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Common Core State Standards : elementary teacher perceptions of administrator supports with a focus on professional learning communities and walk throughs.

Kara Joan Ammerman

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ELEMENTARY TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF ADMINISTRATOR SUPPORTS WITH A FOCUS ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND WALK THROUGHS

By

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DEDICATION

For the teachers and administrators who serve students each day. Continue to learn and collaborate together in order to help students succeed. Always believe you are making a difference, because you are one child at a time. Remember to not embark on this journey of educating students alone but work together for one common goal.

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ABSTRACT

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF ADMINISTRATOR SUPPORTS WITH A FOCUS ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND WALK THROUGHS

Kara Joan Ammerman

June 15, 2016

In 2009, there was a major instructional shift in the state of Kentucky. Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were adopted and funding was provided to the state by Race to the Top in order to facilitate implementation of the CCSS (Kentucky Department Education, 2014c). Within this framework, teachers and administrators have had to re-examine the education of students and, specifically, administrators have had to rethink their approach to supporting teachers. To address these new standards, teachers and administrators had to restructure how students were taught. Implementing CCSS requires teachers to teach students differently than they did before. Two widely implemented strategies to support teachers were Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Walk Throughs (WTs). This study examined the perceptions that teachers and administrators have about professional learning communities and walk throughs as supports to improve instructional strategies. The study was conducted in a large urban district in Kentucky. A cross-sectional survey design was used to measure teachers' and administrators' perception of instructional supports. Both the teacher and administrator surveys seek to

measure the perceptions of PLC and WT supports. The surveys are similar in content but worded differently to suit the role of the participant. The findings suggested there was a significant difference between teacher and administrator perceptions on PLCs and WTs serving as instructional supports. Specifically, the largest difference between perceptions was in the survey subscale labeled Trust in Administrators. Teachers did not perceive administrators following through on commitments, providing feedback after a WT, or demonstrating knowledge of teaching and learning using the WT tool.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

In 2009, there was a major instructional shift in the state of Kentucky. Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were adopted and funding was provided to the state by Race to the Top in order to facilitate implementation of the CCSS (Kentucky Department Education, 2014c). Within this framework, teachers and administrators have had to re-examine the education of students and, specifically, administrators have had to rethink their approach to supporting teachers. The first content standards adopted and implemented were Language Arts/English and Mathematics (KDE, 2014a). Again, Kentucky was the first to adopt and implement the standards so there was not another state to follow as an example; instead Kentucky was the pioneer state for CCSS implementation. To address these new standards, teachers and administrators had to restructure how students were taught. Implementing CCSS requires teachers to teach students differently than they did before. Two widely implemented strategies to support teachers were Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Walk Throughs (WTs). Despite the widespread utility of PLCs and WTs as mechanism to support teachers, there is surprisingly little research on these methods to promote teachers' instructional practices. The lack of research on these practices provides areas of rich research to

examine the ways in which schools can implement and support student learning within the framework of the CCSS.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions that teachers and administrators have about professional learning communities and walk throughs as supports to improve instructional strategies. Key variables considered in this study were teachers' perceptions of PLCs and WTs. PLCs and WTs served as the instructional supports being measured. Research states the importance of providing instructional supports to teachers and how it is the role of the administrator to lead the school in implementing instructional practices (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012; Ruchti, Jenkins, & Agamba, 2013). For teachers to successfully promote students' attainment of the CCSS, it is important for instructional supports to be in place and the teachers need to be actively involved in the process (Ruchti et al., 2013). According to Eilers and D'Amico (2012), it is the administrators' responsibility to decide how to lead their faculty in implementing the new standards. Administrators are essentially in charge of how CCSS are implemented but teachers need to be a part of the decision-making process as well as supported in their daily classroom instruction.

Administrators contribute the culture and climate in the building (Hallinger, 2003). This is accomplished by encouraging teachers' instructional practices in the classroom, providing teachers' instructional feedback, and by conducting formal teacher evaluations. The shifting of standards and curriculum being taught has changed the supports offered to teachers, as well as how teachers are evaluated. Also, the evaluations of teachers are no longer centered on the teacher's practices but how those practices influence student learning, with a focus on creating a student-centered learning

environment. Teachers are being encouraged to collaborate with other teachers and administrators. Administrators have the task of supporting teachers' instructional practices in various ways but also evaluating teachers on those practices.

There are several instructional leadership practices that support teachers. According to several authors (Donaldson, 2009; Ebmeier, 2003; Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Neumerski, 2013) the supports include: classroom walk throughs, coaching and feedback to teachers, monitoring classrooms and setting instructional goals school wide, instructional supervision and formative or summative evaluation of teachers, coordinating curriculum planning, professional development and protecting instructional time, have been deemed to support teaching practices. The two instructional supports examined in this study were PLCs and WTs. These supports were selected due to a lack of research (e.g., Gargani & Strong, 2014; Grossman, Loeb, Cohen, & Wyckoff, 2013; Looney, 2011) and Kentucky Urban District (KUD) promotes both of these supports. Every school in KUD utilizes PLCs and WTs as a common practice to support instruction.

PLCs are an established venue where colleagues can have professional discourse about student learning and teacher instruction (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012; Stahl, 2015). A PLC is a structured time built into the school day when teachers are provided the opportunity to get to work together at least once a week to discuss instructional goals (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008). The teams are relatively small (i.e. 2-6 members) to ensure each member participates. The PLC teams can be set up by content or grade level. When the PLC teams meet the teachers discuss student achievement data, common formative assessments, and lesson planning. This time is used for teachers to share

successes and failures in order to collaborate with one another to reach a common goal of student achievement. The main characteristics of a PLC is to focus on student learning, reflective dialogue between teachers, and continually improving upon learning goals, and instructional practices (Nelson, Deuel, Slavit, & Kennedy, 2010; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). According to DuFour, Eaker, Many, and DuFour (2006), PLCs require teachers to shift their focus from teaching to students learning, collaborating, and holding one another accountable to continue to improve instructionally.

For teachers to be successful using PLCs, administrators have the responsibility to actively participate in PLCs and create time for PLCs (Buffum & Erkens, 2012). Administrators need to be thoughtful when creating the master schedule for their school because time is needed for PLCs. Teachers will need common planning time with other teachers in the same content area or same grade level (DuFour et al., 2008). PLCs can easily fall into "another thing to do" if time is not allotted during the school day for teachers to meet in a meaningful manner. Administrators also need to participate in PLCs to offer support to teachers. Administrators should be available to PLCs as a resource, but not a voice in the collaboration. An administrator must be intentional when participating in a PLC. If an administrator dominates the meeting time, it takes away from the opportunity for teachers to collaborate. However, if the administrator is not an active participant, the PLC could become a vent session. Vent sessions are common if teachers do not value and understand the purpose of a PLC, or do not feel supported by administrators (Buffum & Erkens, 2012).

A WT is a process in which the administrators in the building go into classrooms for a brief period of time, five to ten minutes, to offer teachers feedback on their

instructional practices (Cudeiro & Nelsen, 2009; Eilers & D'Amico, 2012; Ginsberg & Murphy, 2002; Grissom et al., 2013). When an administrator goes into a classroom they use a template that informs the teacher what was observed instructionally. The template used can vary depending on the school and the school-wide instructional goals established. The intention of WT feedback is to support teachers instructionally, not to evaluate their performance. Administrators should leave feedback or have a brief conversation with the teacher to inform the teacher of the positives observed and things to improve on. Feedback can range from written, verbal, or a check list. The administrator will use the walk through tool as a way to collect evidence and to have an instructional conversation with the teacher versus using it for evaluation purposes (David, 2007).

PLCs and WTs are supports that administrators can offer to teachers to better their instructional practices. However, research does not know how the perceptions of PLCs and WTs affect teachers' instructional practices (Gargani & Strong, 2014; Grossman et al., 2013; Looney, 2011). For too long, schools have focused on administrators supporting classroom management (Wise & Jacobo, 2010) and not enough sufficient support has been offered instructionally for teachers. A change in the political climate (i.e., Race to the Top, CCSS, and standardized assessments) has required a change in focus for administrators in buildings. Administrators must place more attention on student achievement (Wise & Jacobo, 2010). According to Gargani and Strong (2014) and Grossman et al. (2013), there is a need for research that examines the relationship between teacher observations and student achievement. Additionally, Grossman et al. (2013) indicate that, if classroom practices associated with student achievement can be

identified, it can improve the quality of teaching. More evidence on the impact of different forms of teacher evaluation and development is needed to improve teacher quality (Looney, 2011). Thus, if administrators conducting WTs provide feedback on instructional strategies, and teachers share instructional strategies and feedback in PLCs, this could increase student learning.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of teachers implementing CCSS and the supports (i.e., PLCs and WTs) offered by administrators in KUD. For administrators to best support teachers using PLCs and WTs, the administrators and teachers need to understand the CCSS. All stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members are changing their thinking on how students are learning as well as how teachers are teaching content. For example, students in mathematics classes are being asked to have a conceptual understanding versus learning how to count or solving problems the "old way" which, was how many parents and teachers were taught (Clark, 2015). Currently, this is resulting in a disconnect between parents/guardians and the school because parents/guardians are not familiar with the instructional practices accompanying the CCSS. The CCSS were designed to create one set of national standards instead of the patchwork of standards states designed unequally (CCSSI, 2014; McLaughlin & Overturf, 2012). Until recently students across the nation were being assessed with standards designed differently depending on which state they lived in. According to Wallender (2014), the CCSS were designed to "create common educational standards, prepare students for college (or careers), stress quality education for all students, and

increase rigor in schools" (p. 10). The aim of CCSS is to raise student achievement by creating consistency in expected grade level outcomes in schools across the nation.

In addition to the recent implementation of the CCSS, a new teacher evaluation system has been implemented (KDE, 2014e). In Kentucky, the Charlotte Danielson Framework: Professional Growth Effectiveness System (PGES) was adopted in 2014 and designed to create an equitable evaluation system to measure teacher effectiveness and promote professional development and growth (KDE, 2014e). The evaluation framework requires teachers to provide evidence in four domains: planning and preparation, the classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. The two supports being explored in this study directly relate to supporting each of these domains. For example, PLCs help teachers in planning in collaboration with a team versus in isolation (Woodland & Mazur, 2015), and WTs can give teachers feedback on their classroom environment for establishing a culture for learning (Cudeiro & Nelsen, 2009). It is critical teachers have support in these areas, as they are directly related to success in the new evaluation system.

Before the adoption of CCSS, Kentucky was implementing Core Content 4.1. Core Content 4.1 were the standards implemented in Kentucky before CCSS. These standards were developed to assess the following goals of Core Content 4.1. Within Core Content 4.1, students were expected to demonstrate the following: basic communication and mathematic skills, application of core concepts, development of self-sufficiency, responsible group membership, the ability to think and solve problems, as well as connect and integrate knowledge (KDE, 2015a). The two goals that were not assessed were: development of self-sufficiency and responsible group membership. These goals were in

place for individual students to become self-advocates and also able to work in groups productively. Students were expected to embody these skills, but they were not formally assessed like the other goals. Kentucky went from six overarching goals listed above from Core Content 4.1 to CCSS, which are known as KCAS in Kentucky. The CCSS were a complete rewrite of the 4.1 standards. CCSS are research-based, consistent and clear, aligned with college and career expectations, based on higher-order thinking skills, internationally benchmarked, and improved current state standards (KDE, 2014c).

The CCSS has been a controversial reform initiative in education. Even though CCSS are still relatively new, the reform has sparked controversy among educators, parents, and politicians (Bidwell, 2014). The CCSS have provoked controversy in general, but the initial focus has been on teachers and students. The two major questions that arose from the controversy were: how will teachers implement the standards and will the student learning outcomes improve with CCSS in place? The CCSS are embedded in the Race to the Top education reform (RTTT) announced by President Barack Obama in 2009. President Barack Obama established RTTT as a competitive grant encouraging states to compete against one another in order to be rewarded with additional federal grant money (Abbott, 2013). RTTT also has an emphasis on teacher evaluation frameworks identifying the need for more rigorous classrooms (Popham, 2013).

Kentucky was the first state to adopt the CCSS and renamed them as Kentucky Core Academic Standards (KCAS) because of Senate Bill 1 (KDE, 2014c). For the purpose of this study the standards will be referred to as CCSS. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) adopted the CCSS to increase students' retention of knowledge over the years and critical thinking skills to perform better on state

assessments (KDE, 2014a). The standards were developed to create consistency in grade level expectations across the nation, but because the reform did not provide curriculum with the standards there is wide variation in implementation among US states (Murphy & Torff, 2014). The CCSS resulted in changes within the curriculum being taught and also brought uncertainty to educational practices in general. KDE (2014f) created a Model Curriculum Framework to guide the process of developing lessons based on the standards. The Model Curriculum Framework was a template created to help outline the why, how, and what in developing local curriculum. This required districts to hold professional development session to help teachers understand how to implement the new standards and how to the curriculum was created (Overturf, 2011). Teachers are in need of support implementing these standards and adjusting their teaching practices. Teachers have been charged with two immense tasks: to implement new standards, and to be evaluated under a new system.

Inspection of national, state, and local student achievement data supports the need to identify effective strategies to promote teachers' classroom practices. For example, Figure 1 reports data from the fourth grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics average scores. The circles represent no change from the previous year and triangles represent growth from the previous year. Overall, the trends in student achievement nationally on the NAEP assessment in mathematics for students in the fourth grade indicate an increase from 1990 to 2013. As shown, math scores have increased from 213 points in 1990 to 242 points in 2013, which is a 28-point increase (NAEP, 2013). In recent years when Kentucky adopted CCSS the NAEP scores from 2011-2013 have not changed in any noticeable fashion.

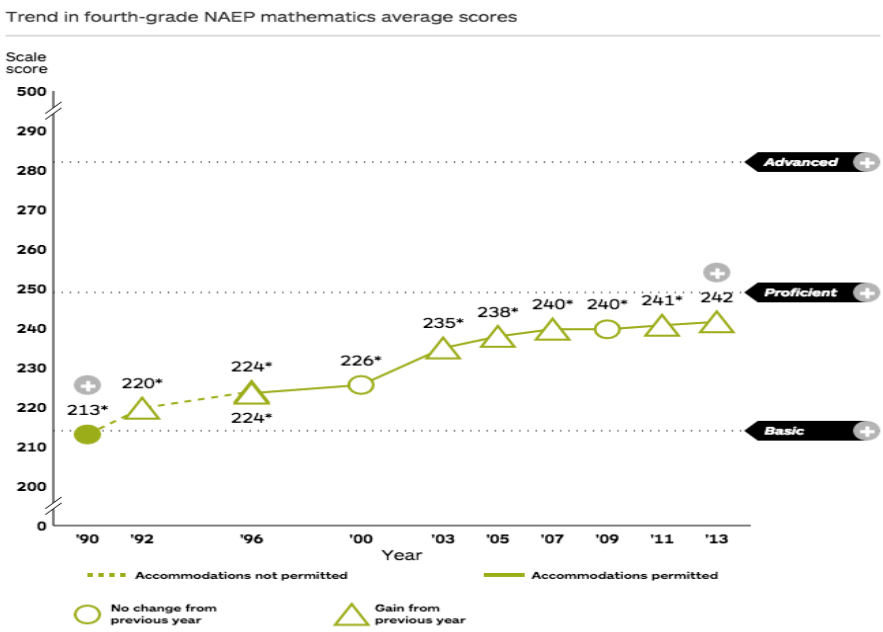

Figure 1.*Trend Data on Elementary Math, 1990-2013. Source: National Assessment of Education Performance, 2013.*

Kentucky NAEP scores in 2013 for students in the fourth grade are not noticeably different from the nation's scores (NAEP, 2013). Table 1 shows how Kentucky compares against the national average. NAEP scores range from 0 to 500 and are broken up into four categories: below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced (KDE, 2013). This data set shows the achievement among students has not changed significantly over the years even with the implementation of the new standards. The instructional supports in place need to be examined to better understand how to improve student achievement. More specifically, practices already in place such as PLCs and WTs need to be studied further to understand how they support teachers instructionally and what can be improved upon.

Table 1

2013 NAEP Scale Scores, Kentucky

2012	NAEP Scale Score	Kentucky Scale Score
Average Score	241	241
Below Basic	18	16
Basic	41	42
Advance	8	6

Note. NAEP = National Assessment of Educational Performance

Narrowing the data even further to Kentucky achievement focuses on how students performed on Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP). This assessment is a blended norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, which determines student performance in levels of novice, apprentice, proficient, and distinguished, and provides national percentiles (KDE, 2015b). The test consists of multiple-choice, extended-response, and short answer questions (KDE, 2014a). Both the norm-referenced and criterion-referenced portions of the assessment are customized for Kentucky (KDE, 2014a). Table 2 shows that from 2012 to 2014, less than half of the students in Kentucky scored proficient or distinguished. These data indicate a slight increase in student achievement from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014 with an overall growth in percent proficient and distinguished. Overall, Kentucky's student achievement remains stable and is consistent with the NAEP results. These data present another reason to investigate PLCs and WTs as supports to teachers. Instead of adding additional supports, PLCs and WTs need to be studied further to add to the limited research.

