018). Overall, teacher evaluation may provide clarity and focus to teacher development, or it may lead to confusion and have little to no positive impact on teaching and learning within a school undergoing improvement efforts.

Teacher Collaboration

Teacher collaboration has been present in different forms for decades in American public-schools, but the styles, types, and level of intensity have changed dramatically over time (Hargreaves, 2019). Teaching has historically been viewed as an isolated profession (Hargreaves, 2019), but current education practice places a greater emphasis on teacher collaboration, and teacher proficiency may now demand high-quality collaboration with other teachers (Vangrieken, Dochy, Raes, & Kyndt, 2015). The nebulous nature of teacher collaboration across many schools has led to confusion as to what is meant by collaboration and

what makes for high quality teacher collaboration (Dufour et al., 2016). Akiba, Murata, Howard, and Wilkinson (2019) stated:

> Even when teachers successfully form a learning community with shared norms and values for supporting student learning, studies have found that those values of promoting student understanding or dialogues within the community may not provide rich learning opportunities for teachers (p. 353).

Teacher collaboration may have strong short- and long-term impacts on teacher culture, teacher development, and student learning. Teacher collaboration can have a positive impact on school culture by focusing support on new teachers. A collaborative inquiry cycle to support new teachers can improve new teachers' pedagogy, student achievement, and a school's culture of support and improvement (Brondyk & Stanulis, 2014). Beyond a focus on new teachers, teacher collaboration can also support all teachers. Schools with teachers regularly engaging in high-quality teacher collaboration may have greater increases in teacher development and higher math and literacy achievement rates than schools with no or ineffective teacher collaboration (Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, & Grissom, 2015). Saunders, Goldenberg, & Gallimore (2009) found that the Title I schools that utilized teacher team collaboration focused on analyzing student data to drive instruction had a positive impact on student achievement, but teacher collaboration without a structured focus made no impact.

Developing strong teacher teams and a culture of collective leadership can support using student results to drive instruction that may lead to greater achievement (Dufour et al., 2016). Shared leadership in strong learning communities can support stronger teacher relationships, implementation of high-quality instructional practices, and higher student achievement (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010). Effective teacher collaboration work that is

focused on data-driven instruction helps teachers identify how assessment will be utilized to drive instruction and craft the specific reteaching plans to support greater student achievement (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2019). Strong teacher teams may also be considered the strongest teacher development method according to many teachers and support teachers remaining in the profession altogether (Dufour & Mattos, 2013).

In order to change the culture of a school, a school leader must take the long view of the school turnaround effort, and this ability to maintain an eye on the distant future is essential despite the simultaneous need for urgent results (Meyers & Smylie, 2017). Leaders of turnaround schools must change the culture by challenging current beliefs and establishing new values such as all school members taking responsibility for what students learn, understanding the need for schools at different levels within the same system to collaborate, and developing a deep level of trust within the school (Leithwood et al., 2010). Often, a school leader may use teacher collaboration structures to support building a culture of accountability and responsibility (Dufour & Mattos, 2013). Similarly, Duke (2015) stated, "Schools that value continuous improvement, collective accountability, collaboration, coherence, and caring are more likely to sustain gains in student achievement" (p. 179). Ultimately, the culture of a school is determined by the leadership and staff and the level of trust and responsibility they feel toward each other, the students, and the community (Herman, 2012; Okilwa & Barnett, 2017). Therefore, teacher collaboration may be an essential component of long-term teacher development to support school improvement efforts.

The lesson study method is another common form of teacher collaboration across schools. Lesson study is a collaborative process in which teachers study a topic and create a student learning goal, develop a lesson to support student learning, observe the instruction of one

group member, and discuss the effectiveness of the lesson by focusing on student outcomes (Akiba et al., 2019). Lesson study can support the establishment of an environment for quality teacher learning if the lesson study is designed to include teacher cooperation and instructional practice (Mayrhofer, 2019). Most collaborative teams can take significant time to develop the necessary norms and traits to make a positive impact, but lesson study can support deep, instruction-based conversations among teachers and have a sustained positive impact on instruction and student achievement (Wood & Smith, 2017).

Teacher collaboration is vital to a successful turnaround effort. Hitt and Meyers (2018) explained a necessary component for fostering sustained turnaround success is "structuring the organization to foster collaboration about teaching and learning" (p. 24). School leaders must be careful about overemphasizing team development and collaboration. Too much collaboration between teachers can also have the adverse effect of spawning conformity instead of growth and lead to a new status quo where teachers no longer willingly challenge each other because of an erroneous understanding of loyalty (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Therefore, a balanced amount of teacher collaboration tied to a strong vision of improvement for all can yield the best results in teacher development.

Conclusion

Three crucial aspects of instructional leadership in school turnaround efforts are accounting for the need for building teacher skills and efficacy, creating the proper conditions for teacher development, and focusing on specific and aligned means to drive teacher development. Methods of professional development sessions and teacher coaching are effective if the efforts are high quality. School leaders should focus professional development sessions for a long period of time on targeted content with active learning opportunities and follow up. Quick,

sustained teacher improvement can result from teacher coaching utilized in tandem with professional development consisting of regular face-to-face feedback with targeted and practiced next steps (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2018). The essential elements of regular feedback with next steps when associated with a strong school vision and goals can provide a valuable framework and strategy for significant teacher growth (Duke, 2015).

Overall, there are numerous difficulties in deciphering the evidence as to what makes an effective teacher development program for school turnaround efforts. Teacher development may be site- and person-specific and require evaluation at a site level to judge development efforts (Jacob & McGovern, 2015). Most school leaders, however, tend to use a uniform standard for teacher growth and reallocate resources based on the results achieved by each activity without proper regard to school context and needs (Jacob & McGovern, 2015). Specifically, in turnaround contexts leaders must use teacher development efforts to "be responsive to the peculiarities of the organizational environment of the individual schools and districts" (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010, p. 92).

Similarly, principals vary greatly in not only the types of instructional leadership activities they focus on but also the tactics used in implementation. For example, most schools employ classroom walk-throughs as a key instructional leadership strategy, but walk-through practices vary in implementation (Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2014; Feeney, 2014; Protheroe, 2009). The wide variance in how principals enact teacher development strategies means there may be little to no consistency in how principal activities predict student performance (May et al., 2012).

Overall, the literature on school turnaround leadership is sparse (Hitt & Meyers, 2018). Feldhoff, Radisch, and Bischof (2016) explained that most studies of school turnaround efforts

did not effectively identify the improvement strategies utilized or link improvement strategies to longitudinal student outcomes. The results of school turnaround studies reported in the literature do support the idea that principals must promote and participate in teacher learning (Cosner & Jones, 2016). Further research is needed to examine more specifically how instructional leaders effect teaching and learning overall (Neumerski, 2012). Similarly, Neumerski (2012) identified an even greater need to study how school leaders can best support the quick growth of teachers in service of students in the context of school turnaround efforts. Therefore, existing literature does not provide clear guidance on the strategies and tactics to best supporting high quality of teacher development. As a result, turnaround schools will continue to languish as a result of failed efforts to successfully improve teachers' skillset and create better instruction for all students.

III. METHODOLOGY

Introduction and Problem Statement

Chapter III contains a presentation of the methodology utilized in the study of school leader views of teacher development strategy in low-performing schools showing initial increases in student outcomes. The chapter contains a description of a review of the current basis for the study and the methodology of the study itself. Then, the chapter includes an explanation of context as to the landscape of school turnaround and teacher development within the host state. A description of the participants, the validity and reliability of the instruments utilized, and the procedures for the study is also presented in the chapter. Finally, the chapter concludes with an explanation of the data analysis procedures for each research question guiding the study.

Description of Methodology

Design and Focus

The study was quantitative and non-experimental by design, featuring a survey research approach in addressing the study's topic. The study was designed to explore the types of teacher development methods that school principals believe supported promising school turnaround and improvement efforts in low-performing schools. In the study, specific focus was placed upon schools that demonstrated initial success in raising student achievement and surveyed the school

leaders' beliefs as to which teacher development strategies supported the school improvement efforts.

Research Context

The primary contextual element of the study was a single host state located in the Western United States during the 2019-20 school year. The study included school principals as participants from schools across multiple school districts across the state. None of the participants or their school or district of record were recorded or named in the study to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

The host state, like many states, had state accountability measures in place for many years prior to the study (Colorado State Board of Education, 2019). Accountability measures had shifted over the years due to changes in law and policy at the state and federal level. Current state school accountability is based on the Education Accountability Act of 2009, more commonly referred to as SB163 (Colorado State Board of Education, 2019). SB163 set the rules and regulations for how schools and districts will be held accountable for student achievement results and the consequences for failing to do so. Under SB163, the state accredits school districts and provides a plan type to schools based on the school's performance (Colorado State Board of Education, 2019).

The ratings and plan types the schools receive are based on how each school scores on the state's performance frameworks. The performance frameworks evaluate schools based on student performance in three categories: academic achievement, academic growth, and post-secondary and workforce readiness (Colorado Department of Education, 2018). State assessment data in both student growth and achievement along with post-secondary and workforce readiness measures such as graduation and dropout rates are disaggregated by each

subgroup identified under federal law (Colorado Department of Education, 2018). How schools and districts score relative to set benchmarks in each category determines their accreditation or plan type. Any school or district that earns one of the two lowest ratings in the system for five consecutive years must initiate a significant structural reform by the State Board of Education. The significant actions available to the State Board include closing the school, converting the school to a charter school, identifying an external management agency, developing an innovation plan, or reorganizing the district (Colorado State Board of Education, 2019).

State accountability law as established by SB163 in 2009 was clarified by a law passed in 2018 (Colorado Department of Education, 2019a). The change in law in 2018 defined a school being on performance watch as one that exhibited low performance for two consecutive years. Low performance is determined by a school performance framework rating in the lowest two categories of priority improvement or turnaround (Colorado Department of Education, 2019a).

Participants

Teacher development methods utilized by promising turnaround schools represented the criteria established for identifying schools that have shown initial success. The researcher then utilized available state assessment and accountability data to identify public K-12 schools within the host state that meet the following criteria: (a) served a student population of majority students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, (b) previously received multiple years of low ratings on the host state's accountability framework between 2016 and 2018 indicating pervasive low performance, and (c) subsequently increased their accountability rating on the state's accountability framework to be considered no longer low-performing by 2019.

Study participants were current K-12 school principals of schools that were identified through analysis of publicly available school performance data in the host state. The host state

had a total of 1,843 K-12 public schools that are measured by the state's accountability system at the time the study was conducted. Of all 1,843 public schools in the host state, 348 schools were identified as low performing at some point between 2016 and 2018. Of the 348 schools which had been identified as low-performing, 89 schools showed increased student performance on the state school performance framework and were no longer considered low-performing by the 2019 school performance framework. Of those 89 schools, 84 schools served a student population with most students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch. Of those 84 schools, 78 schools had principals who had served in leadership at the school for at least two years. The school principals of the 78 schools which met all criteria were invited by email to participate in the survey. A total number of 37 principals opted to participate in the study by completing the survey. No identifying information about the participating principals was gathered.

Research questions

The research questions formally posed to address the dissertation's topic and problem statement were as follows:

1. Overall, do study participants perceive teacher development efforts to have been effective in fostering a successful school turnaround effort?
2. Overall, do study participants perceive teacher development as a key focus of the school's turnaround efforts?
3. Considering the five identified teacher development strategies, which strategy of teacher development activity reflected the greatest degree of effect regarding the notion that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school improvement efforts?

4. Considering the five identified teacher development strategies in the study, which strategy manifested the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with the notion that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school turnaround efforts?
5. Considering the five identified teacher development strategies in the study, which strategy manifested the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with the notion that teacher development efforts were a key focus of the school's turnaround efforts?
6. Considering the elements within each of the five teacher development strategies, which element was most associated with study participant perception that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school turnaround effort?

Instrumentation

The study's research instrument was a researcher-created survey. As such, the validation of the research instrument involved two distinct phases. The *a priori* judgment phase of the establishment of the survey instrument's content validity was executed through a content analysis of the existing literature associated with elements that characterize school improvement. Research consulted in formulating the study was completed by subject matter experts within the specific area of school improvement and teacher development working in research institutions or leading work in the field. The subject matter experts' agreed-upon prominent themes associated with school improvement were translated into homogeneous response survey items that represented the study's research instrument.

The study's research instrument was a Likert-type survey utilizing a five-point scale. The survey consisted of Likert scale items regarding the focus, type, characteristics, and effectiveness

of teacher development efforts. Two items were designed to elicit responses from participants regarding the overall perceived effect and focus of teacher development efforts. The remainder of the survey consisted of six items that were developed to produce responses from participants regarding the characteristics of five main teacher development strategies: professional development workshops, teacher collaboration, teacher coaching cycles, teacher evaluation, and classroom walk-throughs. The six items were identical for each of the five identified types of teacher development. Each of the six items was designed to gauge aspects of how different teacher development strategies were employed by the school. The specific items targeted the following aspects of the teacher development strategies: (1) frequency of occurrence, (2) use as a primary driver for school improvement, (3) utility in changing teacher belief in the school improvement efforts, (4) differentiation of implementation based on teacher needs, (5) alignment to the school's improvement plan, and (6) impact in supporting the school's improvement efforts (see Appendix).

The *posteriori* phase of research instrument validation was conducted via statistical analysis using Cronbach's alpha α once study data were collected. An overall evaluation of alpha was conducted for the data set, as well as for the individual domains associated with school improvement.

Procedures

The procedures of the study included two parts. First, publicly available school performance data in the host state were analyzed. The researcher used the performance data to identify schools that fit the criteria for the study. Following identification of schools, principals were contacted by email and invited to complete a survey on how teacher development strategies were utilized at their school.

Four factors were considered in determining which K-12 school principals were eligible to participate in the study and three of these factors were based on the school the principal led. First, the school had to have been considered pervasively low-performing by the host state's accountability system. Publicly available state assessment and state accountability data were compiled in order to identify schools that had been considered pervasively low-performing but had shown initial signs of successful school improvement or turnaround efforts. The host state's accountability definition of performance watch (Colorado State Board of Education, 2019) was utilized as the criteria to determine schools that were considered pervasively low-performing. Publicly available flat files of school performance frameworks from 2016 to 2018 (Colorado Department of Education, 2019b) were analyzed to identify all schools considered on performance watch.

The final factor considered in determining eligibility of participation was the length of tenure of the school leader at the school. Only school principals who were at the school in a leadership capacity for at least two years were eligible to participate. The researcher believed that new school principals in their first year at the school would not have the knowledge and insight into the teacher development strategies utilized to show or maintain student growth and proficiency. The host state's website was used to identify the principals who had been at the school during the 2018-2019 school year (Colorado Department of Education, 2019b). Individual school websites were used to determine principal tenure when the host state's information was missing. If the principal had not been in a position of leadership during the 2018-19 school year, or if it was not possible to determine if the principal had been at the school during the 2018-19 school year, the principal was considered ineligible for completing the survey.

The study was designed to elicit input from principals who lead pervasively low-performing schools showing initial improvement in student outcomes, and, therefore, data were analyzed to identify the schools on performance watch that had exhibited sufficient increase in student outcomes and were no longer be considered as low performing according to the host state's definition. The school performance frameworks of the subset of schools on performance watch were analyzed to identify the schools that had demonstrated enough improvement to exit performance watch and able to maintain the elevated status through the 2019 school performance frameworks. Schools that exhibited the level of improvement to receive plan types outside of the bottom two categories were no longer on performance watch and, therefore, no longer considered low-performing according to host state definition (Colorado State Board of Education, 2019).

Finally, the study was designed to focus upon schools that serve a population consisting mostly of students in poverty. The researcher decided to focus on schools serving mostly students in poverty because students in poverty constitute a major component of the achievement gap (Downey & Condron, 2016). Publicly available student demographic data from the host state's department of education database (Colorado Department of Education, 2019d) were utilized to identify the percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch in each school. Utilizing free and reduced-price lunch data is a common proxy measure for poverty in public school research since household income data are not readily available (Murphy & Bleiberg, 2019). Schools comprised of a majority of students who qualified for free or reduced-price lunch were regarded as schools serving communities of poverty and therefore eligible for participation in the study. Therefore, all schools that met the three criteria of (a) identified as low-performing by obtaining performance watch status from 2016 to 2018, (b) subsequently

exiting performance watch according to the host state's accountability system, and (c) serving a student population where the majority of students are considered to be living in poverty were identified as part of the cohort for the proposed study.

Upon identifying the list of qualifying schools for the study, the names and email addresses of the principal of each school were obtained from publicly available school improvement plans through the host state's website (Colorado Department of Education, 2019c). School principals of the identified schools were then contacted via email and invited to participate in the research study. The email included an introductory letter explaining the study and a link to the electronic survey. School leaders who agreed to participate in the study were able to electronically submit their consent at the beginning of the survey and complete the survey online anonymously with no personally identifiable information provided. The survey consisted items measured with a Likert scale and open-ended questions (see Appendix).

School leaders who agreed to participate in the study completed and submitted the online survey. The initial page of the survey included a question asking for official consent to participate in the study. Participants who consented by indicating "yes" were directed to a page to complete the survey. Participants who did not consent and marked "no" were directed to close their browser and did not receive access to the survey. The survey was housed on an online platform with all results populating an online spreadsheet that was accessed only by the researcher. No personally identifiable information of any participants was collected through the survey.