Table 2

2012-14 K-PREP Assessment Scores, Kentucky

Year	Percent Proficient	Percent Distinguished	Percent Proficient/ Distinguished
13-14	34.2	15.0	49.2
12-13	32.9	15.0	47.8

Note. Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress = KPREP

The KUD data on student achievement focusing on elementary mathematics is represented in Table 3. The data represent the math portion of the K-PREP test and how elementary students performed established by the four categories of novice, apprentice, proficient, and distinguished. The last column in the table represents the novice, apprentice, proficient, and distinguished calculation the district used for school accountability scores. Those are calculated by the following equation according to district data sources in 2013[1]: (Proficient x 1) + (Distinguished x 1) + (Apprentice x .5) + (Distinguished – Novice) x .5 = NAPD. From the 2012 school year to the 2014 school year, the overall NAPD has increased each year since CCSS has been implemented. This is encouraging but there is not a specific indicator for the increase other than the change in standards. National and local data illustrate few gains in student achievement with the current instructional practices and education reforms, even though they are meant to promote student-learning gains. This suggests that teacher instructional practices and administrator supports for these practices need further examination in order to increase student achievement.

[1] The district source being used is not listed to protect the amenity of the district

Table 3

2012-14 Math K-PREP Kentucky Urban District (KUD) Assessment Scores

Year	Number of Students	Percent Proficient	Percent Distinguished	NAPD Calculation
14-15	21,609	32.5	14.6	63.1
13-14	21,796	29.2	11.5	52.9
12-13	22,088	26.5	9.0	53.9

Note. Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress = KPREP

Within Kentucky, the newly adopted and implemented PGES framework seeks to advance national reforms to promote teachers' classroom practices to promote students' learning outcomes. Specifically, the PGES framework encourages teachers to include the following themes in their teaching practices: accommodating individual needs, developmental appropriateness, high expectations, culture competence, equity, student assumption of responsibility, and effective technology integration (Danielson, 2011). The CCSS are more challenging for students, and require them to use higher order critical thinking skills, collaborate with other while learning, provide opportunities to problem solve, and internalize these skills to prepare themselves to be college and career ready (KDE, 2014c). The teacher evaluation system aligns with the CCSS. Both PGES and CCSS require students to be responsible for their learning and for the teacher to create a learning environment that is student centered (Danielson, 2011; KDE, 2014c). For teachers to create such student-centered learning environment, administrators must offer high-quality feedback and time to collaborate with peers. Thus there needs to be a seamless system in place to offer teachers consistent feedback on instruction and the

availability to collaborate with peers to plan effective lessons and improve student achievement.

A total of 41 schools in Kentucky have been identified as persistently low achieving (KDE, 2014b). The persistently low achieving (PLA) label is determined by reading and mathematics scores by averaging the percent of proficient or distinguished on the state assessment. For a school to exit its PLA status, it is required to meet adequate yearly progress for three consecutive years. This data illustrates a need for high-quality instructional support, thus PLCs and WTs must be analyzed for their perceived effectiveness. At the time of this study, KUD is one of the largest districts in Kentucky. The district consists of 3,351 elementary teachers, 86.2% of them having a Master's degree or higher. The teacher retention rate as of 2013-14 was 88.9% overall. The elementary schools are made up of 35.1% black students, 46.2% white students, and 18.7% other students. There are 45, 818 students in elementary school during the 2013-14 school year and of those students 12.2% were classified as ECE and 1.6% as self-contained students. Students on free or reduced lunch included: 29.2% black students, 23.4% white students, and 13.6% other students. A total of 66.8% more than half the students in the district qualified for free or reduce services. This demographic information demonstrates the needs of the students in KUD and the importance of supporting teachers in the classrooms to support students instructionally. It is clear teachers are facing several obstacles in KUD from new standards, a new evaluation system, and teaching in an urban setting.

To build on the literature regarding the utility of PLCs and WTs as a means to support teachers' classroom practices, the present study will examine the perceptions of

administrators and teachers. Specifically, a cross-sectional survey research design was used to understand the relationship between school administrators' and teachers' perceptions of instructional supports in a quantitative study. The study will focus on elementary schools because of the intentional professional development conducted within the district to prepare teachers to implement CCSS. The study will specifically focus on the relationship between the supports offered to teachers by administrators to improve their instructional practices. The conceptual framework of this study represents a relationship between CCSS, administration, teachers, and the supports offered (i.e., PLCs and WTs). A conceptual framework is used to assist the research with a general approach and synthesize the variables and concepts (Imenda, 2014). The variables and concepts I investigated and made sense of were teachers, administrators, PLCs, WTs, and CCSS. The CCSS were developed at the national level, and Kentucky was the first to adopt the standards. This adoption required schools in Kentucky to implement and teach CCSS immediately. For this to happen the administrators were responsible for developing a plan for teacher implementation of the standards. Even though administrators developed the plan for implementation, teachers and administrators must collaborate for CCSS instructional practices to be successful. Further, instructional supportive practices, such as PLCs and WTs, may improve teachers' instructional practices and in turn increase student achievement. Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the hypothesized relationships among the study variables. This figure shows how each of the variables work with another variable. Specifically, it demonstrates how administrators and teachers should work together, and how PLCs and WTs can influence that relationship.

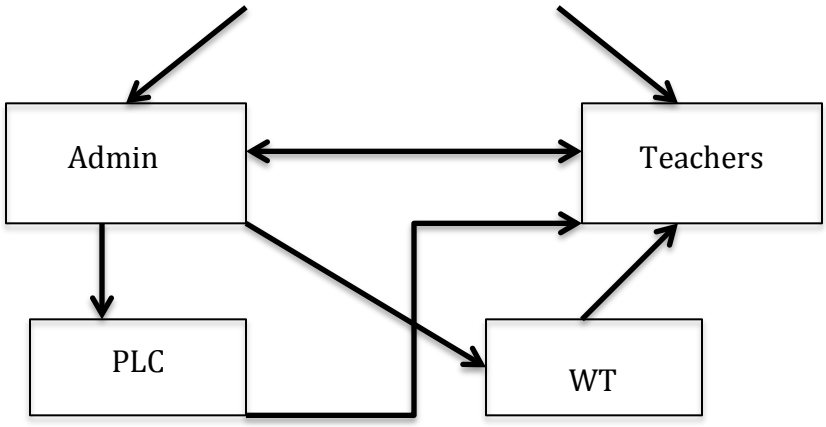

Figure 2. *Conceptual Framework representing the relationship between CCSS, Administration, Teachers, and PLC and WT supports. CCSS = Common Core State Standards; PLC = Professional Learning Community; WT = Walk Through.*

Statement of the Problem

When Kentucky adopted CCSS, the state did not receive curricula to support the standards (Council of Chief State School Officers and national Governors Association, 2011). It is up to school and school district administrators to select the curricula that align with the standards for teachers to use. This research study examined teachers' and administrators' perceptions of instructional support for CCSS implementation using the curricula provided. This study seeks to explore two support systems that could assist teachers in their instructional practice: PLCs and WTs. According to Eilers and D'Amico (2012), teachers without guidance from administrators are more likely to encounter frustration and failure. The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between the supports offered to teachers by administrators, and the supports identified as PLCs and WTs. Additionally, do teachers perceive PLCs and WTs as systems that support their instructional practices in the classroom?

Research Questions

The questions that will guide this study are as follows:

1. In what ways are principals and assistant principals supporting teachers' classroom instructional practices through Professional Learning Communities and Walk Throughs?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of administrators' supports of Professional Learning Communities and Walk Throughs?

Significance of Study

This study investigated the perceptions of administrators offering PLCs and WTs as supports to assist teacher instruction and teacher perceptions of those supports. The majority of the nation is implementing the new standards known as CCSS and there is a need for consistent practices to yield high student achievement nationally. There are many instructional supports and strategies being implemented to support instructional practices, but this study seeks to identify two supports that could impact a schools' culture and climate as well as instructional practices, which could lead to increased student achievement. The CCSS are continually being questioned because the standards have been established but the specific curriculum or practices to make the standards successful have not been established. Each state and school district are implementing various instructional practices, but this study can establish two practices, with little research currently, that could help explore the relationship between teachers and administrators implementing PLCs and WTs to support the CCSS being taught.

There are several implications for this study. This study is relevant to other states that have adopted CCSS and understanding an unified approach to supporting teachers implementing the standards. This study will identify the relationship between

professional learning communities and walk throughs and how teachers perceive these supports. As the first state to adopt CCSS, Kentucky could provide a model of how PLCs and WTs successfully support teachers in their instructional practices by creating a dialogue about how daily administrative practices can shift to intentionally support teachers. This can give administrators research to support the implementation and value of PLCs and WTs. For any reform to be successful, teachers need support. This study focuses on two well-known supports with little research conducted. Analyzing these two supports can also create more intentional efforts to help administrators understand how to implement these supports with fidelity. Also, this study can investigate if PLCs and WTs are perceived as supports to teachers instructionally, as they are intended to be. The data can guide future work on intentional implementation of PLCs and WTs so that these supports are beneficial for teachers and administrators. Additionally, this study is relevant to all practitioners who have adopted the CCSS. The RTTT education policy will be informed by this study and the supports needed for teachers to be successful in teaching CCSS and increasing student achievement.

Definitions

The following definitions were used for this study. The definitions below are the meanings of the terms used in this study.

Administrative Leaders: This study will focus on assistant principals and principals in the elementary schools which participate in the study.

Administrator Supports: This study will focus on the supports provided by school level administrators; specifically professional learning communities and walk throughs.

Common Core State Standards: The standards create common educational standards, prepare students for college, provide a quality education for all students, and continue to increase the rigor in all schools (Wallender, 2014; KDE, 2015a).

Instructional Strategies: These are a variety of teaching strategies used to increase student achievement and engage students in authentic learning experiences (Conrad & Stone, 2015)

Instructional Supports: Those supports provided to teachers to support and improve teaching practices.

K-Prep: This is the norm and criterion referenced state test in Kentucky to measure the students on their knowledge about the CCSS.

Next Generation Learner Scores: These are comprised of student achievement, growth, and gap. This score is calculated into the overall percentile score for the school.

Professional Learning Communities: These are a group of people in a school setting sharing, collaborating, reflecting, and improving on their practice to benefit students (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallce, & Thomas, 2006; Wise & Jacobo, 2010; Watson, 2014).

Race to the Top: This was a competitive grant established by President Barack Obama encouraging states to compete against one another in order to be rewarded with additional federal grant money (Abbott, 2013). RTTT also has an emphasis on teacher evaluation frameworks identifying the need for more rigorous classrooms (Popham, 2013).

Teacher Evaluation: The purpose of evaluating a teacher is to make decisions on when the teacher is fulfilling their responsibilities in the classroom (McGreal & Wood, 1988; Wood & Lease, 1987; McQuarrie & Wood, 1991) and if their contract is renewed or not.

Student Achievement: This is the score a student receives on a high-stakes assessment like K-PREP.

Walk Throughs: These are informal classroom observations conducted periodically by administrators to foster focused, reflective, and collaborative adult learning (Ginsberg & Murphy, 2002).

Data Sources and Analysis Methods

A cross-sectional survey research design was used to gather data on elementary administrators and teachers in a large urban southeastern school district in Kentucky. The variables measured in the survey were teacher and administrator perceptions, WTs, and PLCs. The Teacher Perception Survey (TPS) instrument (Forsyth & Adams, 2015) was designed to assess teacher and administrator perceptions of the supports offered to teachers. The surveys were administered to teachers and administrators across the 90 elementary schools within the school district using a convenience sample. First, descriptive statistics were used to examine the perceptions of what instructional supports administrators were using to support teachers instructionally. The means were analyzed for each sub-section for both the teacher and administrator surveys and how each population answered the items. Last, a MANOVA was used to examine the perceptions of administrators and teachers on PLCs and WTs as instructional supports. The findings from this study can add to the literature about PLCs and WTs as supports to teachers. Additionally, it can provide administrators' with research to assist them in supporting teachers' instructional practices.

Organization of Remaining Chapters

The remainder of the study will include the literature review, methodology, data collection, and findings. Chapter 2 will specifically outline the history of the common core state standards, instructional supervision versus instructional evaluation, professional learning communities characteristics, and walk through characteristics. Chapter 3 provides a review of the methodology used to conduct the study. Chapter 4 will discuss the findings and results of the study conducted. Chapter 5 will discuss the conclusions found for future research and the implications for practitioners and future policy decisions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

It is still unknown how the perception of PLCs and WTs affects instructional practices. Specifically, how are administrators supporting teachers and how do teachers perceive those instructional supports? According to Wise and Jacobo (2010), schools for too long have focused on administrators supporting classroom management and not enough sufficient support has been offered instructionally for teachers. Additionally, a change in the political climate (i.e., high-stakes assessments) has required a change in administrators in buildings, placing more attention on student achievement (Wise & Jacobo, 2010). There is still a need for research-based evidence to support a relationship between teacher observations and student achievement (Gargani & Strong, 2014; Grossman et al., 2013). Additionally, Grossman et al. (2013) states, if classroom practices associated with student achievement can be identified, the quality of teaching can be improved. According to Looney (2011), more evidence is needed on the impact of different forms of evaluation and instructional development to improve teacher quality. This study seeks to add to existing research on teacher supports. It will specifically highlight the relationship between PLCs and WTs supports for teacher implementing CCSS.

The CCSS were adopted in Kentucky in 2009 and implemented in the 2010-2011 school year. Kentucky educators had to make a shift from teaching Core Content 4.1 to Kentucky Core Academic Standards, which is the state's name for CCSS. For the purpose of this study, the standards will be referred to as CCSS. The first two contents to adopt the standards were English and Mathematics. In the process of adopting new standards, curricula also needed to be developed to teach the standards. The curricula was not supplied with the standards, leaving it up to school districts on how the CCSS would be implemented. For example, when teachers were teaching under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) only reading and mathematics test scores counted, and now the following scores are counted from reading, mathematics, science, social studies, and writing (KDE, 2012). Additionally, under NCLB schools did not have to incorporate an emphasis on college or career readiness and now Kentucky includes this as an indicator in the accountability system (KDE, 2012). The shift from NCLB to CCSS has created adjustments on what teachers are teaching, how teachers are teaching, and the accountability system schools are being evaluated on.

The adoption of CCSS has increased the rigor for students, and teachers are being evaluated on how effectively they teach the CCSS (KDE, 2014c). The intention of the CCSS was to establish common learning goals to better prepare students for college or a career. The CCSS were structured to focus on critical knowledge and skills needed in the real world. There are fewer standards but more in-depth learning requirements that are established from evidence-based research. The standards are internationally benchmarked, and aligned from elementary school through high school to successfully build on students' knowledge each year (KDE, 2015a). KDE produced a cross-walk

document to assist teachers and administrators understand how to implement the new standards. The cross-walk was provided for English Language Arts and Mathematics and organized the CCSS for teachers. The cross-walk was also developed to help implement the CCSS, align the standards, inform instruction, plan professional development, and determine curriculum needs (KDE, 2015a). The CCSS had a more focused lens on what standards teachers should be implementing and local districts created resources in order to support teachers in developing lessons.

Teacher evaluations are mechanism to promote teachers' classroom effectiveness to promote intended student learning outcomes. According to Looney (2011), there are different forms of evaluations. Most commonly used is the teacher appraisal system, which is a formal review, conducted by administration. A formal review conducted by an administrator is used towards a teacher's evaluation. Teachers can also give informal feedback by conducting peer-to-peer evaluation within the same content. Students can complete an evaluation on their teacher providing feedback from their perspective. Also, a school evaluation can be conducted including internal and external evaluations on school accountability versus improvement. Additionally high stakes assessments, which measure student achievement, and value-added assessments that take into account how teachers promote learning year to year in a school can be used as evaluative measures.

Several studies have found that well-designed evaluation systems, which are aligned with professional development, improve teacher classroom instruction and student achievement (Looney, 2011). According to Looney (2011), there are different forms of evaluations that when used together can promote innovation and support teachers. Two other systems that can help teachers before a formal review is informal

feedback from peer to peer and students providing feedback to the teacher from their perspective (Looney, 2011). Additionally, high-stakes assessment, which measure student achievement, and value added assessments that take into account how teachers promote learning year to year in a school can be used in evaluative measures. Most evaluation systems use a combination of these to evaluate teachers, however it is important that professional development measures are embedded (Looney, 2011) to promote instructional growth. However, often this is not the case with evaluation systems and administrators are not trained properly (Looney, 2011). Most teacher evaluation systems do not give timely feedback to teachers to inform their instructional practices (Looney, 2011) creating gaps in the development of the teachers. Teachers indicate feedback from administrators was more effective when they could discuss their performance and ways to improve instructional strategies with peers (Freiberg, Waxman, & Houston, 1987). Teacher credentials are a poor indicator of the quality of instruction delivered (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2007; Rockoff, 2004).

The Common Core State Standards: A Brief Primer and History

The CCSS represent the most recent set of grade standards to assess students and schools. This builds on the following reforms discussed in this sub-section, namely: the Committee of Ten, the National Defense Education Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, A Nation at Risk, ESEA Improving America's Schools Act, NCLB, and CCSS. Inspection of each type of educational reform, which dates from 1892, show the progression of how education policy evolved to CCSS. In 1892, the Committee of Ten declared high schools would follow educational standards to align with colleges and better prepare students to attend college (United States Bureau of Education, 1892). This

was a progressive movement that started the transformation of schools, and started a foundation of course sequences and curricula for students (Bohan, 2003). Creating high school standards laid the foundation for students to be prepared for college courses. The next impactful reform built off the Committee of Ten reform. President Dwight D. Eisenhower introduced the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958 (Wallender, 2014). NDEA was signed to increase the number of college graduates produced in the United States to create global competitiveness (Russell, 1949). This addressed the need for students to attend college and be successful afterwards. This act also defines the partnership between federal and state government and the beginnings of government control over education systems (Flemming, 1960).