Data Analysis

Analyses of a foundational nature were conducted in advance of the analysis of research questions posed in the study. Specific analyses conducted were evaluations of missing data and internal consistency (reliability) of participant response.

Missing data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Specifically, frequency counts (*f*) and percentages (%) were utilized for initial illustrative and comparative purposes. The randomness of missing data was assessed using Little's MCAR test statistic. An MCAR value of $p > .05$ was considered indicative of sufficient randomness of missing data.

Internal consistency (reliability) of participant response to the survey instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α). The statistical significance of α was evaluated through the application of an *F*-Test. *F* values of $p < .05$ were considered statistically significant.

The study's essential demographic information was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Specifically, frequency counts (*f*) and percentages (%) represented the primary descriptive techniques utilized for illustrative purposes.

Research questions. The study's research questions were addressed broadly using a variety of descriptive, associative/predictive, and inferential statistical techniques. Frequency counts (*f*), percentages (%), measures of central tendency (mean scores), and variability (standard deviations) represented the primary descriptive statistical techniques that were used to address the six formally posed research questions.

In research questions one through three, the one sample *t* test was used to assess the statistical significance of participant response in the question. The alpha level of $p < .05$ represented the threshold for statistical significance of finding. Cohen's *d* was used to assess the

magnitude of effect (effect size). Cohen's parameters of interpretation of effect sizes were employed for comparative purposes.

Research Questions four through six were associative. As such, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient test statistic was used to assess the mathematical relationships representing the focus of each research question. The analysis, interpretation, and reporting of study findings were conducted using IBM's 26th version of the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS).

Summary

Chapter III of the study contained a presentation of the procedure for the quantitative study of principal views of teacher development strategies in low-performing schools showing initial increases in student outcomes. The context for the research was described. The process and rationale for participant selection was detailed with a description of the study's instrumentation. The procedures for procuring and analyzing data to determine eligible participation were presented along with the procedures for disseminating the quantitative survey and obtaining results. The chapter concluded with an explanation of data analysis procedures for each research question.

IV. RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to examine the types of teacher development methods that school principals perceive to be supportive of promising school turnaround efforts in order to provide further guidance for school and district leaders in school turnaround settings to make more informed decisions as to how to develop their teachers and improve instruction and outcomes for underperforming students. Six research questions were formally posed to address the study's topic. The study's topic and research problem were addressed through a non-experimental, quantitative research design, using a survey research approach. Descriptive, inferential, and associative statistical techniques were used to address to address preliminary analyses, and the study's six research questions.

Preliminary Analyses

Prior to analyzing the data of the study in order to answer each research question, various preliminary analyses were completed. Participant response and completion rates were studied in order to examine the general viability of the resulting data. Internal reliability was then investigated. Finally, participants' responses to questions regarding the frequency of use of each teacher development strategy were explored to provide context to the subsequent responses in the survey.

Participant Response/Completion Rate

The response rate achieved in the study was 48.7% (n = 37), a figure well beyond the 10% to 15% customarily achieved through external surveying, and the 25% level generally achieved through surveying via email. The study's participant completion rate of survey items represented on the research instrument was 100%, which is a much higher rate than the customary completion rate of 78.6%.

Internal Reliability of Study Participant Response

The internal reliability of study participant response to survey items on the research instrument was assessed using the Cronbach's alpha (a) statistical technique. The overall alpha level achieved through participant response to the study's essential data arrays was a = .88, a level widely considered to be excellent (Field, 2018). Internal reliability values for study participant response to survey items within the five teacher development strategies ranged from a = .78 (Professional Development) to a = .92 (Coaching Cycles).

Table 1 contains a summary of finding for the internal reliability of study participant response to teacher development strategy survey items represented on the research instrument.

Table 1

Internal Reliability Levels by Teacher Development Strategy

Teacher Development Strategy	*n*	*a*
Professional Development	37	.78
Coaching Cycles	37	.92
Collaboration	37	.86
Evaluation	37	.89
Walk-Throughs	37	.91
Overall	37	.88

Frequency of Teacher Development Strategies

Study participants were asked to indicate the frequency of implementation of each of the five teacher development strategies within seven specific categories. The categories of implementation ranged in extremes from Never to More than on a Weekly Basis.

Table 2 contains a summary of finding for participant response regarding implementation frequency of the five teacher development strategies using the seven prescribed categories of implementation.

Table 2

Frequency (%) of Implementation of Teacher Development Strategies by Category of Frequency

Category	PD	Coaching	Collaboration	Evaluation	Walk-Throughs
Never	0%	0%	0%	0%	3.8%
Semi-Annual	0%	0%	0%	15.4%	0%
Quarterly	0%	23.1%	0%	38.5%	0%
Monthly	23.1%	3.8%	3.8%	19.2%	7.7%
Bi-Weekly	19.2%	26.9%	3.8%	19.2%	42.3%
Weekly	50.0%	38.5%	53.8%	0%	23.1%
>Weekly	7.7%	7.7%	38.5%	7.7%	23.1%

Greatest Response Effects Within Teacher Development Strategies

Using the one sample *t*-test and the Cohen's *d* statistical techniques, the statistical significance and magnitude of effect (effect size) of study participant mean responses for each element of the study's five teacher development strategies were assessed. As a result, the greatest degree of effect for participant response for elements within the five teacher development strategies are presented in Table 3 for illustrative and comparative purposes.

Table 3

Response Effect for Elements within Teacher Development Strategies

Strategy (Element)	*n*	Mean	*SD*	*t*	*d*
Professional Development (Narrow Priorities)	37	3.97	1.09	5.42***	.89[c]
Coaching Cycles (Impactful)	37	4.19	0.84	8.57***	1.42[b]
Collaboration (Impactful)	37	4.46	0.69	12.85***	2.12[a]
Evaluations (Impactful)	37	3.35	1.01	2.12*	.35
Walk-Throughs (Impactful)	37	4.35	0.79	10.41***	1.71[b]

*$p = .04$ ***$p < .001$ [a] Huge Effect ($d \geq 2.00$) [b] Very Large Effect ($d \geq 1.20$) [c] Large Effect ($d \geq .80$)

Findings by Research Question

After completing preliminary analyses, the researcher examined the data from the study to answer the six posed research questions. In the following section, the findings from the study relating to each posed research question are explained.

Research Question 1: Overall, do study participants perceive teacher development efforts to have been effectual in fostering a successful school turnaround effort?

The one sample *t*-test was used to assess the statistical significance of finding for research question one. As a result, the mean score of 4.57 ($SD = 0.50$) for participant response to research question one was manifested at a statistically significant level ($t_{(36)} = 18.99$; $p < .001$). The Cohen's *d* statistical technique was used to assess the magnitude of effect for participant response within research question one. As a result, using Sawilowsky's (2009) conventions of

effect size interpretation, the magnitude of effect of participant response for research question one was considered huge ($d = 3.14$).

H_0 1: There will be no statistically significant effect for study participant perception that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering a successful school turnaround effort. In light of the statistically significant finding for study participant perception that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering a successful school turnaround effort the null hypothesis in research question one was rejected.

Research Question 2: Overall, do study participants perceive teacher development as a key focus of the school's turnaround efforts?

The one sample *t*-test was used to assess the statistical significance of finding for research question two. As a result, the mean score of 4.68 ($SD = 0.47$) for participant response to research question one was manifested at a statistically significant level ($t_{(36)} = 21.48$; $p < .001$). The Cohen's *d* statistical technique was used to assess the magnitude of effect for participant response. As a result, using Sawilowsky's (2009) conventions of effect size interpretation, the magnitude of effect of participant response to research question one was considered huge ($d = 3.57$).

H_0 2: There will be no statistically significant effect for study participant perception that teacher development efforts represent a key focus in fostering a successful school turnaround effort. In light of the statistically significant finding for study participant perception that teacher development efforts have represented a key focus in fostering successful school turnaround efforts, the null hypothesis in research question two was rejected.

Research Question 3: Considering the five identified teacher development strategies, which strategy of teacher development activity reflected the greatest degree of effect regarding the notion that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school improvement efforts?

Using the one sample *t*-test and the Cohen's *d* statistical techniques respectively, the statistical significance and magnitude of effect (effect size) of participant response for each of the study's five teacher development strategies were assessed. As a result, the single greatest degree of effect for participant response within the five teacher development strategies was manifested in the strategy of Collaboration. The teacher development strategy of Evaluations manifested a statistically significant, small to medium inverse effect for study participant response.

Table 4 contains a summary of finding for the evaluation and magnitude of effect comparison of the study's five teacher development strategies.

Table 4

Comparison of Teacher Development Strategies

Strategy	*n*	Mean	*SD*	*t*	*d*
Professional Development	37	3.68	1.00	4.10***	.68
Coaching Cycles	37	4.03	0.87	7.22***	1.18[c]
Collaboration	37	4.46	0.65	13.67***	2.25[a]
Evaluations	37	2.68	0.94	-2.09*	-.34
Walk-Throughs	37	4.16	0.90	7.87***	1.29[b]

*$p = .04$ ***$p < .001$ [a] Huge Effect ($d \geq 2.00$) [b] Very Large Effect ($d \geq 1.20$) [c] Large Effect ($d \geq .80$)

H_a 3: The strategy of Collaboration within teacher development activities will reflect the greatest degree of effect regarding the notion that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school improvement efforts. In light of the finding favoring the teacher development strategy of Collaboration, the alternative hypothesis in research question three was retained.

Research Question 4: Considering the five identified teacher development strategies in the study, which strategy manifested the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with the notion that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school turnaround efforts?

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to assess the mathematical relationship between teacher development strategies and study participant perceptions of the efficacy of successful school turnaround efforts. As a result, the teacher development strategy of Classroom Walk-Throughs manifested the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with study participant perceptions of school turnaround efficacy, representing the only statistically significant correlate ($r = .34$; $p = .04$) and predictor of the five teaching development strategies, $\beta = 0.22$ (0.11); $p = .04$.

Table 5 contains a summary for the finding for the mathematical relationship between teacher development strategies and study participant perceptions of the efficacy of school turnaround efforts.

Table 5

Mathematical Relationships: Teacher Development Strategies and Perceived Efficacy of School Turnaround Efforts

Strategy	*n*	*r*	*p*
Professional Development	37	.13	.46
Coaching Cycles	37	.14	.42
Collaboration	37	.12	.49
Evaluations	37	-.06	.71
Walk-Throughs	37	.34	.04*

*$p < .05$

H_a 4: Considering the five identified teacher development strategies in the study, the strategy of Collaboration will manifest the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with the notion that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school turnaround effort. In light of the finding favoring the teacher development strategy of Walk-Throughs, the alternative hypothesis in research question four was rejected.

Research Question 5: Considering the five identified teacher development strategies in the study, which strategy manifested the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with the notion that teacher development efforts were a key focus of the school's turnaround efforts?

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (*r*) was used to assess the mathematical relationship between teacher development strategies and study participant perceptions of the notion that the strategies were a key focus of school turnaround efforts. As a result, the teacher development strategy of Classroom Walk-Throughs manifested the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with study participant perceptions of the teacher

development strategies being the key focus of school turnaround, representing the only statistically significant correlate (r = .45; p = .005) and predictor of the five teaching development strategies, β =0.28 (0.09); p = .005.

Table 6 contains a summary for the finding for the mathematical relationship between teacher development strategies and study participant perceptions of the notion that the strategies were a key focus of school turnaround efforts.

Table 6

Mathematical Relationships: Teacher Development Strategies and Perceptions that Strategies as a Key Focus of School Turnaround Efforts

Strategy	*n*	*r*	*p*
Professional Development	37	.27	.11
Coaching Cycles	37	.20	.25
Collaboration	37	.14	.41
Evaluations	37	-.11	.52
Walk-Throughs	37	.45	.005**

**p < .01

H_0 5: Considering the five identified teacher development strategies in the study, the strategy of Collaboration will manifest the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with the notion that teacher development efforts have been a key focus in fostering successful school turnaround effort. In light of the finding favoring the teacher development strategy of Walk-Throughs, the alternative hypothesis in research question five was rejected.

Research Question 6: Considering the five identified teacher development strategies, which of the sub-components of the five strategies was most related to the overall perception of school improvement efficacy efforts?

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to assess the mathematical relationship between elements of the five teacher development strategies and study participant perceptions of the efficacy of successful school turnaround efforts. As a result, the element of Changing Beliefs within the teacher development strategy of Classroom Walk-Throughs manifested the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with study participant perceptions of school turnaround efficacy, representing a statistically significant correlate (r = .40; p = .01) and predictor, β =0.22 (0.08); p = .01 of study participant perceptions of teacher development efforts as having been effective in fostering successful school turnaround efforts.

Three additional elements within the study manifested statistically significant degrees of mathematical relationships with study participant perception that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school turnaround efforts. Two of the three additional elements manifesting statistically significant degrees of mathematical relationships with study participant perception that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school turnaround effort were identified with the domain of Classroom Walk-Throughs.

Table 7 contains a summary of elements most associated with study participant perception that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school turnaround effort.

Table 7

Statistically Significant Element/Domain Associations

Element (Domain)	*n*	*r*	*p*
Professional Development (Differentiated)	37	.34	.04*
Walk-Throughs (Changing Beliefs)	37	.40	.01**
Walk-Throughs (Narrow Priorities)	37	.34	.04*
Walk-Throughs (Impactful)	37	.32	.05*

*$p \leq .05$ **$p \leq .01$

H_a 6: The element of Impactful within the domain of Collaboration will be most associated with study participant perception that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school turnaround effort. In light of the finding favoring Changing Beliefs within the domain of Classroom Walk-Throughs, the alternative hypothesis in research question six was rejected.

V. DISCUSSION

Brief Summary/Statement of the Problem

In this study, the researcher considered the teacher development strategies used by school leaders who recently led low-performing schools through initially successful turnaround and improvement efforts. The study was designed to determine how school leaders perceived the effectiveness of various teacher development strategies in supporting the turnaround and school improvement efforts at their schools. This chapter contains a discussion of the findings of this study. The chapter begins with a review of the methodology of the study. The chapter then includes a summary of the results. The chapter continues with a discussion by each research question. Finally, the chapter concludes with an explanation of the study's limitations, implications for professional practice, and recommendations for future research.

Review of Methodology

The study occurred during the spring semester of the 2019-2020 school year in one state. The researcher identified schools that had undergone initially promising school turnaround efforts. The publicly available school performance results and ratings for every public school in the state were analyzed to determine the schools with previously low-performing student outcomes that had student performance results indicating initial signs of school turnaround and improvement. The researcher then used publicly available email addresses to reach the leaders

of the identified schools and invited them via email to participate in the survey. The instrument used in the study was a researcher-designed quantitative survey. The survey consisted of 32 questions designed to gauge school leaders' perceptions of the use and effect of different teacher development strategies in their efforts to lead their schools out of low performance. The resulting participants' responses were then analyzed to answer each of the six posed research questions.

Summary of Results

Discussion of Preliminary Analyses

Before analyzing the data from the study based on the identified research questions, a variety of preliminary analyses were completed. Participant response rates were calculated to assess the representative nature of the collected data. Then the researcher analyzed the internal reliability of participants' responses. Finally, the researcher evaluated two aspects of the data that were substantive but not part of answering the six framed research questions.

Response rate. A review of the responses of the study indicated a response rate above typical rates. The response rate for the survey was close to 50%, which is well above the average response rates for external surveys and surveys administered over email. A high response rate with an initial sample of 100% of the population meant a large portion of the population was represented in the study. A 100% completion rate among those who participated also supported a robust overall response rate with no missing or incomplete data. The 100% completion rate by study participants added to the credibility of the study's findings. The absence of missing data was a powerful and important feature of the study as it allowed for precise, accurate, and trustworthy interpretations of the responses themselves. All of these characteristics of the survey's response rate indicate a robust sample was used in the study.

Internal reliability. Similar to the response rate, the study's internal reliability was also strong. The level of internal reliability of study participants' responses to survey items was exceptional. The exceptional level of internal reliability validated the survey for use in the study. This high reliability further adds to the credibility of the use of the instrument in addressing the study's six research questions.

Frequency of teacher development activities. The overall focus of the study was on how school leaders used different teacher development strategies to support their school turnaround and improvement efforts. One main aspect of researching the use of teacher development strategies was to ask participants about the frequency of the use of each of the five main types of teacher development strategies. As identified in the second research question of the study, a major component involved in the study was to surmise how large of a focus was placed on teacher development in the school leaders' improvement and turnaround efforts. The frequency of implementation of various teacher development strategies was a foundational piece of evidence in identifying the level of focus and effort given to teacher development.

Overall, participants' responses weighted heavily toward a high frequency of teacher development activities across all school leaders in the study. The majority of respondents identified utilizing four of the five teacher development activities at least every two weeks, with many indicating using them weekly or more than weekly. The only type of activity that did not have a high level of frequency among participants was teacher evaluation. Teacher evaluation has been a significant focus of school improvement efforts over the last fifteen years, but the evidence of the impact of teacher evaluations on school improvement is limited (Hallinger et al., 2014). Teacher collaboration had the highest frequency of use in schools as indicated by school leader responses, with over 90% of respondents indicating that teachers collaborated officially at

least weekly. Teacher collaboration has become a commonly used teacher development strategy that some practitioners believe is key to school improvement success (Dufour & Mattos, 2013).