In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) required a quality education be made available to all students including the nation's impoverished youth (Forte, 2010; United States Department of Education, 2012). ESEA was the first major legislation to mandate evaluation of programs, which was a way for the government to be accountable (McLaughlin, 1974). As different reforms are introduced, the power of federal and state government continues to become deeply involved in education. Several years later in 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education published *A Nation at Risk*; stating education across the United States was not rigorous enough and created a decrease in academic achievement (Wallender, 2014). *A Nation at Risk* gave recommendations for curriculum, teacher preparation programs, evaluation, and leadership within the schools (Gardner, 1983). This document revealed students were not being exposed to rigorous curriculum but opting to take "general track" courses (Gardner, 1983). Also, students were not completing courses at high levels. One of the

recommendations made was for all high school students to complete 4 years of English, 3 years of mathematics, 3 years of science, 3 years of social studies, a half a year of computer sciences, and if a student was college bound 2 years of a foreign language (Gardner, 1983). Additionally, this report suggested state and local standardized tests of achievement be used to measure student progress (Gardner, 1983). At this point, education became more structured with what was taught, but states still had the freedom to dictate how it was taught. The next influential legislation made affecting education was President Bill Clinton's reauthorized ESEA Improving America's Schools Act, which was passed by 103rd congress in 1994 (Hanushek & Jorgenson, 1996). According to Wallender (2014), this created frameworks for educators to follow (e.g., curriculum maps, assessments, objectives, teacher training). The framework also required each state to implement key practices as performance standards, state assessment aligned to the standards, and statewide accountability systems (Brady, 2003). This framework supported President Clinton's previous education policy Goals 2000 (Hanushek & Jorgenson, 1996). Goals 2000 was established to give all students the opportunity to achieve using high standards of learning (Hanushek & Jorgenson, 1996). ESEA Improving America's Schools Act was the first time the U.S. Department of Education pulled several programs (i.e., Title I, compensatory education program, professional development) together to focus on working together instead of going in different directions (Hanushek & Jorgenson, 1996). This act was also the first time teachers were intentionally supported in professional development, and specifically using technology (Hanushek & Jorgenson, 1996). Overall, this reform initiated the conversation about consistent standards and assessments at the state and local levels.

In 2001, President George W. Bush proposed NCLB, requiring states to create their own standards, curriculum, assessments and proficiency levels for academic achievement (Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011). NCLB's limitation was every state had their own accountability system set up, creating no consistency across the states for determining student achievement levels (Wallender, 2014). The NCLB reform made it difficult for students to move to another school district or state because of the gaps in learning created by the inconsistent accountability system referenced above. The most recent reform is the CCSS, which were developed to improve upon NCLB to make all students prepared for college or career readiness in the 21st century (Wallender, 2014).

CCSS embedded in the RTTT reform initiated several changes to be made in the following areas of education: philosophy, curriculum, instruction, and assessments (Wallender, 2014). RTTT and the CCSS have now created standards, which are consistent throughout the nation, for those states that have adopted the standards. Reforms in education require a shift to take place and for the reform to be successful, the stakeholders implementing the shift need to actively participate. The rationale behind adopting CCSS is that it will create common educational standards, prepare students for college, provide a quality education for all students, and continue to increase the rigor in all schools (Wallender, 2014). All states had the option to voluntarily join RTTT and once they did the school systems would also begin implementing Common Core State Standards (Murphy & Torff, 2014). For schools to implement CCSS, they would need funding to support the teachers in using the standards. Once a state adopted CCSS, the state would be offered substantial funding for implementing CCSS and teachers and

administrators would then be held accountable for students' performance on assessments (Murphy & Torff, 2014). The only way states received funding for their schools is if they joined the Race to the Top reform and began implementing CCSS.

The goal of the CCSS was to establish common learning goals to better prepare students for college or a career. The CCSS were structured to focus on critical knowledge and skills needed in the real world. This included fewer standards but more in-depth learning requirements, established from evidence-based research, internationally benchmarked, and aligned from elementary school through high school to successfully build on students' knowledge each year (KDE, 2015a). The combination of RTTT and CCSS has now replaced No Child Left Behind reform. A great deal of discourse and debate exists in education and is focused on state-mandated testing (Martone & Sireci, 2009). The most recent discourse in education has centered on the RTTT reform (i.e., the policy including the Common Core State Standards) announced by President Barack Obama in 2009. The intent of this policy was to replace President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind program (NCLB), which assessed schools' ability to produce students who are proficient in math and reading by 2014 (Bell & Meinelt, 2011).

When a state started receiving funding, the schools within that state began to be accountable for producing academic success on the performance test. In Kentucky, this test is known as Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (KPREP; KDE, 2014a). Kentucky was the first state to adopt the CCSS referred to as Kentucky Core Academic Standards (KCAS). The new standards created were called KCAS, but based on the CCSS, were taught in schools during the 2011-2012 school year (KDE, 2014c). One of the reasons the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) adopted the CCSS is

because the standards are supposed to help students retain knowledge learned, and help students improve their critical thinking skills to perform better on state assessments (KDE, 2014a). KCAS helps students know specifically what they are learning and scaffolds this process (KDE, 2014c). Students will be able to communicate exactly what they know and what they do not know based on the KCAS standards. The teachers should scaffold the standards by breaking each standard into learning targets and from these learning targets students know what the learning outcomes are for that day (KDE, 2014c). CCSS were developed to create standards that are taught across the state with some consistency. The reason there is not 100% consistency is because the reform provided the standards but did not provide curriculum (Murphy & Torff, 2014). Each state implementing CCSS has the freedom to create the curriculum to meet the goals (Murphy & Torff, 2014). In short, each board of education can determine how the standards are taught but the common factor is the standards themselves.

KDE (2014a) states that using KCAS standards to teach will create clarity on what is supposed to be taught based on the standards, and allow teachers to collaborate more effectively together. Based on this information PLCs and WTs should support teachers in implementing CCSS. The CCSS were put in place to increase student achievement nationally (Wallender, 2014). Currently in Kentucky, KDE has reported that KCAS is supporting student learning because the following areas have improved: college and career readiness, graduation rates, remediation costs, and successful transitions to college and career (KDE, 2014a). However, in 2014, 41 schools in Kentucky were declared persistently low achieving (KDE, 2014b). Persistently low achieving (PLA) schools are determined by averaging the percentage of proficient or

distinguished scores on reading and mathematics scores on the state assessment. The schools that are identified as PLA fall in the bottom five percent of schools. These schools have three years to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) with extra support provided by the state.

The reforms discussed above have made several changes to education practices. Even with the current reform RTTT and the CCSS being implemented there is still a gap in student achievement and schools are continuing to be labeled as PLA. This study will examine the relationship between PLC and WT supports and the perception of these supports. Keeping these reforms in mind, this study will be addressing the Kentucky Core Academic Standards (KCAS/CCSS) in a large urban district (KUD) focusing on elementary schools. The research problem is that teachers are not prepared and supported to teach the Kentucky Core Academic Standards (KCAS/CCSS). Administrators (i.e., principals and assistant principals) in the school building need to be able to support teachers' implementation of common core state standards (CCSS) to increase student achievement. The CCSS do not dictate how teachers must teach the standard; individual states, districts, schools, and school leaders decide the implementation of the CCSS. The CCSS/KCAS were provided, but the curricula based on those standards was not (Council of Chief State School Officers and national Governors Association, 2011).

Currently, there are "two" reform initiatives in education in the United States. The "two" reforms are the Common Core State Standards and the polices that go with CCSS (e.g., Race to the Top). The policies determine how educators are held accountable based on student performance on the assessments (Murphy & Torff, 2014).

The Common Core State Standards are designed to describe what students should know in each grade as well as in each subject. Student scores on assessments like K-PREP measure this. Students must meet the benchmark score that is determined by the state (KDE, 2014c; Murphy & Torff, 2014). Additionally, states that adopt the CCSS through the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top program (U.S. Department of Education, 2012) will offer funding to states in exchange for the implementation of the standards. Additionally, administrators will be held accountable for student scores (Murphy & Torff, 2014). Legislators presented Race to the Top and CCSS in 2009. States were not forced to join the reform but could volunteer to adopt the new standards. Kentucky was the first state to voluntarily adopt the standards.

Common Core State Standards provided the opportunity for Language Arts/English and Mathematics to have nationally consistent curriculum (Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2011). Language Arts/English and Mathematics were justified as the first content standards to implement because they encompass the knowledge and skills that could meet all the needs for students to be 21st century learners (Wallender, 2014). The new standards require students in Language Arts/English to read a balance of literature and informational texts, write with an emphasis on argument, speak using both formal and informal techniques and to use specific vocabulary (KDE, 2015a). The key shifts in mathematics are for student to be able to do the following: focus and coherence on key topics, balance of concepts and skills, and sense making in math (KDE, 2015a). One of the goals for aligning standards across the country is to increase the number of students who are college and career ready (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2014). Common Core State Standards were also created to increase

the rigor of academics being taught nationwide, while still allowing states some flexibility with how states implemented the standards (e.g., assessments and curriculum framework).

The standardized test Kentucky uses at the end of each school year since adopting CCSS is called K-PREP. The test is designed by NCS Pearson, which provides assessments such as the K-PREP to more than 25 states and the US Department of Education (KDE, 2014d). The K-PREP is scored and schools are placed in percentiles based on those scores. The percentiles the elementary schools are placed in are based on a range from 1 to 99, where 50 would be an average performance (KDE, 2014d). The percentile scores are based on the student scores compared to students at the same level who took the test at the same time of year (KDE, 2014d). The school's percentile score will distinguish on average how well the students scored based on the national sample (KDE, 2014d). The label a school receives based on their overall score can impact the schools success in recruitment of students and parents. KUD scores on the K-PREP have improved but not meeting the desired benchmark.

The CCSS are still very new to educators, and because Kentucky was the first to adopt CCSS, Kentucky could be a model for other states. With the additional accountability that accompanies the CCSS, it is imperative that administrators know what supports will benefit all stakeholders (e.g., leaders, teachers, and students). The implementation of the CCSS is intense work for teachers to lead and can be challenging academically (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012; Murphy & Torff, 2014). The challenge for teachers in education today is the pressure of student performance on high-stakes accountability assessments. The environment of any reform based on student

achievement creates a cultural to teach to the test (Cizek, 2001; Ehren & Hatch, 2013). Teachers and administrators have additional pressure for student achievement because of the lack of time they have to prepare students using the CCSS, and the added pressure of the accountability policies. Unfortunately, the accountability policies did not leave much room for teachers to implement the standards and prepare themselves to teach the standards; reformers unintentionally left teachers in a tough position (Murphy & Torff, 2014).

CCSS adoption states are still trying to develop the best way to teach the standards. There are no studies published yet to guide the work that is being done. Currently, there are not any nationally normed tests similar to the CCSS (Murphy & Torff, 2014). At this time, the effect the standards will have on student learning, student performance or teaching practices using the standards cannot be known (Murphy & Torff, 2014). Additionally, based on the last two decades of implementing some form of standards-based learning, there is not clear evidence that reflects standards-based learning is effective (Mathis, 2010). There is limited research and evidence that indicate having common standards will increase student learning without other supports in place (Bracey, 2009; Mathis, 2010). In addition, there are no studies published that systematically addressed how teachers' pedagogy or practices influence the standards being taught (Murphy & Torff, 2014). There is not any evidence with CCSS that administrative observations and support are linked to student achievement or teacher improvement (Gargani & Strong, 2014). The lack of evidence and research guiding administrators on how to best support teachers when implementing CCSS has been left up to the administrators' discretion, and what protocols (i.e., systems, supports, observation) will

yield achievement (Gargani & Strong, 2014). There needs to be a better understanding of exactly what supports help teachers become better instructional leaders in their classrooms and develop quality lessons, especially when teaching CCSS and under the pressures of high-stakes assessments (Grossman et al., 2013). There have been many education-practitioner organizations which have supported the adoption of CCSS, but for the standards to increase student achievement, schools need proper professional development and organizational support; school systems do not currently have that capacity (Mathis, 2010). My study will specifically address two commonly used supports (i.e., PLCs and WTs) and how these supports are perceived to benefit instruction by teachers and administrators.

The gap in the literature is a description of how teachers are specifically supported to implement the CCSS. There is literature provided in general terms of what leaders should be aware of when implementing CCSS. It is explicit from the research and literature that CCSS has been put in place to raise the academic achievement of students in the United States, to increase critical thinking skills, college and career readiness, and become a 21st century learner (KDE, 2014a). What is missing is how administrators should support teachers in implementing CCSS. KDE (2014c) produced the standards for teachers to use but the implementation is not as structured. This places the majority of the responsibility on school administration to provide support for teachers in the implementation of CCSS (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012). Leadership is a determining factor in this study, and if teachers are provided the supports of PLCs and WTs to successfully implement CCSS will teacher and administrator perceptions be congruent?

Teacher Evaluation Framework

The state of Kentucky has shifted from the Comprehensive Teacher Performance Evaluation system, which evaluated teachers on ten teaching standards, to the Charlotte Danielson teaching framework (KDE, 2016). The prior evaluation, Comprehensive Teacher Performance Evaluation system, expected teachers to perform the following duties: demonstrate applied content knowledge, design and plan instruction, create and maintain a learning climate, implement and manage instruction, assess and communicate learning results, implement technology, reflect and evaluate teaching and learning, collaborate with peers, implement professional development, and lead within the profession (Kentucky Teaching Standards, 2008). Teachers could be placed into one of four categories for each of the 10 teaching standards: Consistently Meets, Adequately Meets, Inconsistently Meets, or Does Not Meet within each standard. Consistently meets states the employee meets or exceeds the performance criteria, adequately meets indicates the employee requires minimal intervention and follows instructions, inconsistently meets is when there is improvement needed from the employee's performance, and does not meet requires frequent assistance and support provided to employee because their job performance is unacceptable. Additionally, teachers were observed up to twice a year based on their tenure (i.e., completed 5 years of teaching). These types of evaluations were used to remove teachers from the profession instead of providing feedback for improvement.

The framework of PGES (i.e., Charlotte Danielson Framework) encourages teachers to include the following themes in their teaching practices: accommodating individual needs, developmental appropriateness, high expectations, cultural competence, equity, student assumption of responsibility, and effective technology integration

(Danielson, 2011). The framework also evaluates teachers based on evidence in four domains: Planning and Preparation, The Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities. Teacher can score ineffective, developing, accomplished, or exemplary in each domain. KDE (2014e), supplied teachers and administrators with a rubric describing each domain of the framework, and the criteria for the assignment of the performance score. The rubric includes the definition for the categories to be scored, critical attributes for the category, and possible examples for the category. KDE and Kentucky Leadership Academy developed PGES training modules based off the evaluation framework developed by Charlotte Danielson (KDE, 2014e). Teachers are observed multiple times a year in the PGES framework. Teachers are observed by supervising administrators. Depending on the cycle of the framework, the teacher can be observed up to four times a year. This consists of two possible mini observations; a full observation, a peer observation, and student feedback through a student voice survey. Based on the evidence collected by the administrator and teacher throughout the year places the teacher into one of three cycles being: self-directed, directed, or an improvement plan (KDE, 2014e). For example, the self-directed cycle allows teachers to develop their professional growth plan. The directed cycle includes the administrator when the teacher is developing their professional growth plan. Finally, the improvement plan is an intensive process where the administrator provides goals for the teacher. The PGES evaluation model is deemed to produces effective teachers and administrators through a partnership of continuous growth (KDE, 2014e). According to Looney (2011), teachers need to continuously improve their knowledge and strategies with the changing curricula to meet student needs.

The evaluation system in Kentucky and KUD has shifted from only teachers being observed to a system that focuses on how the teacher is engaging students and promoting their learning outcomes. The evaluation system has also gone from a brief checklist the administrator completed with a small narrative as evidence to a system with four domains indicating successful teaching behaviors. In the new evaluation system each domain requires several pieces of evidence. The evidence teachers develop are: Student Growth Goal, Professional Growth Goal, Proficiency target percent on an enduring skill for students, and lesson plans (KDE, 2014e). Based on those goals established by the teacher are then followed-up with their results at the end of the year. However, during the course of the year the teacher collaborates and reflects with their supervising administrator on their progress, and any adjustments that may need to be made (KDE, 2014e). Administrators when observing teachers must be able to provide specific evidence on each domain. For example, domain 1 (i.e., planning and preparation) the administrator must determine if the teacher has demonstrated the following: knowledge of content, knowledge of students, established instructional goals, and designed coherent instruction (Danielson, 2011). Possible examples of evidence the administrator would be looking for in a lesson plan is, age appropriate learning objectives, differentiation through out the lesson depending on student needs, and a structured lesson that includes transitions (KDE, 2014e). This shift in the evaluation system has created a sense of collaboration between the teacher and administrator as well as a way to specifically support teachers with feedback (KDE, 2014e).