Greatest response effects within teacher development strategies. Within each of the five teacher development strategies, participants were asked a series of six questions pertaining to the characteristics and impact of each teacher development strategy. The teacher development strategies that were studied were professional development sessions, teacher collaboration, teacher coaching cycles, teacher evaluation, and classroom walk-throughs. Participants responded using a Likert scale to answer their level of agreement with the following six statements regarding each of the five teacher development strategies:

- The teacher development strategy was a primary driver in increasing teacher development through the school's improvement efforts.
- The frequency of the teacher development strategy was adequate and conducive to optimal teacher development.
- The teacher development strategy was effective in changing teacher attitudes and beliefs about the school's improvement efforts as shown by increased participation and implementation.
- The teacher development strategy was differentiated based on teacher needs to a satisfactory degree.
- The content of the teacher development strategy was focused on a narrow set of priorities aligned to the school's improvement plan.
- Specific instructional strategies addressed in the teacher development strategy were impactful in supporting the school's improvement efforts.

The researcher completed an analysis of the effect size of participant responses to each question for each teacher development strategy. The largest effect was found for the impact of the instructional strategies used for every teacher development strategy except professional development sessions. For professional development sessions, the largest effect was found for focusing on a narrow set of priorities. Similar to participants' responses regarding frequency of use of different strategies, the results indicated that the greatest effect was in the area of how the strategies impacted the school's improvement efforts. The impact of the strategies showing the largest effect size further underscores that teacher development was not only a focus of the school leaders' turnaround strategies but that teacher development was also impactful in supporting the schools' improvement and turnaround efforts.

Teacher coaching cycles, teacher collaboration, and classroom walk-throughs each had very large or huge effect sizes in response to how impactful these strategies were on the school's improvement and turnaround efforts. Teacher coaching has shown across studies to be a viable way to not only to improve teacher instruction, but also to increase student achievement as a result (Kraft et al., 2018). Similarly, schools with structured, high-functioning teacher collaboration systems in place have shown increases in student achievement due to the impact that collaboration can have on teachers' skill level in classroom instruction (Ronfeldt et al., 2015; Saunders et al., 2009). Classroom walk-throughs also showed a very large effect size for participants' perceptions of the impact of the strategy. Purposeful, targeted walk-throughs that are clearly aligned to the school's improvement strategies can have a valuable impact on a school's instructional program (David, 2008). Also, classroom walk-throughs are primarily conducted with school leaders as part of the team while many other teacher development strategies may or may not involve the school leader personally. The more a school leader

devotes time to instructional leadership, the greater the school leader's impact on student achievement (Goldring et al., 2015). Therefore, the belief of school leaders regarding the impact of classroom walk-throughs may be tied to their own personal involvement in the process.

The majority of the teacher development strategies were found to be focused on impactful instructional strategies that supported the school's improvement and turnaround efforts. Leaders of low-performing schools should focus teacher development efforts on high-impact instructional moves that make a difference in daily instruction. Teacher development efforts may only be effective if they are directly focused on instructional work that is highly effective in classrooms. Some researchers suggest the focus of these instructional strategies should be on math and literacy, including literacy embedded across content areas (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Meyers & Hitt, 2017). Other studies indicate that the focus of instructional improvement should be on supporting teachers to use student data to drive instruction and on raising instructional expectations for all students in all classrooms (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2018; Griffin & Green, 2013).

The outlier teacher development strategy that did not have the highest effect size related to the impact of the focal instructional strategies was professional development sessions. The greatest effect size for responses related to professional development sessions was in the area of focusing on narrow priorities. Professional development sessions have been a common strategy for teacher development across the country but with varying degrees of success (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Many researchers have found that the pitfalls of professional development sessions can often be a lack of coherence with the school's improvement efforts and the disconnect between the learning and teachers' daily classroom instruction (Chapman & Harris, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Targeted professional

development sessions that focus on a narrow set of priorities aligned to the school's plan could be an effective means of improving and developing teachers.

Discussion by Research Question

The study was designed to investigate school leaders' perceptions of teacher development efforts and the scope and impact of those teacher development efforts on their school improvement and turnaround efforts. In designing the study to examine school leaders' perceptions on teacher development efforts, six research questions were posed. These research questions were designed to focus the analysis of the results of the study and each question provided an opportunity for unique analyses of the data in order to ascertain greater understanding of how teacher development strategies were used by schools showing initial school improvement success.

Research Question 1

Overall, do study participants perceive teacher development efforts to have been effective in fostering a successful school turnaround effort?

The finding for research question one was very supportive of the idea that the teacher development efforts were perceived as being highly effective. The effect size for this finding was huge and statistically significant.

The findings in research question one validate the conclusions of current literature regarding the importance of teacher development as a key aspect of school improvement and turnaround efforts. If leaders did not find teacher development important, then the entire premise of the research study is invalidated and unimportant. The huge effect size associated with school

leaders' perception of the importance of teacher development to their initially successful turnaround efforts is a key point in line with current belief across the educational landscape.

Literature indicates that leaders of schools with student achievement data showing initial turnaround and improvement success focus their school improvement efforts on teacher development. The very existence of educational inequalities across schools in America may be directly related to the lack of teacher development in struggling schools (Trujillo & Scott, 2014). Literature on school improvement has long included conclusions pointing to school leadership as the second largest school factor to student success behind only the quality of teaching in the classroom (Leithwood & Day, 2008). Even though school leaders may use less than 13% of their own time on instructional leadership (Grissom et al., 2013), overall successful school improvement efforts often focus heavily on teacher development strategies (Calkins et al., 2007; Connecticut State Department of Education, 2018; Hitt & Meyers, 2017). Researchers have further claimed that school leaders are most effective in supporting student success in focusing on supporting and developing teachers to improve their instruction (Goldring et al., 2015).

This study provides further evidence toward the claims made by current research. The school leaders who participated in the survey were all leaders of schools that had shown increased student outcomes after years of low performance. These leaders strongly indicated teacher development efforts as a huge reason for increased student outcomes. This finding provides strong grounding for the other findings in this study. When analyzing data from participants' responses concerning the importance, focus, and other factors associated with each type of teacher development strategy, the results are undergirded by a strong belief that these strategies were effective in bringing about school improvement and turnaround.

Research Question 2

Overall, do study participants perceive teacher development as a key focus of the school's turnaround efforts?

Research question two was framed with a focus on taking the first research question a step further. Research question one was designed around studying whether leaders of schools showing promising turnaround and improvement efforts believed teacher development efforts were effective in supporting improved student outcomes. With leaders overwhelmingly responding that teacher development strategies were effective, then research question two is essential in checking whether or not school leaders focused their improvement efforts on these strategies as a core aspect of their improvement and turnaround efforts.

One takeaway from this finding is that the current focus of teacher development in school turnaround efforts is backed up by school leaders' perceptions of the work. Similar to how participants responded regarding research question one, participants strongly indicated that teacher development was a significant focus of their school improvement efforts with a huge magnitude of effect. This result also confirms the current literature findings on the subject. Many state and national organizations focused on school turnaround and improvement work have teacher development named as a central component of successful school reform efforts (Calkins et al., 2007; Colorado Department of Education, 2020; Connecticut State Department of Education, 2018; Hitt & Meyers, 2017).

In many cases, federal, state, and district education policy makers focus on reform efforts that prioritize systemic disruption as the primary means to accelerating student achievement (Meyers & Smylie, 2017). For decades, the federal government has incentivized states to increase accountability measures on schools and districts with chronic low-performance under

"the belief that reforming teaching and learning processes… would not be sufficient to produce swift and dramatic increases in student performance" (Zimmer, Henry & Kho, 2017, p. 670). As a result, school reform efforts by leaders at all levels focused on strategies such as state takeover of schools, school closure, school chartering, and other highly disruptive mechanisms to support dramatic shifts in schooling (Duke, 2016). This study did not focus on the efficacy of disruptive reform efforts in improving education outcomes for students in historically low-performing schools.

The school leader perceptions captured in this study, however, do show evidence that structural reform efforts without a focus on developing teachers is not the current practice of the initially successful school turnaround and improvement leaders in the study. Regardless of the school structure or system, school leaders who have produced success in school turnaround have focused on improving teaching and learning processes by increasing attention on developing teachers and improving teaching. Therefore, education leaders at all levels should ensure that teacher development strategies are core elements to any school turnaround and improvement efforts.

Research Question 3

Considering the five identified teacher development strategies, which strategy of teacher development activity reflected the greatest degree of effect regarding the notion that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school improvement efforts?

Overall, teacher development efforts were perceived by participating school leaders as very effective in supporting the schools' turnaround and improvement efforts. When analyzing the perceived effect of each type of teacher development strategy, more specific perceptions emerge in the data. Three of the five teacher development strategies were shown to have large

effects in the perceptions of the effectiveness of those strategies in supporting the schools' improvement and turnaround efforts. The three strategies with large effects were teacher collaboration, teacher coaching cycles, and classroom walk-throughs with teacher collaboration having the largest effect.

Multiple teacher development strategies being identified as effective by school leaders is unsurprising since various teacher development models and guidance are provided from both national literature and the host state's education department (Colorado Department of Education, 2015; Colorado Department of Education, 2020). In a recent study, Kuijpers, Houtveen, and van de Grift (2019) investigated the impact teacher development activities have on school improvement efforts. The effort to pair the two typically separate concepts was unique and the literature is sparse in attempting to study the correlation between the two processes (Kuijpers et al., 2019). Literature pertaining to the turnaround efforts of low-performing schools in general as well as specifically with teacher development activities is even more rare (Hitt & Meyers, 2018). Therefore, school leaders in school turnaround settings have used many different teacher development strategies and found many of them useful in their school improvement and turnaround efforts.

The teacher development strategy perceived to be most effective in supporting the turnaround efforts in low-performing schools was teacher collaboration. Teacher collaboration was also the most frequently utilized teacher development strategy in the study with greater than 90% of school leaders stating collaboration for teachers happened at least weekly. Because the study was based solely on school leader perception, it is possible that a prior conception of the effectiveness of teacher collaboration caused school leaders to prioritize its use more frequently. The presupposition of the positive effect of teacher collaboration could also be responsible for

school leaders' beliefs in the strong impact collaboration had on school turnaround and improvement efforts.

Literature does support the concept of teacher collaboration improving teacher effectiveness as well as the use of collaborative efforts in fostering successful school turnaround processes. Ronfeldt et al. (2015) found that teacher collaboration can support teacher development and student achievement. Teacher collaboration efforts in schools with a predominantly low-socioeconomic population of students can specifically be supported by strong teacher collaboration efforts if those efforts are focused narrowly on looking at student data to modify and enhance teachers' instruction on a regular basis (Saunders et al., 2009). In school improvement and turnaround settings, teacher collaboration has been found to be an effective way of building teacher buy-in to the turnaround process and supporting teachers' efficacy, accountability, and understanding of the coherence within the school turnaround efforts (Dufour & Mattos, 2013; Duke, 2015; Leithwood et al., 2010). In the study, school leaders' perceptions of the effectiveness of teacher collaboration efforts in supporting the success of their school turnaround and improvement efforts supports these claims in literature.

Contrary to the effect of teacher collaboration, teacher evaluation was found to have a small to medium negative effect in supporting school turnaround and improvement efforts. With the advent of Race to the Top by the federal government in 2009, teacher evaluation reform became a top priority for leaders of low-performing schools across the country as a means to support school improvement and turnaround efforts (Reinhorn et al., 2017). In a low-performing school, it is necessary for a school leader to prioritize teacher development over accountability (Reinhorn et al., 2017). Teacher evaluation typically tends to be focused on accountability as opposed to teacher collaboration and classroom walk-throughs. In the course of implementing

new, reformed teacher evaluations, the focus of evaluations shifted to be less on accountability and more on development through increased frequency of observation, a focus on feedback, and the use of student data (Donaldson, 2016).

The shifting of teacher evaluation into a more developmental focus has been met with positive reactions from teachers, but there has been fear of the inability of school leaders to successfully utilize teacher evaluation in these new ways (Donaldson, 2016). It is unclear how school leaders in the study utilized teacher evaluation, but based on the data from the study, school leaders did not find that their current use of teacher evaluation was effective in supporting teacher development or school improvement. Rather than focusing on using teacher evaluation as a teacher development strategy, in a school turnaround setting, evaluation may be more valuable as a means to "prioritize removing teachers who refuse to commit to the new shared vision" (Meyers & Hitt, 2017, p. 47).

Research Question 4

Considering the five identified teacher development strategies in the study, which strategy manifested the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with the notion that teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school turnaround efforts?

Although the third research question was posed to study the effect school leaders perceived various teacher development strategies had on their school turnaround and improvement efforts, the fourth research question was designed to study the actual correlation between the two concepts. The participating school leaders viewed teacher collaboration as having the largest effect on school turnaround efforts, but the teacher development strategy with the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with school leaders' perceptions of effective school turnaround efforts was classroom walk-throughs. Classroom walk-throughs were the only

teacher development strategy that was statistically significant correlated to effective school turnaround efforts.

The finding of classroom walk-throughs being the only teacher development strategy that was statistically predictive of school leaders' perceptions of being effective in supporting school turnaround efforts is a finding with large implications. In general, literature on teacher development consists of scores of studies on a variety of topics associated with the other four teacher development strategies from this study, but very few studies in current literature are associated with classroom walk-throughs. Any discussion of the use of classroom walk-throughs specifically to support school turnaround efforts is virtually non-existent.

One possible reason for the lack of literature regarding classroom walk-throughs is because of the significant variation of design, implementation, and rationale of execution of classroom walk-throughs practiced by school and district leaders across the country (David, 2008). Even the terminology used for classroom walk-throughs varies considerably including terms such as learning walks, quick visits, and data walks (David, 2008). Despite the differences in terminology and use, the study's survey included a specific definition of classroom walk-throughs. Classroom walk-throughs were defined in the survey as "systematic, structured, brief and routine observations of classrooms that are non-evaluative. Classroom walk-throughs have a clear focus on learning about teaching and learning within a school and involve a collaborative reflection with a focus on next steps." (Swanson, 2020, p. 11)

School leaders may perceive classroom walk-throughs as highly effective in supporting school turnaround and improvement efforts because classroom walk-throughs allow school leaders to informally assess implementation of the school improvement plan, evaluate teacher effectiveness, establish specific next steps for teachers, and establish a collaborative team

approach to improvement while completing the walk-throughs with teachers and other support personnel (Protheroe, 2009). Though not inherently the same as teacher collaboration techniques, walk-throughs typically have a highly collaborative approach (Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2014; Feeney, 2014; Protheroe, 2009). Because teacher collaboration was identified as the most effective teacher development strategy by school leaders, it is likely that the collaborative approach to classroom walk-throughs was a strong characteristic that supported the predictive nature of the use of walk-throughs being tied to perception of school turnaround and improvement efficacy.

Research Question 5

Considering the five identified teacher development strategies in the study, which strategy manifested the greatest degree of mathematical relationship with the notion that teacher development efforts were a key focus of the school's turnaround efforts?

The fourth research question was formulated in order to analyze the correlation between various teacher development strategies and school leaders' perceptions of their support of school turnaround and improvement efficacy. The fifth research question was designed to identify the correlation between the use of different teacher development strategies and whether or not teacher development was a key focus of the improvement and turnaround efforts at the school. The only teacher development strategy that showed a statistically significant correlation with teacher development as a key focus of school improvement efforts was the strategy of using classroom walk-throughs. As mentioned in the discussion of research question five, the literature regarding classroom walk-throughs is sparse and does not include any specific research about the use of classroom walk-throughs as a major component of teacher development or school turnaround efforts.

The stated use of classroom walk-throughs in literature may provide some evidence as to why school leaders viewed the strategy as an essential component to their school turnaround and improvement efforts. Allen and Topolka-Jorissen (2014), David (2008), Feeney (2014), and Protheroe (2009) all discuss that classroom walk-throughs provide opportunities for teacher collaboration, the inspection of implementation of the school plan by school leaders, and the opportunity for school leaders to be a visible part of the teaching and learning within a school. A unique collaborative aspect of the classroom walk-through is that it allows teachers to not only discuss instructional techniques and co-plan with each other, but classroom walk-throughs offer teachers the opportunity to observe each other and learn from each other's practice as it is executed in the classroom (Feeney, 2014).

Classroom walk-throughs also provide a routine occasion for school leaders to observe classrooms and study the entire school instructional system as opposed to evaluating single classrooms as is typically the case with teacher evaluation and coaching (Protheroe, 2009). In a school turnaround setting, leaders tend to be viewed as effective when they are able to complete 20 to 60 quick, informal classroom visits per week (Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms, 2012). Classroom walk-throughs provide a systematic, structured protocol for quick classroom visits for leaders.

A school leader's ability to observe and direct the school's entire instructional system is uniquely important in a turnaround setting. In school turnaround work, a successful school leader is one who establishes clear expectations for all teachers aligned to the school's instructional vision (Chapman & Harris, 2004). The instructional vision of the principal must permeate coherently through all classrooms in order to bring about the necessary changes at all levels of the school (Duke, 2015). Therefore, a focus on classroom walk-throughs may be

predictive as a focus on teacher development within successful school turnaround efforts since classroom walk-throughs uniquely blend teacher collaboration, assessment of the school instructional system, and increased visibility of school leaders in classrooms.

Research Question 6

Considering the five identified teacher development strategies, which of the sub-components of the five strategies was most related to the overall perception of school improvement efficacy efforts?

In the study, participants were asked a variety of questions about each teacher development strategy. Four specific elements were found to be statistically significant in their relationship with fostering effective school turnaround efforts according to participant perception. Of the four statistically significant characteristics, three were associated with classroom walk-throughs and one with professional development sessions.