There are several instructional practices administrators can implement to support teachers. The following instructional practices will be reviewed: administrative coaching

and feedback, school wide instructional goals, professional development, emotional and social supports, and intentional curriculum. According to Yahir (2000), a reaction to *A Nation at Risk* (1983), innovative practices surrounding academic time has been the focus in educational policy. This led to administrators finding creative ways to extend learning time by manipulating the schedule structure or providing afterschool services. Administrators have continued to seek out instructional strategies to maximize instructional time (Yahir, 2000).

Administrators who conduct classroom walkthroughs, coaching and provide feedback (Neumerski, 2013; Grissom et al., 2013) can assist teachers with adjusting their instructional practices as well as reflecting on their own practice without it being evaluative. A key purpose of providing feedback to teachers is to prompt teachers to engage in reflective practices on their teaching (Harrison, Lawson, & Wortley, 2005; Galbraith, 2003). According to Hudson (2014), formal feedback (i.e., evaluation), but oral feedback can occur more frequently and can provide teachers with immediate feedback in an informal manner (Bunton, Stimpson, & Lopez-Real, 2002; Sempowicz & Hudson, 2011). Setting school wide instructional goals and monitoring classrooms (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger, 2005) can create a consistent expectation for teachers from administrators. This refers to administrators creating instructional focuses for the school. For example, some schools set the expectation that the teachers will post learning targets each day, teach bell-to-bell, and engage students in collaborative learning. Once the instructional goals are established it is key, according to Kimball (2002), for the administrators to provide feedback aligned with the instructional school wide goals to provide consistency.

Additionally, administrators can plan intentional and meaningful professional development for teachers (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger, 2005; Grissom et al., 2013). Providing professional development for teachers allows time for teachers to reflect on their practices and continue to refine their practices. Teacher reflection can happen individually or within a PLC team. Professional development for teachers has been identified in leading change in teacher knowledge and practices (Desimone, 2009; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007). There are features of professional development needed to be successful: content focus, active learning, coherence, sufficient duration, and collective participation (Garet et al., 2001). Lee and Buxton (2013), expand on the focuses of professional development and the purposes. Professional development can focus on content, which helps teachers in learning new skills or to increase student achievement. Active learning engages the teachers in the process of learning and being a part of the professional development. Coherence allows the professional development include broader goals of the content or skill, sufficient duration is ensuring enough hours and sessions are provided to make the professional development meaningful, and collective participation describes the importance of several teachers from the same school building participate in a professional development together (Lee & Buxton, 2013).

Coordinating curriculum and establishing the content the teachers are expected to teach is essential as an instructional leader (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger, 2005). Teachers need to understand the curriculum in order to adopt the curriculum with fidelity (Yurdakul, 2015). Curriculum is ultimately shaped in practice by the teachers and students (Yurdakul, 2015). The perceptions teachers have about the curriculum translate

in their instruction (Applefield, Huber, & Moaellem, 2001; Biggs, 1996; Jaramillo, 1996). Administrators cannot simply hand teachers new curriculum or make changes until the teachers have an opportunity to understand the changes. Including teachers in the process will create buy-in and allow administrators to support teachers. Another support to assist teachers implementing curriculum is the protection of instructional time (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger, 2005). Administrations need to acknowledge the need for teachers to have an opportunity, like professional development, to understand new curriculum and also provided teachers protected time to design quality lessons.

Administrators who provide support to teachers can increase their effectiveness in the classroom. For example, administrators who implemented new teaching practices school-wide were successful when providing critical support, believed in the instructional change, and had a long-term vision for the instructional change (Hertberg-Davis & Brighton, 2006). Additionally, teachers were effective when supported emotionally and when resources were provided (Hertberg-Davis & Brigton, 2006). According to Abbey and Esposito (1985), teachers were more effective when they felt socially supported by their administrators, and had a greater job satisfaction. Teachers at work who feel supported by their administrators view the work environment as less threatening (Abbey & Esposito, 1985), which can lead to a trusting and collaborative culture. There are four dimensions of supports administrators can offer: emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support (Littrell, Billingsley, & Cross, 1994). Within these support systems teachers who describe their administrator as supportive find their job more rewarding, have decreased attrition, and increased motivation and productivity (Littrell et al., 1994). Thus, teachers who feel supported by their

administrator tend to want to be at work, and take risks instructionally. This is important to consider when implementing CCSS and how administrators can offer these emotional and social supports when implementing PLCs and WTs.

The importance of supporting teachers is undeniable, but administrators who support teachers purposefully create a positive climate and culture. Intentionally supporting teachers using the structures discussed above will foster a trusting, professional environment that allows teachers the opportunity to focus on instruction within the framework of the CCSS. This is important to understanding the potential benefits of PLCs and WTs can serve in supporting instruction.

Administrators as Instructional Supervision versus Instructional Evaluation

Leadership in schools as a principal or assistant principal has evolved significantly throughout the history of education (Hallinger, 2003). Beginning in the 1980's, two differing views of the role of principals and assistant principals emerged causing great debate among educational practitioners: the instructional leader and the transformational leader. According to Hallinger (2003), instructional leadership models emerged in the 1980's identifying many characteristics of what a leader should embody. One of these characteristics was strong and directive leadership, and this style of principal heavily influenced the direction of curriculum practices. Additionally, researchers defined instructional leaders as coordinating, controlling, supervising, and developing curriculum and overseeing instruction in the school (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

The transformational leadership style did not emerge until the 1990's and was defined as a shared leadership between the principal and teachers (Hallinger, 2003).

According to Hallinger (2003), transformational leadership requires a focus on developing innovation within the organization. Shared leadership builds sustainability throughout the building, empowers teachers to participate collaboratively and increases teacher buy-in with the systems being implemented. One cause for the changing role of administrators is the way students are being assessed. With the change in assessments (i.e., initiatives such as Race to the Top and the implementation of the Common Core curriculum), principals face significant pressure to increase student achievement. The focus has now narrowed to emphasize the role of leaders and their effectiveness in creating positive change. There still is an emphasis that the principal is a critical player to ensure academic achievement, especially for minority and low-income students (Andrews & Soder, 1987). The role of a principal has shifted from being a disciplinarian to an instructional leader, and, now a transformational leader. Leaders' understanding of how to lead effectively will empower the stakeholders in their building and increase student achievement. Administrators have the responsibility to interact with teachers continually by giving feedback about teaching practices and increasing the environment of collaboration (Knapp, 2008). The purpose of this section is to further investigate the role of the administrator and how they support teachers through leadership practices.

Administrators are the key for improvement within schools and were first viewed as managers of the school building. Administrators then shifted from being a managerial leader to an instructional leader (Lee, 1991).

> According to Wright (1991):
>
> The principal as an instructional leader, one might imagine a principal sitting at a desk and identifying instruction-related problems, designing improvement plans,

> identifying instructional leadership tasks, determining amounts of time needed for tasks such as classroom observations and conferences and convening meetings for carrying out these decisions. (p. 113)

Unfortunately, it is not always realistic for a principal to have the time and flexibility to carry out such tasks. Even though many of those tasks are instructionally driven to improve teaching practices, the day-to-day work a principal encounters delays the process.

The instructional leadership model emerged in the early 1980s shaping the criteria for effective principals and their leadership style (Hallinger, 2003). This model was adopted across the United States rapidly and was used by most principals (Hallinger, 1992; Hallinger & Wimpelberg, 1992). The literature also reflects that from the 1920s until the 1970s principals were mostly viewed as an administrative manager (Valentine & Prater, 2011). Stakeholders assumed principals would maintain an orderly school environment, removing any behavioral obstacles in the classroom, and handle all disruptions in their office (Valentine & Prater, 2011). During the time when leaders were viewed as managers, it was thought principals should be consistent, assertive disciplinarian (Eberts & Stone, 1988). According to Brewer (1993), it was the principal's duty to ensure day-to-day operations ran smoothly and indirectly, all students would achieve academically. Additionally, Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan and Lee (1982) stated, principals must support their teachers with discipline to promote an academic environment. Also emerging in the 1980s was an instrument to measure effective leadership models and begin to identify which models were the most successful (Bossert

et al., 1982; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). It is believed the instructional leadership model was the first leadership model to be studied.

The instructional leadership model placed the principal in control of coordinating, controlling, supervising, and developing curriculum within the school (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). This type of model was implemented to help increase achievement in poor urban school settings because there was a need for a strong, directive leader (Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). To improve student achievement using the instructional leadership model, the principal was viewed as a culture builder fostering high academic expectations for both teachers and students (Mortimore, 1993; Purkey & Smith, 1983). This placed the majority of the schools systems and academics on the principal to manage.

Table 4 describes, Hallinger's (2003) instructional leadership using three dimensions of school leadership defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school-learning climate. Hallinger (2003) provides these three dimensions as a foundation for administrators using the instructional leadership model and how they can support instruction.

Table 4

Hallinger's School Mission and Managing Instructional Program

Three Dimensions	Examples
School's Mission	Principal is responsible communicating a clear academic mission.
Managing Instructional Program	Supervising and evaluating instruction Coordinating curriculum Monitoring student progress
Positive school-learning climate	Protecting instructional time Promoting professional development Maintaining high visibility Providing incentives for teachers and learning

Wright's (1991) definition for an instructional leader is the planning that is needed for administrators to support teachers. Instructional leadership is also seen as the functions an administrator provides to support teaching and learning (Murphy, 1988). The instructional model put many tasks at the principal's control. This can result challenges if the principal is being spread too thin, because the principal is also in control of various responsibilities outside of instruction such as: manager, politician, instructor, human resources, and disciplinarian (Hallinger, 2003). Strong instructional leaders are not afraid to be involved with working with teachers and engaged in supporting the curriculum being taught (Horng & Loeb, 2010). Today in education a principal is more likely to be seen completing several small tasks, such as instructional leadership tasks, and their time is disjointed and brief (Martin & Willower, 1981;Wright, 1991). A principal as an instructional leader is also described as someone providing resources and steering the school towards the goal of increasing student achievement through improved teaching practices (Keefe & Jenkins, 1984). An instructional leader has several roles and

responsibilities: goal setting, supervision and evaluation, staff development, professional development, curriculum development, involving stakeholders, and establishing a safe school environment (Larsen, 1987; Wright, 1991).

Beginning in the 1990s, researchers shifted their focus to studying trends in educational reform such as: empowerment, shared leadership, and organizational learning (Hallinger, 2003). During the 1990s, transformational leadership took the forefront as a desired leadership model. The instructional leadership model began to be criticized due to the top-down approach; the principal was the sole expertise, power, and authority (Hallinger, 2003). Furthermore, in the 1990s reformers thought there should be a change in the following areas: the organizational structure, professional roles, and goals of public education (Valentine & Prater, 2011). The changes brought on by educational reform helped the transformational leader emerge (Valentine & Prater, 2011). Society began to drastically change with the need to educate more diverse students. Transformational leadership increased as the model of choice because of the changing society and this model would help support restructuring schools (Halllinger, 2003). With the demands of students, teachers, and accountability for administrators the transformational leadership model allowed principals to share leadership and not be over programmed.

However, though the transformational leadership model was first studied as a theory during the 1970s and 1980s it was not implemented until the early 1990s (Bass, 1997; Howell & Avolio, 1993). According to Leithwood (1994), the transformational leadership model would provide the leadership characteristics needed for schools facing challenges in the 21st century. The transformational leadership model is intended to build capacity among an organization, and to support the development of teaching practices as

well as student learning (Hallinger, 2003). According to Beyer (2012), leadership theory supported transformational leadership connecting this model to a charismatic leadership style.

Leithwood and Jantizi (2000), created a model with seven components describing transformational leadership. The seven components defined were: individualized support, shared goals, vision, intellectual stimulation, culture building, rewards, high expectations, and modeling. Instilling these seven components within the building and instruction allows for a natural collaboration to occur between teachers and administrators. Furthermore, teachers that incorporate these components into instruction promotes student engagement (Leithwood & Jantizi, 2000). Leithwood (1992) further states, transformational leadership should be pursing three goals: collaborating with staff members and developing a professional school culture, encouraging continuous teacher development, and problem solving as a school unit instead of only the principal. Again, these three goals support the seven components by empowering teachers to be leaders and take ownership. The three goals also allow for staff members to continue to improve and be accountable for creating solutions.

The major shift from the instructional model to the transformational model is when the principal went from being the sole controller to now sharing leadership. The transformational leadership model lends the opportunity for principals to empower teachers and develop teacher leaders. Table 5 describes the differences between an instructional leader and a transformational leader outlined by three distinctions (Hallinger, 2003).

Table 5

Hallinger's Instructional Leadership versus Transformational Leadership

Instructional Leadership	Transformational Leadership
Top-down	Bottom-up focus on approach to school improvement
First-order	Second-order target for change
Managerial or Transactional	Transformations relationship to staff

As identified in Table 5, the first distinction, top-down leadership, places the principal in control of all instruction and supervising the instruction, where bottom-up instruction provides the opportunity for shared leadership and changes to occur from the bottom-up (Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2001; Jackson, 2000). The second distinction, first-order, directly impacts the curriculum and instruction being delivered to students in the classroom (Cuban, 1984), and second-order distributes the capacity for teachers to be in control of the first-order changes in learning (Hallinger, 2003). The third distinction, transactional approaches, keeps the status quo among the staff and proceeds with managing the school environment, whereas transformational develops relationships with staff members to create self-motivation to achievement improvement in learning (Hallinger, 2003). The shift from instructional leadership focuses on changes in the curriculum and learning and transformational leadership focuses on changes in people and building capacity while still achieving rigorous learning. According to Jackson (2000), transformational leadership requires the principal to be comfortable with change

and the uncertainty that comes with change. The change in leadership styles reflects the changing nature of education in American schools with curriculum, culture, and society.

Several studies have indicated the role of an administrator as the pivotal person in guiding teachers to change their pedagogy, and style of teaching (Kalule & Bouchamma, 2013b, Ovando, 2005; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2006). Ovando (2005) conducted a study to examine instructional leadership through practical learning. The participants in the study observed classes, collected data from the classes, and gave written feedback to the teachers of the classrooms visited. The study had the following findings: instructional leaders in a building need to be equipped with professional ways to deliver constructive feedback, and knowledge of what quality instruction looks like, and be aware that teachers appreciate feedback with a positive approach. This study also implied constructive feedback should guide the professional development offered for teachers and such intentional professional development could increase effective teaching practices.

Kalule and Bouchamma (2013b) examined the relevance of the perceptions of the instructional supervisor's role from the administrator's point of view. Supervision in this study was defined as an evaluative process. This study used a questionnaire examining the relationship between teacher evaluation and teacher professional development. The theoretical framework used in this study was the interconnected model of professional growth. This framework suggests that change occurs in cycles using the following domains: professional experimentation, personal domain, and the domain of consequence. The study concluded that having an effective evaluation program needs to consider the perceptions of all stakeholders involved in the process. This study took into consideration the role of the administrator and evaluation practices. Kalule and

Bouchamma (2013b) did not investigate the perceptions of teachers and practices in place to support instruction. The two leadership styles discussed were instructional leadership and transformational leadership. It is important to understand both styles and the key characteristics of each style. Over time administrators have evolved from managers of discipline, to controlling and supervising the learning environment, and finally to shared leadership. The instructional leadership style was a top-down approach where the administrator was in control. The transformational leadership style was deemed to be a shared leadership style supporting teaching and learning, and also building capacity among teachers to lead. By using both of these supports administrators increase the amount of feedback received from an administrator and time for teachers to collaborate with one another. As a transformational leader an administrator shares in the process of improving instruction with the teachers. However, it is unknown how administrators support teachers in a non-evaluative manner and teacher's perceptions of supports offered by administrators.

The primary purpose of supervision activities conducted by administrators is to support teachers as they begin to implement new practices, refine instruction, and help improve instructional practices (Kalule & Bouchamma, 2013b; McCann, Jones, & Aronoff, 2012; McQuarri & Wood, 1991). A school culture that promotes constant dialogue and reflection is necessary for student success (Wise & Jacobo, 2010). When administrators supervise teachers effectively it can promote student-learning (Harris 1985; Kalule & Bouchamma, 2013), promote professional development (Kalule & Bouchamma, 2013; Tucker & Pounder, 2010; Zepeda & Kruskamp, 2007), and improve the teaching-learning process (Hoy & Forsyth, 1986). According to Wright (1991),

instructional leadership and supervision are synonymous because they both are focused on improving teaching and learning, and this is supported by the intentional collaboration between the teacher and principal.

Supervision practices should address the needs of teachers, develop teachers, and monitor progress in a supportive manner (Glanz & Sullivan 2000; Glickman 1981; Nolan, 1997; Zepeda & Kruskamp, 2007). As the administrator supervises (i.e., supports) teachers they also need to be cognizant of instilling confidence in the teacher (Palandra, 2010). Examples of supports an administrator can offer are frequent visits the teacher's class for a short period of time, and providing relevant feedback per their observations (Glanz & Sullivan, 2000; Zepeda & Kruskamp, 2007). Teachers require guided practice and support from administrators providing feedback to encourage best practices in instruction (Joyce & Showers, 1982). According to McQuarrie and Wood (1991), "supervision accomplishes this by helping teachers refine skills they have already learned" (p. 94). Teachers need to feel a part of the process when administrators are supervising them; if this does not occur teachers will not be committed or trust the process (Withall & Wood, 1979).

Administrators as Evaluators

Administrators also have the responsibility to clearly communicate the difference between evaluating a teacher and supporting a teacher. Both activities are equally as important to help a teacher grow within the profession (Duke, 1987; Glickman, 1985; McQuarrie & Wood, 1991). The majority of teachers are familiar with evaluation practices but not supporting practices conducted by an administrator. Many times supervision and evaluation practices are miscommunicated (Lee, 1991) and teachers feel

as if every time an administrator is in their room they are being evaluated. It is important to define the differences (Lee, 1991; McQuarrie & Wood, 1991) and also communicate an evaluation should also be used to benefit teachers instructionally, not a way to get them out of the building.

Instructional supervision by administrators is used to support teachers to prepare and improve their skills before they are evaluated (McQuarrie & Wood, 1991). With the implementation of strong instructional supervision and support from administrators, positive summative evaluations should increase in number. If these are implemented with fidelity teachers should not have anxiety about evaluations. According to McQuarrie and Wood (1991), " supervision, staff development, and teacher evaluation are three distinctively discrete, yet connected, dimensions of personnel improvement processes employed in educational settings" (p. 91). However, the way these dimensions are implemented can result confusion and misunderstanding (Duke, 1987; Goldhammer, 1969; Wood & Lease, 1987). Understanding the connections between the dimensions is important because when implemented together successfully, they can impact student achievement (McQuarrie & Wood, 1991). Supervision and evaluation are often seen as two separate entities, when, in fact, they compliment each other and are instructional improvement processes (Duke, 1987; Glickman, 1985; McQuarrie & Wood, 1991). When an administrator is evaluating a teacher, the purpose is to make decisions about if the teacher is fulfilling their responsibilities in the classroom (McGreal & Wood, 1988; McQuarrie & Wood, 1991; Wood & Lease, 1987). As stated in the section above, when an administrator is supervising it is for the purpose of supporting the teacher in a non-evaluative manner. To improve a school's curriculum the roles of supervision as support

to teachers and evaluation as an approach to rate a teacher, must be understood (McQuarrie & Wood, 1991; Wood & Lease, 1987).

Supervision and evaluation are intended to be used for different purposes. As stated, supervision is supposed to support teachers as a formative exercise and evaluations are a final ranking of the teacher fulfilling their responsibility as a summative exercise. Unfortunately, in many schools supervising activities conducted by administrators are closely related to the evaluation process and hinder the purpose of supervision (Goldstein & Noguera, 2006; Nolan & Hilkirk, 1991; Nolan, Hawkins, & Francis, 1993; O'Sullivan, 2004; Poglinco & Bach, 2004; Snow-Gerono, 2008; Kalule & Bouchamma, 2013). The lines are blurred between supervision and evaluation because administrators are now being pressured to have more evidence other than the formal observation that is conducted on a yearly basis (Palandra, 2010). Another defined difference between supervision and evaluation is when a teacher is being evaluated the administrators role can be seen as the superordinate (Dornbusch, Scott, & Busching, 1975). According to Woodland and Mazure (2015), there is a need for a teacher evaluation system that helps teachers continuously improve throughout their career. A system like this should improve teacher practices and at the same time retain teachers to ensure qualified teachers are supporting student learning throughout their careers. Administrators need to keep in mind that evaluating teachers is for a different purpose than supervising teachers. Even though there are similarities between supervision and evaluation they are not the same and cannot be communicated to teachers the same way. The difference in evaluation and supervision can determine the teacher perceptions surrounding administrators' involvement in PLCs and WTs.

Administrators are under constant pressure to lead a successful school. To maintain positive test scores and student achievement, administrators must evaluate the instruction within the building. However, there are administrators that use supervision and evaluation practices only on struggling teachers when the reality is all teachers need support to continue to improve (Wood, Thompson, & Russell, 1981). Some administrators use supervisory practices to push teachers out of the profession (Stoelinga, 2011) and other use these practices not to support instruction, but to monitor teachers (Wanzare, 2012). It is important for administrators to define which leadership functions will serve as supports (i.e., PLC and WT) to teachers and which will serve as evaluating indicators (Grissom et al., 2013). Without a clear definition of these functions, teachers can resist supervision practices and feel threatened. This affects teachers' confidence in their own abilities and causes them to feel inspected by administrators, instead of supported (Kalule & Bouchamma, 2013). Teachers can confuse supervision and evaluation practices because many administrators use classroom observations as a tool to support instruction and evaluate teachers (Lee, 1991). This can cause tension between the administrator and teacher (Lee, 1991) and the goal of improving teaching practices and student learning decreases with this type of relationship.

In education each year there are initiatives that are being promoted as a way to improve teacher effectiveness and student learning. However, whatever the initiative is there must be systems in place for support and accountability or it will fail or not be implemented correctly (Cuban, 1998; Datnow, Borman, & Stringfield, 2000; Elmore & Sykes, 1992; Fullan, 1996). The alarming fact is that administrators who are in charge of professional development and supporting teachers spend more time on administrative

duties than educational obligations (Kalule & Bouchamma, 2013). Furthermore, some believe that administrators are not prepared to support all teachers in instruction and their job demands make it difficult to spend the amount of time necessary to significantly benefit teachers (Lee, 1991).

Types of Instructional Supports

For a leader to be effective at implementing CCSS, they need to be able to take innovative ideas, build them into the school system, and guide the work creating sustainable growth (Wise & Jacobo, 2010). Administration in school buildings must be intentional and effective when implementing CCSS. According to Eilers and D'Amico (2012), there are six elements of highly effective leaders that need to be taken into account for CCSS to be implemented successfully. The elements are: (a) establishing a purpose, (b) setting priorities, (c) aligning personnel with circular needs, (d) practicing professional discourse, (e) encouraging risk taking, and (f) providing feedback. Using these six elements can help provide a framework for administration/leadership to use when supporting their teachers. Administrators have the responsibility of guiding teachers on how to best facilitate the new standards (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012). The first element, establishing a purpose, is a foundational piece. A successful leader creates a vision, mission, and a course of action for how to carry out the teaching and learning being facilitated in the building (Mendez-Morse, 1992). Once this is in place the administration/leadership should facilitate the strengths of individual staff members and align them with the overall vision (Mendez-Morse, 1992; Thessin & Starr, 2011; Wise & Jacobs, 2010). By doing this the staff will be more likely to support the instructional shift focusing on implementing CCSS. This process is important in the development of the

staff feeling comfortable with the new standards, however it cannot be rushed. According to Eilers and D'Amico (2012), "effective leaders create prioritized and proactive structure to reduce anxiety and frustration while ensuring success" (p. 48). Implementing the new CCSS requires leaders to identify the priorities in their building and act upon them to continue the goal of student achievement.

There are several ways that administrators can support teachers. There have been several studies that list the following areas as important instructional leadership activities: classroom walkthroughs, coaching and feedback to teachers (Grissom et al., 2013; Neumerski, 2013), monitoring classrooms and setting instructional goals school wide (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger, 2005), supervision or evaluation of teachers (Donaldson, 2009; Ebmeier, 2003), coordinating curriculum (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger, 2005), planning professional development (Grissom et al., 2013; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger, 2005), and protecting instructional time (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger, 2005). Although there are several supports administrators can offer teachers, this study will be focusing on two supports highly encouraged with in the district being studied. The two support structures this study will focus on are PLCs and WTs.

Professional Learning Communities

The use of PLCs have become a popular form of teacher and administrator collaboration to increase student achievement in education. The ability for teachers and administrators to desegregate data and have conversations about what is best for students instructionally are initiated by PLCs. For PLCs to be beneficial for teachers administrators need to reserve dedicated time in the school day for teachers to collaborate

and plan instruction (Woodland & Mazur, 2015). PLCs can be defined as a group of people in a school setting sharing, collaborating, reflecting, and improving on their practice to benefit students (DuFour, Eaker, Karhanek, & DuFour, 2004; Stoll et al., 2006; Watson, 2014; Wise & Jacobo, 2010).

According to Woodland and Mazur (2015), "PLCs are arguably the two most powerful ideas related to PD at work in modern education theory" (p.7), and have increased in popularity in education over the past decade (Anrig, 2013; Curry, 2008; Hargreaves, 2007; Talbert, 2010). PLCs can develop professional bonds, reduce teacher isolation, increase consistency of teaching practices, increase the school's overall capacity, and increase pupil learning (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; DuFour et al., 2008; Hoagland, Birkenfeld, & Box, 2014; Stahl, 2015; Talbert, 2010; Watson, 2014). The PLC framework is intended to reduce teacher isolation of planning, creating assessments, and analyzing student data alone. The work of PLCs creates a community of educators working together for the same purpose of learning from each other and moving students academically. Incorporating PLCs can create a positive culture of collaboration among colleagues as well as increase teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Hoagland et al., 2014).

The PLC framework serves to support teachers in producing high-quality materials for instruction, continues to help improve student comprehension, and helps support adult learning (Stahl, 2015; Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2010). The main characteristics of a PLC are to focus on student learning, reflective dialogue between teachers, and continually improving upon learning goals, and instructional practices (Nelson et al., 2010; Vescio et al., 2008). Schools that adopt the PLC model reserve time

for teachers to collaborate together to continue to find solutions to problems, evaluate what students are learning, or not learning, and continue planning instruction based on this information (Woodland & Mazur, 2015). If PLCs are implemented with fidelity and administrators provide the time for teachers to use this support it has the potential to produce positive student gains.

PLCs are a collaborative space for teachers to meet and discuss student achievement, and lesson planning. DuFour et al. (2004) adds a PLC is focused on student learning rather than teaching and working collaboratively while holding yourself accountable. Teachers need to be a part of determining the instructional strategies used and how they will shape the achievement school-wide (Lee, 1991). Gajda and Koliba (2008) state, working with peers who understand each other's content and pedagogy can increase the effectiveness of collaboration. This means using student evidence, increasing focused dialogue about student performance, and challenging their teaching methods can ultimately lead to improved instruction (Gajda & Koliba, 2008). PLCs can improve the school climate and teachers' satisfaction at work (Woodland & Mazur, 2015).

Although PLCs directly affect teachers and students, it is the administrator's responsibility to build a culture of collegial collaboration and build professional communities (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012). The administrator will also need to provide a supportive culture and norms for teachers to take risks within their classrooms (Little, 1982). PLCs allow administrators to build capacity within their buildings by harnessing the talent the teachers possess and "treat teachers as the generators of knowledge instead of seeing them merely as people who need improvement to happen to them" (Woodland

& Mazur, 2015, p. 9). Instilling this environment of PLCs provides the structure for an effective collaborative culture to exist (Hoagland et al., 2014), continue to build capacity within the school, and is the most effective model to create positive change instructionally (Woodland & Mazur, 2015).

Within the PLC's foundation there are questions the PLC needs to address when meeting to maintain focus DuFour et al., (2006) suggests asking the following questions: a) what do we expect our students to learn? b) how will we know they are learning? c) how will we respond when they do not learn? d) how will we respond if they already know it? (p. 90). PLCs can also provide the time for teachers to analyze data from student work. According to Glickman (1985) and McQuarrie and Wood (1991), administrators often interpret the teachers' data for them, rather than giving the teacher the opportunity to interpret their data. This will empower the teacher to identify growth areas and lead the discussion with the support of the administrator. The administrator in this instance is placed in a supportive role rather than an evaluator encouraging a productive dialogue between the teacher and administrator.

For the administrators to develop a culture of support, they will need to identify staff members who can help introduce collegial support and collaboration and work with those members to then empower the rest of the staff (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012). For CCSS to be implemented successfully, school leaders must promote a professional collaboration among staff (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012). The uniformed standards naturally promote collaboration and consistency in teaching the standards. It is key that each grade level and subject collaborate to bring clarity (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012). According to Thessin and Starr (2011), simply putting teachers together for the sake of collaborating in

not enough, the collaboration process has to be learned and intentional. Effective leaders should build strong relationships between staff members and create the security needed for collaboration to build PLCs, which work together towards rigorous student learning based on CCSS (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012; Fullan, 2002; Wise & Jacobo, 2010).

According to Wise and Jacobo (2010), they suggest that the practice of PLCs in schools helps teachers learn as a unit and PLCs develop a collaborative responsibility for all students to learn the standards. When teachers are in PLCs, it creates motivation to collaborate and it facilitates a feeling of being valued and being an important part of the school (DuFour et al., 2004; Fullan, 2002). When a teacher feels valued this promotes buy-in within the school systems like PLCs. According to Little (1982), teachers will need to share their instructional expertise when embarking on new and challenging content. This is best supported through an environment that allows for teachers to make decisions, organize materials, and implement quality instruction (Lee, 1991).

Little (1982) used a qualitative approach to examine the professional collaboration between teachers and administrators, and suggested future research use a quantitative approach. Little (1982) conducted an ethnography studying teachers and administrators in six schools total. There were four schools that were considered successful and two schools that were considered not successful. The focus of the study was to examine the workplace and organizational characteristics for teachers "learning on the job." The findings of the study suggested that in successful schools teachers were more likely to interact professionally (i.e., planning, talk about instruction) with other teachers and administrators. Hence the more successful a school is deemed the more teachers are willing to participate in collaboration with peers. These types of schools

continue to focus on instructional practices unlike schools deemed to be unsuccessful. This study suggests that functional PLCs reflect positive school culture and an increase of efficacy of teachers contributing to collaboration with peers.

The PLC framework assists teachers in producing high-quality materials for instruction, continues to help improve student comprehension, and helps support adult learning (Stahl, 2015; Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2010). The main characteristics of a PLC is to focus on student learning, reflective dialogue between teachers, and continually improving upon learning goals, and instructional practices (Nelson et al., 2010; Vescio et al., 2008). Schools that adopt the PLC model reserve time for teachers to collaborate together to continue to find solutions to problems, evaluate what students are learning, or not learning, and continue planning instruction based on this information (Woodland & Mazur, 2015). If PLCs are implemented with fidelity and administrators provide the time for teachers to use this support it has the potential to produce positive student gains.

PLCs have many benefits to schools, teachers, and students as mentioned, but there are some challenges as well. Currently in the United States teachers are reported to only have about eight hours a year towards collaboration with peers, and only two percent average thirty-three hours annually (Wei, Darling-Hammond, & Adamson, 2010). This indicates teachers do not have enough time to collaborate or there is not time allotted for teachers to collaborate daily. PLCs focus on groups of teachers with similar content areas or similar students, but this can create a problem for "special area" teachers such as PE, music, or art. These teachers rarely have time to meet collaboratively or may serve as a singleton in their schools and due to time constraints meeting with others at

other schools is difficult and decreases meaningful reflection to impact instruction (Gajda & Koliba, 2008).

Depending on the school culture PLCs can fluctuate on how accountable the team of teachers is with what is produced during this collaboration time. There is not a formal accountability system associated with PLC outcomes that produce quality work or have available resources to do so, and PLCs are not monitored consistently (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Talbert, 2010; Vescio et al., 2008). PLCs can also lack focus. This lack of focus creates a time for teachers to avoid work that needs to be accomplished. This can lead to a toxic environment of *coblaboration* and create frustration due to the lack of measurable instructional improvement through collaboration (Woodland & Mazur, 2015). Thus creating a negative perception of this type of instructional support. According to Woodland and Mazur (2015), "PLCs have not garnered many fierce policy-level proponents who have managed to effectively codify them into state or federal mandates" (p. 20). However, PLCs have a variety of advantages to improve meaningful collaboration, instruction, and student achievement. PLCs will serve as one of the variables in the study to examine the relationship this support has with CCSS student achievement.

Harris, Ingle, and Rutledge (2014) and Louis and Marks (1998) conducted studies that used a mixed methods approach investigating variables such as, principal efficacy and the influence of PLCs on collaboration and student achievement. Harris et al. (2014) examined the following question: why do teacher value-added measures differ from principals' perception of effectiveness. Louis and Marks (1998) examined the following research question, what are the influences of a professional community environment

within the school and the effects on student achievement? Each study conducted interviews for the qualitative aspect of their study. These two studies differed in the quantitative data collection with one study using existing data from test scores (Harris et al. 2014) and Louis and Marks (1998) issued a questionnaire to be completed by participants. The findings of the Harris et al. (2014) study suggested principals' informal evaluation of teachers and value-added measures were positively, but weakly, correlated. Louis and Marks (1998) findings suggested having a professional community in place at the school resulted in higher pedagogy practices. These studies suggest the importance of teacher evaluation practices in identifying quality instruction and the relationship between PLCs and instruction.

Hollins, McIntyre, DeBose, Hollins, and Towner (2004) undertook a qualitative study which utilized a five step structured study-group with teachers to identify how to promote PLCs in order to increase student achievement in literacy for black students over a two year period of time. Twelve teachers participated in this study and taught K-4th grade and participation was voluntary. The data collection included interviews, meeting notes, field notes, and informal conversations. The findings suggested that having an administrator present during PLCs was beneficial to keep the teachers focused. Additionally, this study found that PLCs shifted the conversations teachers were having away from behavior problems with the students, to how they could reach each student academically

Strahan (2003) conducted a qualitative study to examine PLCs by conducting a case study that led to a suggested framework to support collaborative learning. Strahan (2003) had three research questions, which were: How have teachers and administrators

articulated collaborative agendas for reform?, How have they strengthened their PLCs?, and How have these PLCs nurtured instructional improvement and continuous school renewal? The case studies took place at three different schools and teams of researchers conducted focus group interviews. The findings suggested that the collaboration between teachers in PLCs was an environment of instructional support for teachers. Additionally, when teachers and administrators work together to improve their school it also helps address reforms in place. Overall, the conversations had between teachers were focused on how they could increase student learning versus only talking about test scores. In future research it was expressed by Strahan (2003) would like to investigate how to continue collaboration in schools and what supports are needed to do so.