In classroom walk-throughs, statistical significance was shown in the mathematical relationship between school turnaround efficacy and the following indicators:

- Classroom walk-throughs were effective in changing teacher attitudes and beliefs about the school's improvement efforts as shown by increased participation and implementation.
- Classroom walk-throughs were focused on a narrow set of priorities aligned to the school's improvement plan.
- Specific instructional strategies addressed in classroom walk-throughs were impactful in supporting the school's improvement efforts.

A major area of focus necessary for successful school turnaround and improvement efforts must be establishing a strong teacher culture through collaboration (Leithwood et al., 2010). Often, the influence of fellow teachers through collaboration can change the beliefs of many teachers in the building (Supovitz et al., 2010). Many schools use a collaborative protocol and reflection with teachers as part of the classroom walk-through process (Feeney, 2014) which could aid in the changing of teacher beliefs toward the school's improvement efforts. Teachers may also feel less professional isolation if they are involved in classroom walk-throughs due to the collaborative nature of the work (Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2014). Strong classroom walk-through protocols can also support school improvement efforts by narrowing the focus of the walk-throughs to the critical components of the school's instructional vision (Feeney, 2014). In many ways, well-executed classroom walk-throughs can provide a variety of helpful supports to a school leader's efforts at school improvement by supporting collaboration among teachers, giving a routine way for leaders to focus on teacher development instead of accountability, and helping all teachers and leaders focus on a narrow set of high-impact instructional strategies in alignment with the school's plan.

An element of professional development sessions that was also shown to be statistically significant was in participant responses to the statement "professional development sessions were differentiated to a satisfactory degree" (See Appendix). This finding corresponds with one of the major flaws associated with professional development sessions. Often, professional development sessions are maligned as being too generic or standardized and are not tailored enough to teachers' needs to be able to be implemented in the classroom (Chapman & Harris, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Kennedy, 2016). On the contrary, "good leaders know they cannot expect improvement from one-size-fits-all solutions to professional learning for

teachers" (Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms, 2012, p. 10). Effective school leaders in turnaround settings must be able to identify necessary areas of growth for not only the whole school but each individual teacher and utilize both accountability and support to ensure that all teachers are improving their instructional expertise (Meyers & Hitt, 2017). By satisfactorily differentiating professional development sessions, school leaders can ensure that all teachers are receiving necessary training to support their instruction and develop as teachers.

Study Limitations

The generalizability and usability of the study are limited by several factors. First, the number of school leaders who met the criteria for the study and who agreed to answer the survey limited the resulting analyses and conclusions. The initial sampling attempted to engage all school leaders within the host state that met the requirements stated above. The end result of the survey was more of a sample of convenience as a little over 50% of the eligible school leaders opted out of participation. When accounting for all the factors required to meet the criteria for the study, only 78 school leaders were eligible to participate and 37 eligible school leaders agreed to participate in the study. Although the 37 leaders who participated represent a 47% participation rate, the number itself is low enough to cause limitations in the generalizability and strength of the conclusions of the study. Similarly, the types of schools that were identified as eligible to participate were not proportionate in characteristics to the schools across the state. Due to the anonymous nature of the study, it is unknown if schools had had similar factors that contribute to the results such as location type, grade levels served, relative size, or student population. The number of school leaders who agreed to participate, however, did provide for validity of the study.

The study may have limitations in generalizability across all schools, because the study took place in one state as opposed to a sample of schools across the country. Because the data utilized to determine the strength of student growth and achievement at the schools were solely based on the host state's assessments and post-secondary readiness standards, these data may differ from the data used in other states and may lead to results that are less generalizable. Also, utilizing state assessment outcomes to identify promising school turnaround efforts may not always identify schools that are making genuine student achievement gains as single test scores may not indicate true student learning (Koretz, 2017).

Data analysis for the study itself relied on school leader perception. School leaders' perceptions of what strategies are working, how teachers are developing, and precisely how strategies are utilized at the school are dependent on the leaders' abilities to accurately perceive these realities. Also, because the study focused only on the teacher development strategies utilized by schools showing successful gains in school improvement, the study showed correlation but not causality. No comparative study of the teacher development techniques of schools failing to make similar progress was conducted.

Finally, and unexpectedly, the timing of the survey could be a factor in limited school leader engagement and subsequent results. The survey was administered in April and May of 2020, just weeks after the host state's governor declared an executive order that forced all schools in the state to cease in-person learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The massive shift this order caused to all leaders who were eligible to participate in the study could have had unique effects on the study's results. Some leaders who would have otherwise participated during a more normative school setting may not have participated, and it is unclear if the drastic

change in school environment during the period of the survey's administration skewed participants' perceptions and responses.

Implications for Professional Practice

From this study and current literature, there are multiple implications for professional practice at the state, district, and school level. One major implication is that this study further confirms that teacher development needs to be a major focus area of any school's improvement and turnaround plan. School leaders overwhelmingly indicated that teacher development was a priority of their work in turning around their schools and that by and large, that work was effective in supporting the success of their turnaround and improvement efforts. Although large-scale structural reforms such as school closure, change of school models, and complete staff turnover are still large components of state and district turnaround strategies, the use of teacher development to bolster teaching and learning in classrooms is shown to be a viable part of any school turnaround solution. Utilizing teacher development techniques within existing structures could also prove to be a less disruptive method to turnaround schools in some scenarios.

Another key finding from this study was that collaborative teacher development approaches were perceived by school leaders as the most effective strategies for supporting their successful school improvement efforts. School leaders named teacher collaboration and classroom walk-throughs as the most viable and important strategies for teacher development. These two strategies tend to bring educators together for real-time problem solving and focus on what is happening in the context of the school itself based on the school's stated instructional vision and the unique needs in that setting. Current school turnaround leaders can support collaboration, development, and shared vision setting at their schools by developing strong, coherent systems of teacher collaboration and classroom walk-throughs. Classroom walk-

throughs in particular are a practice that district and state leaders could also be a part of to learn more about the real strengths and challenges at the school instead of only using static test scores. District leaders could also utilize strong classroom walk-through practices to support school leaders with contextualized next steps and prioritize the type of support and resources needed for the school to improve.

The use of teacher coaching cycles was also found to be an effective means of supporting teacher development. Although professional development sessions remain a primary means of teacher development across schools nation-wide, schools in need of large-scale improvement should consider employing a strong coaching cycle with frequent interactions with teachers to embed strong teaching practices. Costs and scalability of teacher coaching models are often difficult for tight-budgeted school districts to manage (Knight, 2012). Considering the high value successful school leaders in the study placed on teacher coaching, schools in need of turnaround should find ways to prioritize the expense.

School leaders perceived the use of teacher evaluations, however, to have been either inconsequential or even detrimental to teacher development. Given the large amount of time, money, and legislative effort that has gone into reforming teacher evaluations over the last decade of education policy (Donaldson, 2016), finding that successful turnaround school leaders in this study did not find it supportive of teacher development is a major finding. For current school turnaround efforts, school districts should reconsider the amount of time required of school leaders to spend in teacher evaluation. The study suggests school leaders' time is better spent supporting teacher collaboration, completing classroom walk-throughs, and ensuring high-quality professional development sessions are differentiated to teachers' needs. Teacher evaluations maintain a crucial role in turnaround schools as necessary for accountability and

maintaining a high-quality teaching staff but should not be seen as a main driver of teacher development.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study adds to existing research and supplies some next steps and context around teacher development strategies to school leaders of low-performing schools. The study does highlight the need for some follow-up research to further support the understanding of teacher development work in school turnaround and improvement efforts. First, the study relied on quantitative surveys to gather the perception of only school leaders who had led schools showing initial promise in turning around schools. A next step could be to complete a similar study with a comparison group of leaders of schools not having the same success in outcomes or leaders of schools that are performing at high levels without the need for improvement. Providing these comparison groups would help isolate which strategies are unique to supporting the improvement of low-performing schools. Similarly, conducting a similar study across multiple states would provide more generalizability to the results and support school leaders with more accurate information across the nation.

Because the study relied only on the perceptions of school leaders through a survey, other means of data collection would support a more well-rounded view of teacher development and its impact on schools showing initial success. Following up with a group of school leaders in a focus group or in-person interviews would help provide more context to how leaders are using each teacher development strategy. Also, surveying teachers within these schools would provide another perspective on the effectiveness of different teacher development strategies. It is possible teachers would have a different perception of how their instruction improved due to any of the five strategies.