PLCs have the ability to reduce teacher isolation, increase collaboration, and improved on instructionally practices to benefit students (DuFour et. al., 2004; Hoagland et al., 2014). It is the administrator's responsibility to reserve time for PLCs to meet during the day (Woodland & Mazur, 2015; Eiler & D'Amico, 2012). PLCs can also build capacity within the school, promote innovative instructional practices, and make teachers feel like a valued member of the school community (DuFour et al., 2004; Fullan, 2002; Woodland & Mazur, 2015). PLCs are supposed to provide a collaborative environment for instructional support for teachers but it is still unknown the perceptions teachers and administrators.

Walk Throughs

WTs can serve as one strategy to allow administrators to provide meaningful feedback to teachers. According to Grissom et al., (2013) several principals identified WT as part of their instructional practices and a tool they use to give teachers feedback.

Teachers receiving consistent and timely feedback can help them reflect upon their practices to increase student achievement and develop a culture of trust and support. WTs are an identifier of leadership but also can build a positive instructional culture, school climate, gauge the importance of instruction in the school (Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, & Poston, 2004; Protheroe, 2009), and create atmosphere of trust and support for all learners (Moss & Brookhart, 2013).

Unlike evaluations, WTs serve as a way for an administrator to informally give teachers feedback to support their teaching practices. This creates a safe dialogue between the administrator and teacher about instruction. WTs are frequent informal classroom observations made by administration to foster focused, reflective, and collaborative adult learning (Cudeiro & Nelsen, 2009; Eilers & D'Amico, 2012; Ginsberg & Murphy, 2002). WTs are also described as a tool to gather data on teaching practices, and program implementation but not in an evaluative manner (David, 2007). According to Moss and Brookhart (2013), an administrator should ask themselves three questions when conducting a walk through: a) what did I see? b) what does it mean? c) what do I need to learn more about? (p. 43). WTs are going beyond traditional observations, which may only happen two-three times a year (Brown & Coley, 2011). WTs are a relatively new practice and administrators have identified using this practice as a way to measure teacher effectiveness (Grossman et al., 2013), increase student achievement (Frase, 1998; Ziegler, 2006), and increase teacher efficacy (Frase, 1998). WTs have also recently been linked to as an identifier of instructional leadership (Eisner, 2002; Protheroe, 2009).

For WTs to be effective and for teachers to benefit from the feedback administrators need to develop a culture of trust (Cudeiro & Nelsen, 2009). Building

such a culture, which empowers staff members to take risks, will increase trust and help teachers implement the CCSS (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012). Teachers implementing the new standards without administrative support can add stress to the workplace. Again, establishing a culture of trust regarding CCSS is powerful and leaders must continue to encourage collaboration and dialogue between administrators and teachers (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012). Doing this will increase productivity and the ability to work as a team instead of in isolation (Brown & Coley, 2011; Cudeiro & Nelsen, 2009).

In addition, using WTs can enable teachers to learn from each other and shift from a culture of isolation to one of collaboration (Ziegler, 2006). WTs can bridge the communication gap by creating common language (Moss & Brookhart, 2013) and feedback barrier between administrator and teachers by providing the administrator with a genuine observation of instruction (Ziegler, 2006). A dialogue between the administrator and teacher can also focus on student achievement and the strategies in place to increase student learning by using WTs (Moss & Brookhart, 2013). If teachers continue to develop instruction in isolation, school-wide effectiveness and student achievement will be isolated as well (Lee, 1991). Administrators using WTs can continue to break the barrier of only offering instructional feedback only during evaluations. In addition, WTs can establish a place where feedback about instructional strategies is discussed between the administrator and teacher.

WTs are an informal observation tool that provides continuous support through specific and frequent feedback, while monitoring teacher practices, and they should be focused on instruction instead of structure (Cudeiro & Nelsen, 2009; Eilers & D'Amico, 2012; Grissom et al., 2013). This description of a WT falls under a formative WT, which

is defined by Moss and Brookhart (2013) as, "an intentional learning process focused on raising the achievement of all learners in the building including the teachers, students, and principal" (p. 44). In contrast, a traditional WT is defined as, " the existence of a foolproof recipe of best practices that raise student achievement regardless of the content, context, or students in question" (Moss & Brookhart, 2013, p. 44). As administrators introduce the WT process, it is imperative that the process be clearly defined and communicated to staff. The WT process should be transparent and focused on instructional strategies implemented in every classroom (Brown & Coley, 2011; Cudeiro & Nelsen, 2009). WTs can add a system where frequent and focused feedback is received from administrators to continue and improve the work being done by teachers in the classroom (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012). According to Grissom et al. (2013), research as well as other studies (Blase & Blase, 1999; Downey et al., 2004) indicates, if WTs do not have an immediate feedback component built in they are not an effective tool. Instead of teachers receiving feedback on a regular basis about their instructional practices, feedback has often been focused on management support (Wise & Jacobo, 2010).

According to Grossman et al. (2013), the more we can identify classroom practices related to student achievement, the greater chance education professionals have to improve the quality of teaching and show gains in student achievement. If the instructional practices can be identified using WTs then deliberate professional development using PLCs can be focused around specific techniques, which produce student achievement (Grossman et al., 2013). Administrators need to make an intentional effort for WTs to match with professional development or other instructional strategies in order to be beneficial for the teacher and administrator (Grissom et al., 2013). WTs are

very beneficial to the administrators who use them well. These administrators have an increased familiarity with the curriculum being taught, are able to gauge the climate of the school, and are able to develop a collaborative learning environment between teachers, administrators, and students (Ginsberg & Murphy, 2002; Moss & Brookhart, 2013). According to Grissom et al. (2013), more research needs to be done in the field of WTs and if principals are effectively conducting them. Additionally, more research is needed with a focus on how to integrate WTs into the school culture, how WTs can become a key tool in instructional leadership (Grossman et al., 2013) and how administrators can continue to challenge their knowledge to continue to have collaborative conversations with teachers (Moss & Brookhart, 2013).

WTs have several benefits to schools, teachers, and students as mentioned, but there are some criticisms as well. According to Bushman (2006), "although the walk through model improved the way we worked it is not appropriate for everyone" (p. 61). Unfortunately, in a study conducted by Grissom et al. (2013), WTs were mentioned as one of the top support tools for administrators but it only accounted for 5.4% of an administrator's time. The results from this study also indicated that WTs had a negative association with a school's performance, but not in all cases and it depend on how the WT is used to project results (Grissom et al., 2013). In earlier studies, it was found that there was not a relationship between school outcomes and the amount of time spent on instructional tasks (Horng & Loeb, 2010) like WT. The use of a traditional WT by administrators, as defined earlier, can lead to a simple checklist of best practices without a true understanding of what is taking place in the classroom (Moss & Brookhart, 2013).

Additionally, administrators need to understand instruction on a deeper level to conduct WTs effectively (Bushman, 2006). This allows the opportunity for rich dialogue to take place between the teacher and administrator. However, if administrators do not have a proficient knowledge of the content this cannot take place. Bushman (2006) also states that WTs demand the administrators to "engage and question teachers without being critical or demeaning" (p. 61). WTs however have a variety of advantages to increase meaningful feedback from between administrators and teachers, improve instruction, and student achievement. WTs will serve as another variable in the study to examine the relationship this support has with CCSS student achievement.

Brown and Coley (2011) sought to examine the relationship between administrators and teachers and teachers' preferences on being observed, how they received feedback, and their attitudes about reflection practices. This study used a quantitative approach using a survey protocol to examine the relationship. The findings found that the relationship between administrators and teachers was strengthened instructionally as a result of WTs and feedback being completed by an administrator. However, the study did not offer significance that teachers would be more reflective on instructional practices as a result of WTs being conducted by administration.

Murphy and Torff (2014) sought to examine the CCSS and how the accountability measures conflicted with student achievement. They did this by surveying teachers on their perceptions of teaching effectively using the CCSS. The results of this study found a statistically significant decline in teachers' ability to teach general education, special education, and English Language Leaner students using the CCSS. These results provide

an example of when a reform like CCSS is implemented with little regard to teacher readiness to do so.

WTs serve as an instruction support to provide meaningful feedback to teachers. According to Grossman et al. (2013), " if we can identify classroom practices that are associated with student achievement, we may be in a much stronger position to improve the quality of teaching in ways that have demonstrable effects on students" (p. 465). WTs are an informal observation (Ginsberg & Murphy, 2002), which gives administrators and teachers the opportunity to have focused feedback about instruction (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012). However, the perceptions of teachers and administrators on WTs as an instructional support are still unknown.

Summary of Literature Review Findings

The literature reveals the need for administrators to be more supportive to teachers. PLCs and WTs are two methods that can help administrators to support teachers. Both of these systems provide an opportunity for the teacher to be a part of the process instead of having the process done to them. The shift from administrators being managers to instructional leaders impacts the teaching and learning occurring in the school. The Common Core State Standards are still relatively new in Kentucky and schools are still trying to engineer the most effective way to teach them. For schools to increase student achievement there must be supports like PLCs and WTs in place and administrators must implement these strategies with fidelity. Even more importantly, the teachers need to feel genuinely supported and given the resources to improve their teaching and increase student learning daily.

It has been identified in the literature above that transformative leadership provides administrators the ability to share leadership. Whereas the instructional leadership style is more of a top down system, placing the majority of the responsibility on the principal. For the purposes of this study the transformational leadership style is related to the characteristics of leaders who implement PLCs and WTs to support teachers. For supports to be received positively by teachers, administrators need to know the difference between being a supervisor and an evaluator. Administrators are responsible for embodying both. A supervisor role is an administrator offering feedback and support in a non-evaluative manner. An evaluator role is an administrator formally providing feedback, which will be included in the teacher's evaluation. For teachers to develop trust with administrators these two roles need to be defined for meaningful collaboration to occur. There are several supports deemed successful if implemented in a school. These supports, such as intentional professional development, consistent feedback, and creating a climate and culture of trust, have influence on teachers' instructional practices. What is still unknown is how successful PLCs and WTs are on teachers' instructional practices.

PLCs are designed for teachers to collaborate with one another to share instructional strategies and ultimately meet the needs of their students. PLCs can facilitate the process for teachers to build capacity to function as a team versus in isolation and to continuously collaborate with one another. According to Hoagland et al. (2014), PLCs can create a positive culture among colleagues, increase teacher effectiveness, and increase student achievement. For PLCs to be effective leaders need to build relationships of collaboration between staff members and create an environment

towards rigorous student learning (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012; Fullan, 2002; Wise & Jacobo, 2010). Additionally, for PLCs to be effective teachers need to have an understanding of the purpose of PLCs and administrators need to create a positive, safe, and supportive environment. There is information on what PLCs are and what they are supposed to do but this study will add to the knowledge base about the effectiveness of PLCs.

WTs are designed to be a supervisory role of an administrator. WTs give administrators the opportunity to give teachers feedback and to observe instruction without it being considered evaluative. WTs should go beyond traditional observations by giving teachers feedback on instruction consistently throughout the year (Brown & Coley, 2011). WTs have also been deemed as an indicator of an instructional leader (Eisner, 2002; Protheroe, 2009). WTs are similar to PLCs in they remove teachers from isolation and bridge another path of collaboration. The literature also indicates if WTs are not followed with immediate feedback they are not an effective tool (Blase & Blase, 1999; Downey et al., 2004; Grissom et al., 2013). Additionally, the purpose of WTs has been focused on management support (Wise & Jacobo, 2010) instead of instructional support. It is know from the Brown and Coley (2011) study that WTs promoted a better relationship between teachers and administrators but did not increase reflective practices by the teachers. Again, there is information on what WTs are intended to do and the possible benefits but little has been done on their effectiveness to support instruction.

The perceptions of teachers and administrators when it comes to PLCs and WTs are unknown. Also, little is known on how effective these practices are on improving instructional strategies and ultimately student achievement. Additionally, it is unknown

how administrators intentionally support teachers using PLCs and WTs. The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of teachers and administrators using PLCs and WTs as instructional supports. The following research questions will be addressed in this study: In what ways are principals and assistant principals supporting teachers' classroom instructional practices through PLCs and WTs? and What are teachers' perceptions of administrators' supports of PLCs and WTs? The two research questions will identify if PLCs and WT supports are assisting teachers in instructional practices. This will provide research for administrators who do and do not offer PLCs and WTs as supports in their building.

The implications for practice and research focus on the lack of studies specifically on PLCs and WTs. The present study sought to examine the relationship between teachers' and administrators' perceptions on PLCs and WTs as instructional supports. In addition this study is being conducted in Kentucky, which was the first state to adopt CCSS. This will provide more research on effective ways to support teachers implementing CCSS. Additionally, this study is relevant to all practitioners who have adopted the CCSS or who are implementing PLCs and WTs. The data can guide future work on intentional implementation of PLCs and WTs so that these supports are beneficial for teachers and administrators.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of teachers and administrators using PLCs and WTs as instructional supports. A cross-sectional survey design was used to measure teachers' and administrators' perception of instructional supports. As described in Chapter 1, teachers and administrators were sampled from a large, urban school district in Kentucky to examine their beliefs towards administrators supporting teachers using PLCs and WTs to improve instructional practices. Specific research questions addressed in this study included:

1. In what ways are principals and assistant principals supporting teachers' classroom instructional practices through PLCs and WTs?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of administrators' supports of PLCs and WTs?

This chapter is organized into the following sections. First, the research design used in this study is identified and described. This is followed by a description of the context in which the study will be conducted. Third, the instrumentation used will be identified and described. This is followed by the analysis of the survey data discussing the statistical procedures use. Lastly, the limitations of this study will identify the internal and external threats and how they were addressed in this study.

Research Design

A non-experimental cross-sectional survey design (Johnson, 2001) was used to examine the perceptions of teachers and administrators about PLCs and WTs as instructional supports. The purpose of this type of survey design is to identify a population, study the population during a period of time, and making inferences about the population. A cross-sectional survey design was chosen for this study to examine the perceptions of administrators and teachers and measure their perceptions of PLCs and WTs as supports. Survey protocols were used to collect data from teachers and administrators. Both the teacher and administrator surveys seek to measure the perceptions of PLC and WT supports. The surveys are similar in content but worded differently to suit the role of the participant. The surveys are adapted from the TPS survey instrument used by Dr. Patrick Forsyth and Dr. Curt Adams (2015) from the University of Oklahoma. The original survey tool was designed to collect information to improve teaching and learning conditions within a school. Dr. Forsyth and Dr. Adams (2015) ultimate goal was to track progress in the schools using several health dimensions to identify professional development, and other resources that could help teachers make students more successful. The cross-sectional surveys for this study will examine the relationships that exist between the variables being the teacher and administrator perceptions of PLCs and WTs.

Context and Demographics

The study was conducted in a large urban district in Kentucky. Kentucky was selected because of being the first state to adopt CCSS. The selection of the district was due to the sample size of elementary schools (N= 90) available and a convenience sample. KUD serves around 45, 818 elementary students across the 90 schools. There

was 95% of the schools represented with teacher responses and 44% of the schools represented with the administrator responses. The goals of the district in 2015 were[2] 1) every student progresses in learning and meeting or exceeding proficiency in all subjects, 2) every student graduates prepared, 3) all stakeholders are involved and support the students' educational experiences, and 4) all schools have the staff, resources, and are equipped to support student learning. Overall, the elementary proficient and distinguished scores are 47.1%.

KUD elementary schools range in student achievement (i.e., low and high performing schools), which will be determined for this study by their NGL achievement scores. The NGL scores, Table 6, reports the following components of Kentucky's accountability system: multiple measures of student performance on tests, students' accomplishments as identified as College and Career Readiness from 2015. For elementary schools, the accountability (i.e., NGL scores) is based on achievement and includes reading, mathematics, science, social studies and writing. The gap is the percentage of proficient and distinguished scores for the following groups: African American, Latino, Native American, students with disabilities, poverty qualified by free or reduced lunch, and limited English proficiency, and growth in reading and mathematics. This is qualified as the percentage of students at typical or higher levels of growth. The NGL score is used to rank a school in percentiles. Within this study, NGL scores for elementary schools will be used as a reference to academic achievement.

[2] The district source being used is not listed to protect the amenity of the district

Table 6

KUD Elementary School Next Generation Learner Groups

Category	Definition	Number of Schools
Distinguished	90th percentile or above	2
Distinguished/Progressing	Progressing, school has met the current years annual measurable objective (AMO)	17
Proficient	Between 70th and 89th percentile	2
Proficient/Progressing	Between 70th and 89th percentile and met AMO	7
Improvement/Progressing	70th percentile or below	39
Needs Improvement	Below 70th percentile	24

At the time of this study, this district is one of the largest districts in Kentucky. Table 7 reports the student demographics of KUD in the 2013-14 school year. The student demographics include student enrollment, ECE percentage, self-contained students, and the percentage of students on free or reduced lunch services. Students on free or reduced lunch included: 29.2% African American students, 23.4% white students, and 13.6% other students. Overall the representation of elementary students is made up of 35.1% African American students, 46.2% white students, and 18.7% other students.

Table 7

KUD 2013-14 Student Demographics

	Enrollment	ECE	ECE Self-Contained	Free or Reduced Lunch Services	K-PREP % P/D
Student Information	45,818	12.2%	1.6%	66.8%	49.2%

Note. P/D= Proficient and Distinguished

Table 8 reports the teacher demographics of KUD in the 2013-14 school year. The teacher demographics include total number of teachers in elementary schools, the percent of teachers with a Master's degree or higher, the percentage of teachers retained from the previous year, the percentage of highly qualified teachers, and the number of National Board Certified teachers. The district definition of highly qualified teachers in 2013[3] was a teacher who has their Bachelor's Degree; full state certification and licensure, and has demonstrated competency in each core academic content they teach.

Table 8

KUD 2013-14 Teacher Demographics

	Employed	Master's Degree or higher	Retention	Highly Qualified	National Board Certification
Teacher Information	3, 351	83.8%	90.8%	99.5%	118

Instrumentation

Data were collected on the administration of an administrator and teacher survey to gather information on their perceptions of PLCs and WTs. This section describes the original survey and how the teacher and administrator survey were modified

[3] The district source being used is not listed to protect the amenity of the district

for this study. Teacher perceptions of PLCs, WTs, and administrative support were measured using a modified version of the Teacher Perception Survey. The purpose of the survey was to obtain feedback on PLCs and WTs as instructional supports. The original survey consisted of 71 survey questions, 24 of which were modified for the teacher and administrator surveys (Forsyth & Adams, 2015). The survey also had ten different sub-headings within the survey, which included: Transformational Leadership Behavior, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Teacher Workplace Isolation, Teacher/Leader Effectiveness (TLE), Collective Teacher Efficacy, Student Readiness to Learn, Critical Friends Group (CFG), Trust in District Administration, Faculty Trust in Parents, and Basic Information. The following subscales were used for the teacher and administrator surveys: Transformational Leadership Behavior, Teacher Workplace Isolation, Walk Through Effectiveness, Professional Learning Communities, Trust in Administrators, and Basic Information. Each section in the original survey had five to ten questions and the survey used a six-point likert scale which includes the following options: *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree*. A final set of 4 items focused on gathering teacher and administrator demographic information including: number of years teaching, number of years at their current school, school name or location number, and the type of WT tool used at their school.

The teacher survey consists of 29 questions based on a seven-point Likert scale (see Appendix A). The scale had the following options: *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Unsure, Somewhat Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.* The survey is divided into 5 sections with the following sub-headings: Transformational Leadership Behavior, Teacher Workplace Isolation, Walk Through Effectiveness, Professional

Learning Communities, and Trust in Administrators. Each subscale consisted of 3 to 10 questions for the teacher to rate their perception. The conclusion of the survey consisted of 4 items asking the teacher the following questions: number of years teaching, number of years at their current school, school name or location number, and the type of WT tool used at their school.

The administrator survey consists of 26 questions based on a seven-point Likert scale (see Appendix B). The scale had the following options: *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Unsure, Somewhat Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.* The survey is divided into 5 sections with the following sub-headings: Transformational Leadership Behavior, Teacher Workplace Isolation, WT Effectiveness, PLC, and Trust in Administrators. Each section has 2 to 7 questions for the administrator to rate their perception. The conclusion of the survey provides space for the administrator to offer basic information about himself or herself. Both surveys were based on a seven-point likert scale including: *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Unsure, Somewhat Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree*. According to Bandura (2006), scales that offer only a few choices should be avoided because they are not as reliable or sensitive.

The teacher and administrator surveys were piloted for feedback with five schoolteachers and five school administrators that were not at the elementary level. This was done so teachers and administrators participating in the study were not exposed to the surveys multiple times. This pilot ensured clarity of the questions, ease of progressing through the survey, and an estimated time it would take to complete the survey. The pilot test concluded it would take ten minutes to complete the survey, and this will be included in the instructions. The pilot also provided feedback about the

clarity of the questions and ease of progressing through the survey. Based on this feedback the survey will be adjusted to provide clarity in the questions. The surveys were delivered by email using Survey Monkey to all elementary teachers and elementary administrators, which include principals and assistant principals. The window to complete the survey will be from February 2016 to March 2016. An official personalized email was sent to both teachers and administrators explaining the survey, informing participants that completion is voluntary, and to protect identifying information it will be coded (see Appendix C). Also, the email will include necessary information about the study being conducted and the reasoning for the data collection.

Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to address the two research questions. Descriptive statistics were used to present the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. Specifically, the descriptive statistics gave a summary of the data in each section of the survey, which were divided into sub-sections. The inferential statistics provided information on the population based on data obtained on the sample being studied. Table 9 addresses how each research question will be analyzed and the output files. To address research question 1 and research question 2, descriptive statistics were used to measure the perception of the supports. The answers were analyzed using the means, standard deviation and other descriptives of how the participants rated the items.

Secondly, a one-way MANOVA was conducted to examine potential differences in the perceptions of teachers and administrators on PLCs and WTs. This procedure answered research question 2. According to Stevens (2009), "the MANOVA analysis

will then determine how much of the variance on the dependent variable is accounted for by the predictors" (p. 178). Additionally, the Wilks Lambda Post Hoc test (Stevens, 2009) was used because there were more than three variables. The independent variables are the 4 survey subscales, which were transformative leadership, walk through effectiveness, professional learning communities, and trust in building administrators. The dependent variables were administrator and teacher perceptions of supports.

Table 9

Statistical Analysis based on research questions

Research Question	Analysis	Output
In what ways are principals and assistant principals supporting teachers' classroom instructional practices through Professional Learning Communities and Walk Throughs?	Descriptive Statistics	Characterize administrator and teacher perceive supports of PLCs and WTs.
What are teachers' perceptions of administrators' supports of Professional Learning Communities and Walk Throughs?	One-Way MANOVA	Examine the presence of differences in perceptions of teachers and administrators across the set of dependent variables.

Limitations

There were limitations in the present study that were identified and addressed. This study will be conducted and completed before the K-PREP scores will be released. This information may be beneficial for future research to compare the assessment data with the perceptions of teachers and administrators. A delimitation of this study is that it only focuses on elementary schools. The rationale for only including the elementary

schools is because the teachers and administrators had the most experience with implementing the standards because of specific CCSS professional development training cycles being offered. Additionally, the district being study offered a large sample size of 90 elementary schools. Including middle and high schools would have created an uneven comparison.

The following paragraphs will discuss the threats to internal and external validity and the steps taken to address these threats. Specific threats to internal validity that will be discussed for this study are: the instrumentation, maturation, and selection (Cook & Campbell, 1979). The instrumentation threats include the surveys which only measure perception and not factual information, the survey has been altered, and the survey was completed online. To control for these threats, the survey has been piloted with several teachers and administrators to provide feedback about the clarity of the questions and ease of progressing through the survey. To ensure there is not a difference between participants completing the survey online, the same directions will be used. The maturation threats (Cook & Campbell, 1979) are the level of implementation of PLCs and WTs in each elementary school. The survey will include questions asking the participants to indicate the level of implementation of PLCs and WTs in their building. The last internal validity threat (Cook & Campbell, 1979) is the selection process of participants. To address this threat all 90 elementary schools will be included in the study. This gives an opportunity for all elementary school teachers and administrators to participate. This will increase the representation of the population being studied.

The external validity threats to this study are: reactive effects of experimental arrangements, generalizability, and population representation (Cook & Campbell, 1979).

To address the reactive effects of experimental arrangements the survey does not include any identifying information (i.e., name, sex, race). Even though the participants are aware they are completing a survey for a study, they will not be identified. The generalizability (Cook & Campbell, 1979) and population representation threats are being addressed in this study by including all the elementary schools to participant in this study. Additional steps like site visits will be conducted if needed to encourage responses. The survey was sent out two times to the participants. The initial email explained the purpose of the survey and the time period to complete the survey. The first survey window had a two week time period for completion, and the second window had a week for participates to complete the survey. The district being studied is large enough for the findings to be generalizable to other similar districts. Due to the high stakes of this study it would be suggested this study be replicated. With the internal and external validity threats being addressed in this study the results should be beneficial for administrators who implement PLCs and WTs as instructional supports.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The discussion in Chapter 4 focuses on the findings from the two survey instruments titled Teacher Survey and Administrator Survey. Both surveys were adapted from the Teacher Perception Survey (Forsyth & Adams, 2015). This chapter outlines the analysis of the surveys and how the results relate to the two research questions posed in this study. The study's purpose was to identify if there was a relationship between teacher and administrator perceptions of PLCs and WTs as instructional supports. The two research questions were: In what ways are principals and assistant principals supporting teachers' classroom instructional practices through PLCs and WTs? and What are teachers' perceptions of administrators' supports of PLCs and WTs? To answer Research Question 1, descriptive statistics were used to examine each variable and the items in the survey that related to PLCs and WTs. To answer Research Question 2, a one-way MANOVA (Stevens, 2009) used to examine differences between perceptions of PLCs and WTs.

Survey Responses

For this study the targeted population were all elementary teachers (N=2807) and all elementary principals and assistant principals (N=179). Out of the target population for elementary teachers 442 responded. Out of the target population for elementary

administrators 59 responded. Teachers and Administrators survey responses were removed if the survey was not completed. There were 56 teacher surveys not complete and 7 administrator surveys not completed. After removing the incomplete surveys 386 teachers responded with a 14% response rate and 52 administrators responded with a 29% response rate. The teacher and administrator response rates fell within or surpassed the average online response rate of 10 to 15% (Dodson, 2015; PeoplePulse, 2013).The administrator and teacher surveys consisted of six sections. The first section was labeled Transformational Leadership Behavior, which measured the leadership style of the administrator as well as overall support. Both the teacher survey and administrator survey consisted of three questions (1, 2, and 3) for this section. The second section was labeled Workplace Isolation, which measured the collaboration and support teachers received with instruction. The teacher survey consisted of four questions (4, 5, 6, and 7) and the administrator survey consisted of 2 questions (4 and 5) in this section. The third section was labeled Walk Through Effectiveness, which measured the perceptions of WTs as a support. Both the teacher survey and administrator survey consisted of eight questions (8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 for the teacher survey; 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 for the administrator survey) for this section. The fourth section was labeled PLCs, which measured the perceptions of PLCs as a support. The teacher survey consisted of seven questions (17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24) and the administrator survey consisted of eight questions (14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21) in this section. The fifth section was labeled Trust in Administrators, which measured the follow through and collaboration between teachers and administrators. The teacher survey consisted of four questions (25, 26, 27, 28, and 29) and the administrator survey consisted of five

questions (22, 23, 24, 25, and 26) in this section. The final section was labeled Basic Information, which included background information to gauge how long the teacher or administrator had been in their job role, at their respective schools, current school location, and the type of WT used. This information was included to further understand the population being studied and collect demographic information.

The teacher response rate was larger than the administrator response rate. To compare the administrators to teachers, 70 teacher responses were randomly selected for the analysis. The number of teacher responses randomly selected was determined by the administrator's total number of responses (n=52). The number of teacher responses could not be more than two times that of the administrators (Cronk, 2012). Forty elementary schools were represented in the administrators' responses with eight participants choosing not to identify their school location. Forty-three elementary schools were represented in the teachers' responses with eight participants choosing not to identify their school location. Overall, the external validity for participates was reliable because about half of the elementary schools were represented in the sample. Additionally, the teacher and administrator surveys were tested for scale reliability. Table 10 outlines the survey sections for both the administrator and teacher surveys and identifies the reliability score based on Cronbach's Alpha, which should be greater than 0.60 (Cronk, 2012). According to Cronk (2012), "Numbers close to 1.00 are very good, but numbers close to 0.00 represent poor internal consistency" (p.119).

Table 10

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Statistics: Teacher and Administrator Survey

	Items	TLB	Items	WI	Items	WTE	Items	PLC	Items	TA
Teacher	3	.89	4	.80	9	.91	8	.94	5	.92
Administrator	3	.68	4	.48	8	.54	8	.87	5	.72

Note. TLB = Transformational Leadership Behavior, WI = Teacher Workplace Isolation, WTE = Walk Through Effectiveness, PLC = Professional Learning Communities, TA = Trust in Administrators

When answering research question 1, items were used from both the teacher and administrator survey that determined how administrators were supporting teachers. The following sub-sections and items were used in the teacher survey. In the Transformational Leadership Behavior section all three items (1, 2, 3) were used. In the Teacher Workplace Isolation section three out of the four items (4, 5, 6) were used. The Walk Through Effectiveness section used items 8, 15, and 16. One Item (17) in the PLCs section was used. The Trust in Administrators section used all items (25, 26, 27, 28, 29). Examples of the items asked in the teacher survey were: *Administrators provide a good model for me to follow for our PLC time, I have an administrator who conducts WTs in my classroom, I am satisfied with the feedback I receive from the principal or assistant principal who observe me, and The administrators align what they actually do with what they say they will do.*

The following sub-sections and items were used in the administrator survey. Transformational Leadership Behavior section used all three items (1, 2, 3). In the Teacher Workplace Isolation section items 4 and 5 were used. Walk Through Effectiveness section used items 6, 11, and 12. One Item (14) in the PLCs section was used. Trust in Administrators section used all items (22, 23, 24, 25, 26). Examples of the

items asked in the administrator survey were: *I ask questions that prompt teachers to think in PLCs, our school implements WTs on a regular basis, our school implements PLCs with fidelity, and I follow through on my commitments.*

When answering research question 2, only two sub-sections did not test to be reliable. The two sections were, Workplace Isolation and WT Effectiveness but only in the administrator survey. The Workplace Isolation section was taken out completely when analyzed because it was not reliable. Before comparing the teacher and administrator surveys each question was matched up. There were some questions removed because it was only relevant to the administrator or teacher. In the administrator survey item 8 in the WT Effectiveness section was removed because it did not have a matching question in the teacher survey. By removing Item 8 in this section the Cronbach's Alpha scale reliability increased from 0.54 to 0.78. The four reliable survey sections used for analyzing the perceptions of supports by administrators and teachers were (i.e., Research questions 2): Transformational Leadership Behavior, WT Effectiveness, PLCs, and Trust in Administrators.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics were ran using the teacher and administrator survey items that determined the level of support given to teachers by administrators. Table 11 reports the descriptive statistics of the teacher items analyzed to answer research question one.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics: Teacher Survey

Section/ Item #	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*
TLB	70				
1		5.27	1.54	1	7
2		5.44	1.78	1	7
3		4.97	1.78	1	7
WI	70				
4		5.66	1.61	1	7
5		5.57	1.54	1	7
6		5.39	1.54	1	7
WTE	70				
8		5.43	1.47	1	7
15		5.26	1.56	1	7
16		5.19	1.55	1	7
PLC	70				
17		5.16	1.75	1	7
TA	70				
25		4.73	1.79	1	7
26		4.89	1.68	1	7
27		4.91	1.82	1	7
28		4.86	1.57	1	7
29		4.87	1.55	1	7

Note. TLB = Transformational Leadership Behavior, WI = Teacher Workplace Isolation, WTE = Walk Through Effectiveness, PLC = Professional Learning Communities, TA = Trust in Administrators, *n* = number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation, *Min* = minimum, *Max* = Maximum

The descriptive statistics revealed teachers (*n* = 70) rated "somewhat agree" with the supports administrators offered in the following sub-sections: Transformational Leadership Behavior, Workplace Isolation, WT Effectiveness, and PLCs. Teachers responded "unsure" in the Trust in Administrators section. These results suggest teachers are not confident in the level of supports they are receiving from administrators in instructional practices.

Table 12 reports the descriptive statistics of the administrator items analyzed to answer research question 1. The descriptive statistics revealed administrators (n = 52) rated "somewhat agree" and "agree" to the supports offered to teachers. The descriptive statistics also revealed administrators did not respond any lower than "somewhat agree" on items 1, 2, 3, and 24. Administrators feel they are supportive in these areas. Overall, administrators rated themselves high as providing instructional supports to teachers.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics: Administrator Survey

Section/ Item #	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*
TLB	52				
1		6.33	0.64	5	7
2		6.35	0.62	5	7
3		6.27	0.63	5	7
WI	52				
4		6.10	0.99	1	7
5		6.10	0.82	3	7
WTE	52				
6		5.40	1.39	1	7
11		5.38	1.38	1	7
12		5.54	1.17	1	7
PLC	52				
14		6.25	0.92	3	7
TA	52				
22		6.17	0.73	3	7
23		6.38	0.71	3	7
24		6.40	0.60	5	7
25		5.77	1.29	1	7
26		5.94	0.98	1	7

Note. TLB = Transformational Leadership Behavior, WI = Teacher Workplace Isolation, WTE = Walk Through Effectiveness, PLC = Professional Learning Communities, TA = Trust in Administrators, *n* = number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation, *Min* = minimum, *Max* = Maximum

Table 13 reports the item number, question, mean, and standard deviation. The items represented in this table are ones that indicate the level of instructional support

offered by administrators to teachers. Teachers responded "somewhat agree" to 9 of the items and responded "unsure" to 6 of the items. The highest mean score was 5.66 (*i.e., I have an administrator who conducts WTs in my classroom*) and the lowest mean score was 4.86 (i.e., The administrators demonstrate knowledge of teaching and learning using the WT tool). The lowest mean score measuring PLCs was 4.91 (*i.e., The administrators show concern for the need of my PLC team*), and the highest mean score measuring PLCs was 5.57 (i.e., *I have an administrator who supports me in my PLC*). This feedback indicates, teachers are not confident in how administrators specifically support them using WTs and PLCs.