Another area of further research that would help support school leaders is in studying more specifics within each area highlighted by the results of the study. The study found that a major component of successful teacher development was in the focus on strong instructional strategies. A future study could focus on finding out what specific strategies were focused on by school leaders. It would help leaders to know if a focus on specific content-based strategies are more effective in supporting teachers than classroom management or content-agnostic instructional strategies. Likewise, teacher collaboration, classroom walk-throughs, and teacher coaching cycles were shown to be perceived by school leaders as highly effective means of developing teachers. There are many ways in which each of those development strategies can be implemented in schools. Future studies could be helpful to research the specific ways schools implemented the various teacher development strategies. In structuring teacher coaching cycles, schools may have employed an approach more focused on cognitive coaching (Aguilar, 2013) or observation and feedback (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2018). Within teacher collaboration, a worthwhile study could be in looking into the role data use and analysis played in collaboration as opposed to unit and curriculum planning in schools. Also, more formal structures like lesson study (Akiba et al., 2019) as a specific teacher collaboration structure may be in use in successful school turnarounds and future studies could be formed to investigate that as well. For classroom walk-throughs, given the lack of literature surrounding the topic, a more open-ended qualitative study of how schools structure and use the strategy could benefit future school leaders and researchers in the field.

Conclusion

Although this study is one aspect of the larger literature about the intersection of teacher development and school turnaround, the results indicate some specific, actionable realities as to

how teacher development is used in schools showing initial turnaround and improvement. Teacher development is essential in all schools, but the need is both different and more acute in a school turnaround setting. This study indicated that successful school turnaround principals focus on teacher development and that teacher development was highly effective in supporting the improvement efforts at the schools. Overall, school leaders perceived classroom walk-throughs and teacher collaboration as highly effective and important components of their improvement plans. On the contrary, teacher evaluation was seen as inconsequential or as a barrier to teacher development. These findings can steer the efforts of school, district, and state education leaders in planning, support, and funding for various school turnaround and improvement efforts.

Principals in turnaround schools have an immense task and very limited resources to accomplish it. They are charged with increasing student achievement for students in communities that have had generational lack of success in academic achievement and have not found the education system to be worthy to meet their needs. Out of necessity, "turnaround principals, indeed see, feel, and think differently than many of their peers" (Meyers & Hitt, 2017, p. 53). The results of this study can help provide some guidance to the different seeing, feeling and thinking of turnaround principals in order to ensure highly effective teachers can be developed in every classroom in turnaround schools across the country.

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Appendix

School Leader Survey

You are receiving this survey because you have been identified as a school leader who is currently leading or has led a school improvement effort which has increased your School Performance Framework out of a priority improvement or turnaround plan type in the last three years. The purpose of this survey is to learn from how your school focused on different teacher development strategies to support rising student growth and achievement. Learning from promising school improvement efforts can support other school leaders' make similar changes.

Please read the following information before continuing on to complete the survey. The survey asks questions specifically about efforts which school leaders used to develop teachers and which strategies are perceived to be effective so that their experience can be used to support turnaround efforts of other leaders. According to Guskey (2000), a standard-bearer for teacher development research, teacher development is "those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students" (p. 16).

Please answer as accurately as possible to provide as much insight as possible into how teachers at your school improved their instruction. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept confidential and no personally identifiable information collected. Answer "Yes" to the question below to indicate your willingness to participate in the study.

☐ Yes, I agree to complete this survey and for my results to be utilized in this research study.

Teacher Development in Promising School Turnaround Efforts Survey

Directions – Please answer the following questions regarding teacher development activities at your school during the 2018-19 school year as well as prior years which contributed to an improvement or performance plan type.

1. Please indicate the estimated frequency of each of the following teacher development activities **for the majority** of teachers at the school:

	More than weekly	Weekly	Bi-weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Semi-Annually	Annually	Never
Professional development sessions								
Teacher coaching cycles								
Teacher collaboration								
Classroom walk-throughs								
Observations for teacher evaluation								

Overall Teacher Development

2. Overall, teacher development was a key focus of the school's improvement efforts

   5- Strongly Agree 4- Agree 3- Uncertain 2- Disagree 1- Strongly Disagree

3. Overall, teacher development efforts have been effective in fostering successful school improvement efforts.

   5- Strongly Agree 4- Agree 3 - Uncertain 2- Disagree 1- Strongly Disagree

Professional Development Sessions

4. Using the following Likert Scale, please respond to the following items related to professional development sessions for the majority of teachers at the school.

5- Strongly Agree 4- Agree 3- Uncertain 2- Disagree 1- Strongly Disagree

	5 – Strongly Agree	4 - Agree	3 - Uncertain	2 - Disagree	1 – Strongly Disagree
Professional development sessions were a **primary driver** in increasing teacher development through the school's improvement efforts.					
The **frequency** of professional development sessions was adequate and conducive to optimal teacher development.					
Professional development sessions were effective in **changing teacher attitudes and beliefs** about the school's improvement efforts as shown by increased participation and implementation					
Professional development sessions were **differentiated** based on teacher needs to a satisfactory degree.					
The content of professional development sessions was **focused** on a narrow set of priorities aligned to the school's improvement plan.					
Specific instructional strategies addressed at professional development sessions were impactful in supporting the school's improvement efforts.					

Teacher Coaching Cycles

5. Using the following Likert Scale, please respond to the following items related to teacher coaching cycles for the majority of teachers at the school.

   5- Strongly Agree 4- Agree 3- Uncertain 2- Disagree 1- Strongly Disagree

	5 – Strongly Agree	4 - Agree	3 - Uncertain	2 - Disagree	1 – Strongly Disagree
Teacher coaching cycles were a **primary driver** in increasing teacher development through the school's improvement efforts.					
The **frequency** of teacher coaching cycles was adequate and conducive to optimal teacher development.					
Teacher coaching cycles were effective in **changing teacher attitudes and beliefs** about the school's improvement efforts as shown by increased participation and implementation					
Teacher coaching cycles were **differentiated** based on teacher needs to a satisfactory degree.					
The content of teacher coaching cycles was **focused** on a narrow set of priorities aligned to the school's improvement plan.					
Specific instructional strategies addressed in teacher coaching cycles were impactful in supporting the school's improvement efforts.					

Teacher Collaboration

6. Using the following Likert Scale, please respond to the following items related to teacher collaboration for the majority of teachers at the school.

5- Strongly Agree 4- Agree 3- Uncertain 2- Disagree 1- Strongly Disagree

	5 – Strongly Agree	4 - Agree	3 - Uncertain	2 - Disagree	1 – Strongly Disagree
Teacher collaboration was a **primary driver** in increasing teacher development through the school's improvement efforts.					
The **frequency** of teacher collaboration was adequate and conducive to optimal teacher development.					
Teacher collaboration was effective in **changing teacher attitudes and beliefs** about the school's improvement efforts as shown by increased participation and implementation					
Teacher collaboration was **differentiated** based on teacher needs to a satisfactory degree.					
The content of teacher collaboration was **focused** on a narrow set of priorities aligned to the school's improvement plan.					
Specific instructional strategies addressed during teacher collaboration were impactful in supporting the school's improvement efforts.					

Teacher Evaluations

7. Using the following Likert Scale, please respond to the following items related to teacher evaluation for the majority of teachers at the school.

5- Strongly Agree 4- Agree 3- Uncertain 2- Disagree 1- Strongly Disagree

	5 – Strongly Agree	4 - Agree	3 - Uncertain	2 - Disagree	1 – Strongly Disagree
Teacher evaluations were a **primary driver** in increasing teacher development through the school's improvement efforts.					
The **frequency** of teacher evaluations was adequate and conducive to optimal teacher development.					
Teacher evaluations were effective in **changing teacher attitudes and beliefs** about the school's improvement efforts as shown by increased participation and implementation					
Teacher evaluations were **differentiated** based on teacher needs to a satisfactory degree.					
The content of teacher evaluations was **focused** on a narrow set of priorities aligned to the school's improvement plan.					
Specific instructional strategies addressed in teacher evaluations were impactful in supporting the school's improvement efforts.					

Classroom Walkthroughs

8. Using the following Likert Scale, please respond to the following items related to classroom walk-throughs for the majority of teachers at the school.

5- Strongly Agree 4- Agree 3- Uncertain 2- Disagree 1- Strongly Disagree

	5 – Strongly Agree	4 - Agree	3 - Uncertain	2 - Disagree	1 – Strongly Disagree
Classroom walk-throughs were a **primary driver** in increasing teacher development through the school's improvement efforts.					
The **frequency** of classroom walk-throughs was adequate and conducive to optimal teacher development.					
Classroom walk-throughs were effective in **changing teacher attitudes and beliefs** about the school's improvement efforts as shown by increased participation and implementation					
Classroom walk-throughs were **differentiated** based on teacher needs to a satisfactory degree.					
The content of classroom walk-throughs was **focused** on a narrow set of priorities aligned to the school's improvement plan.					
Specific instructional strategies addressed in classroom walk-throughs were impactful in supporting the school's improvement efforts.					

Thank you for your time in completing this survey! Your answers will be kept confidential and used solely to identify trends of teacher development in promising school improvement and turnaround efforts. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Andy Swanson at aswanson@seu.edu.