Table 13

Teacher Survey Questions: Research Question 1

Item Number	Question	*M*	*SD*
1	Administrators ask questions that prompt me to think in my PLC.	5.27	1.54
2	Administrators insist on giving my best during our PLC time.	5.44	1.78
3	Administrators provide a good model for me to follow for our PLC time.	4.97	1.78
4	I have an administrator who conducts WTs in my classroom.	5.66	1.61
5	I have an administrator who supports me in my	5.57	1.54

	PLC.		
6	I have administrators who support me at work with instructional strategies.	5.39	1.54
8	Our school implements WTs on a regular basis.	5.43	1.47
15	I am satisfied with the discussions of my performance with the principal or assistant principal who observed me.	5.26	1.56
16	I am satisfied with the feedback I received from the principal or assistant principal who observed me.	5.19	1.55
17	Our school implements PLCs with fidelity.	5.16	1.75
25	The administrators align what they actually do with what they say they will do.	4.73	1.79
26	The administrators follow through on commitments.	4.89	1.68
27	The administrators show concern for the need of my PLC team.	4.91	1.82
28	The administrators	4.86	1.57

	demonstrate knowledge of teaching and learning using the WT tool.		
29	The administrators demonstrate knowledge of teaching and learning in their feedback given after the WT observation.	4.87	1.55

Note. PLC = Professional Learning Communities, WT = Walk Throughs, *M* = mean, *SD* = Standard deviation

A one-way MANOVA was used to analyze "the mean differences and statistical significance of differences among groups" (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001, p. 322), which was the goal for Research Question 2. A one-way MANOVA between-subjects multivariate analysis of variance was performed on four dependent variables: transformational leadership behavior, WT effectiveness, PLCs, and trust in administrators (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Independent variables were the administrators and teachers. SPSS MANOVA was used for the analyses. Teachers were labeled as group 1 with a total $n = 70$ and administrators were labeled as group 2 with a total $n = 52$. The total number analyzed was $n = 122$. Table 14 displays the descriptive statistics of the two groups within the survey subsections. The likert scale including *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Unsure, Somewhat Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree* was converted in SPSS using the following numbers to represent the response: *Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), Unsure (4), Somewhat Agree (5), Agree (6), Strongly Agree (7)*.

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics: Teacher and Administrator Survey Subscales

Subscale/Group	*n*	*M*	*SD*
TLB			
Teachers	70	5.2	1.5
Administrators	52	6.3	0.49
WTE			
Teachers	70	4.7	1.8
Administrators	52	5.5	0.85
PLC			
Teachers	70	5.0	1.4
Administrators	52	5.6	0.73
TA			
Teachers	70	4.8	1.4
Administrators	52	6.1	0.62

Note. TLB = Transformational Leadership Behavior, WTE = Walk Through Effectiveness, PLC = Professional Learning Communities, TA = Trust in Administrators, *n* = number of participants, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation

Overall administrators reported higher scores than teachers. Table 14 reports that administrators answered "somewhat agree" (*M* = 5.5, *SD* = 0.85) to "agree" (*M* = 6.3, *SD* = 0.49) while teachers answered "unsure" (*M* = 4.8, SD = 1.4) to "somewhat agree" (*M* = 5.3, *SD* = 1.5). The biggest difference between the means was in the sub-section labeled Trust in Administrators. Teachers rated their trust in administration low (*M* = 4.8, *SD* = 1.4), which was labeled "unsure" on the survey and administrators rated themselves high (*M* = 6.1, *SD* = 0.62), which was labeled "agree" on the survey. This section described administrators following through on their commitments to teachers, and their knowledge about PLCs and WTs. All four sub-sections revealed a difference in perceptions of supports between the teachers and administrators. The section with the perceptions being the closest between teacher and administrators was PLCs. Teachers answered "somewhat

agree" (M = 5.0, SD = 1.4) and administrators answered "somewhat agree" (M = 5.6, SD = 0.73).

The one-way MANOVA was calculated examining the perceptions of teachers and administrators about PLCs and WTs. A significant effect was found (*Lambda* [4,117] = .758, $p < .05$). Results of a one-way MANOVA indicated that administrators and teachers held different perceptions across the four scores. Additionally, a follow-up univariate ANOVAs indicated a significant difference in perceptions by administrators and teachers and the supports offered. Table 15 reports the results of the significant difference of perceptions in the four categories tested, the Partial Eta Squared (effect size), and observed power. The criteria used for the effect size was Cohen (1988, 1992) which suggested d = 0.2 small, 0.5 medium, and 0.8 large (Field, 2013). Transformational Leadership Behavior was significant comparing teachers and administrators (F[1, 120] = 23.79, $p < .05$) and d = 0.16 which is small. Walk Through Effectiveness was significant comparing teachers and administrators (F[1, 120] = 16.56, $p < .05$) and d = 0.12 which is small . PLCs was significant comparing teachers and administrators (F[1, 120] = 8.99, $p < .05$) and d = 0.07 which is small. Trust in Administrators was significant comparing teachers and administrators (F[1, 120] = 34.25, $p < .05$) and d = 0.22 which is small. Overall, the subscale that had the highest mean scores from both teachers and administrators was in the Transformational Leadership Behavior (Teachers M = 5.2, SD = 1.5 and Administrators M = 6.3, SD = 0.49). Additionally, the effect size for all subscales was 0.24, which is considered small. It is important to highlight even thought the effect sizes were small the observed power was extremely high.

Table 15

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects: Teacher and Administrator Perceptions

Group	df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed d Power
TLB	1	.00	.16	.99
WTE	1	.00	.12	.98
PLC	1	.00	.07	.84
TA	1	.00	.22	1.00

Note. TLB = Transformational Leadership Behavior, WTE = Walk Through Effectiveness, PLC = Professional Learning Communities, TA = Trust in Administrators

Summary

Results of the teacher and administrator surveys reveal that administrators believe they are supporting teachers at a higher rate than teachers' perceptions of those supports. To answer Research Question 1: In what ways are principals and assistant principals supporting teachers' classroom instructional practices through PLCs and WTs? Teachers are not as confident in how administrators are supporting instruction using PLCs and WTs. Teachers rated administrators supporting them instructionally as "unsure" or "somewhat agree."

To answer Research Question 2: What are teachers' perceptions of administrators' supports of PLCs and WTs? Teacher and administrator perceptions are more aligned in the areas of Transformational Leadership Behavior and PLC sub-sections of the survey. However, there was a minimal difference in perceptions between the two groups in the survey sub-sections of WT Effectiveness and Trust in Administrators. The Trust in Administrators had the largest gap in perception with teachers perception ranked much lower (M = 4.8, SD = 1.4) and administrators perceptions ranked higher (M = 6.1, SD = 0.62). Teachers have the perception they are supported by administrators but at a lower rating than administrators perceived themselves supporting teachers.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Kentucky was the first state to adopt the CCSS in 2009 (KDE, 2014c). This created a shift in instructional practices for teachers to implement and administrators to support teachers instructionally. According to Wise and Jacobo (2010) schools for too long have focused on administrators supporting classroom management and not enough sufficient support has been offered instructionally for teachers. Additionally, there is a need for research in the area of supports offered to teachers and the relationship to student achievement (Garani & Strong, 2014, Grossman et al., 2013). The instructional supports examined in this study were PLCs and WTs. In addition, PLCs and WTs were analyzed using a survey to determine the perceptions teachers and administrators had about these supports. The following research questions were explored: in what ways are principals and assistant principals supporting teachers' classroom instructional practices through PLCs and WTs? and what are teachers' perceptions of administrators' supports on PLCs and WTs?

To answer the research questions a non-experimental, cross-sectional survey design was used to examine the perceptions of WTs and PLCs as instructional supports. The surveys were adapted from the TPS survey instrument used by Dr. Patrick Forsyth and Dr. Curt Adams (2015) from the University of Oklahoma. Surveys were emailed to all 90 elementary schools in KUD using Survey Monkey.

Participation was voluntary and teachers and administrators had a window of four weeks to complete the survey. The findings suggested there was a significant difference between teacher and administrator perceptions on PLCs and WTs serving as instructional supports. Specifically, the largest difference between perceptions was in the survey subscale labeled Trust in Administrators. Teachers did not perceive administrators following through on commitments, providing feedback after a WT, or demonstrating knowledge of teaching and learning using the WT tool. Additionally, teachers were unsure if the WT tool described effective teaching, developed their instructional strategies, supported their development as a teacher, or reflected their teaching effectiveness and instructional strategies. Teachers were more confident in the PLC system than the WT system.

Conceptual Framework and Limitations

This study used a conceptual framework that included the following variables and concepts: teachers, administrators, PLCs, WTs, and CCSS. A conceptual framework is used to better understand and synthesize variables and concepts being researched (Imenda, 2014). PLCs and WTs perceptions among teachers and administrators were the primary focus of this study. However, in order to fully understand the perceptions of these supports the CCSS also needed to be included. The CCSS were included because they were the standards being taught. To fully understand PLCs and WTs as instructional supports, it is important to understand CCSS and the subsequent changes in

instructional practices. Specifically, it demonstrates how administrators and teachers should work together, and how PLCs and WTs can influence that relationship. The CCSS were developed at the national level, and Kentucky was the first to adopt the standards. This shift in instruction resulted in a change in how administrators supported teachers instructionally, resulting in a greater importance for administrators and teachers to collaborate and communicate.

Based on the results of this study administrators offer PLCs and conduct WTs, but teachers perceptions of administrators working with teachers is not consistent. This suggests that supports are in place but teachers do not always view administrators as resources or show follow through on their commitments. According to Eilers and D'Amico (2012), it is the administrator's responsibility to build a culture of collaboration and PLCs. For instance, there were several responses from teachers that did not receive feedback from the administrator after a WT. The teacher agreed that WTs were taking place, but they did not receive feedback to help improve instruction. According to Cudeiro and Nelsen (2009), for WTs to be effective and benefit the teacher instructionally feedback should be given from the administrator. The present study confirms the findings of previous studies that if administrators conducting WTs do not give teachers immediate feedback than the tool is not effective (Blase & Blase, 1999; Downey et al., 2004; Grissom et al., 2013).

Additionally, in KUD there is not a consistent WT being used by administrators. The answers from teachers varied in identifying the WT tool as: the Danielson's Framework WT, school created, or other. Other teachers were not sure what a WT was or what specific WT tool was being used. This information is concerning because based

on the literature to promote trust using a WT tool it should be clearly communicated with teachers and a transparent system (Brown & Coley, 2011; Cudeiro & Nelsen, 2009). Teachers were also unsure if administrators embodied the instructional knowledge used during the WT to provide meaningful feedback. According to Bushman (2006), administrators need to understand instruction on a deeper level to conduct WTs effectively. Teacher's responses to the WT tool being used as a tool of reflection for them to improve on instructional strategies in the present study aligned with the study conducted by Brown and Coley (2011), which did not find significance that teachers would be more reflective on instructional practices as a result of WTs being conducted by administrators.

As discussed in Chapter 3, there were several limitations to this study. This study was conducted and completed before K-PREP scores were released. The NGL school score was going to be used to represent student achievement. However, there was not enough responses that were balanced across the 6 categories of the NGL scores. Therefore, the perceptions of teachers and administrators could not be compared to the achievement strand their school fell in. This information could be beneficial for future research to compare the assessment data with the perceptions of teachers and administrators. This additional information could add to the research by Little (1982), stating schools that have collaboration between teachers tend to be more successful academically than schools that do not. Another limitation was the limited response rate creating a bias on the study. However, even though there was a low response rate the observed power was high. The survey used for both teachers and administrators can be used again and produce valid responses for future researchers.

A delimitation of this study is that it only focuses on elementary schools. Only elementary schools were included in this study because of the sample size being 90 total schools. Also, the teachers and administrators in the elementary schools have had the most experience with implementing CCSS. Including middle and high schools would not provide a balance comparison. Additionally, the teachers and administrators had the most experience implementing CCSS having specific professional development offered. Because of there being 90 schools, there was an increase in the possible number of responses from teachers and administrators. There were also specific internal and external validity threats that were addressed. The internal validity threats were: the instrumentation, maturation, and selection (Cook & Campbell, 1979). The instrumentation threats include the surveys, which only measure perception and not factual information, the survey had been altered, and the survey was completed online. The instrumentation threats were controlled by: a pilot of the survey was completed with teachers and administrators, incorporated clear directions in the survey protocol, and altered the survey only to include the language of PLCs and WTs. The maturation validity threats (Cook & Campbell, 1979) were the level of implementation of PLCs and WTs in each elementary school. The survey included questions asking the participants to indicate the level of implementation of PLCs and WTs in their building. The last internal validity threat (Cook & Campbell, 1979) was the selection process of participants. To address this threat all 90 elementary schools were included in the study. This gave all teachers and administrators the option to complete the survey. The teacher responses included all but 4 schools out of 90. There was a total of 442 teacher responses with only 44 responses choosing not to select a school location. The administrator responses

included 39 out of the 90 schools with 16 administrators choosing not to select a school location.

The external validity threats to this study were: reactive effects of experimental arrangements, generalizability, and population representation (Cook & Campbell, 1979). To address the reactive effects of experimental arrangements the survey did not include any identifying information (i.e., name, sex, race). This information was not included to promote more responses to the survey from both teachers and administrators. This was accomplished because the response rates for teachers and administrators were large. The generalizability (Cook & Campbell, 1979) and population representation threats were addressed in this study by including all elementary schools to participant in this study. Due to the high response rate, site visits to the schools was not necessary. The survey was sent out two times to the participants. The initial email explained the purpose of the survey and the time period to complete the survey. The first survey window had a two week time period for completion, and the second window had a week for participants to complete the survey. The district and elementary schools being studied was large enough for the findings to be generalizable to other similar districts and elementary schools.

Implications for Policy and Practice

There are several implications for this study. This study is relevant to other states that have adopted CCSS and understanding a unified approach to supporting teachers implementing the standards. The findings suggest that teachers do believe PLCs and WTs are instructional supports, however the perceived level of support is not consistent with administrators perception. There needs to be increased communication between teachers and administrators with regards to how these supports are beneficial to

instructional practices. This is consistent with the literature provided by Wise and Jacobo (2010), which stated that a school culture should promote constant dialogue and reflection among teachers and administrators.

This study gives administrators research to better understand that they may perceive the level of instructional support to be higher than what teachers perceive. This suggests that administrators need to create clear lines of communication with teachers and the purpose behind PLCs and WTs as instructional supports. Administrators need to continue to consider supervision practices that address the needs of teachers, develop teachers, and monitor progress in a supportive manner (Glanz & Sullivan, 2000; Glickman, 1981; Nolan, 1997; Zepeda & Kruskamp, 2007). Specifically, teachers need to know what the purpose of PLCs are and what a WT is. The findings of this study revealed many teachers did not know what kind of WT tool was being used and did not receive feedback. Nor did the teacher know what the WT observation was being used for. Now administrators can be more intentional about their efforts to understand how to implement these supports with fidelity. The data can guide future work on intentional implementation of PLCs and WTs so that these supports are beneficial for teachers and administrators. Additionally, this study is relevant to all practitioners who have adopted the CCSS and are implementing PLCs and WTs. Administrators can use the results of the aggregated data from this study and collect school specific data. This would allow administrators to consider the perceptions of teachers about PLCs and WTs at their school, and inform them how they can support teachers.

Implications for Future Research

Due to the time of the school year this research was conducted, K-PREP results were not available. To further investigate the instructional support PLCs and WTs provide to teachers it would be beneficial to examine if there is a relationship with student achievement scores. Also, it would be interesting to compare the perceptions of teachers and administrators at all three levels being: elementary, middle, and high school. This would provide more research if there was a difference of PLCs and WTs as supports to instruction depending on what level a teacher or administrator is employed. Including elementary, middle, and high schools would also expand the generalizability of the findings. Lastly, it would be beneficial for a qualitative approach to be done to further explore the perceptions of teachers and administrators on PLCs and WTs. Using a qualitative approach could also address maturation validity threats. This methodological approach could provide a deeper understanding on how teachers and administrators feel about the PLCs and WTs, how to make them better, and if they were viewed as compliant activities. Additionally, more research is needed on how administrators can implement WTs consistently as an instructional support. WTs are mentioned as one of the top instructional support tools for administrators but only account for a small percentage of an administrator's time (Grissom et al., 2013). Also, future research could examine perceptions of teachers and administrators from the same school. This would provide school level data for both teachers and administrators about PLC and WT perceptions. Administrators could also use the survey tool to inform their practices of implementing PLCs and WTs at their school. This information could serve as non-threatening data points to improve and support instructional practices.

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APPENDIX A
Teacher Survey

The purpose of this survey is to obtain your feedback on professional learning communities and walk through as supports. Your answers will be used to understand the ways in which these supports can be improved. Final inventory data will not identify schools or individuals and all survey responses will be kept confidential.

I agree to participate: Yes

Please read each question and provide your answer by circling one of the following:

Strongly Disagree / Disagree / Somewhat Disagree / Unsure / Somewhat Agree / Agree / Strongly Agree

Item	Domain/Question
	Transformational Leadership Behavior
1	Administrators ask questions that prompt me to think in professional learning community. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
2	Administrators insist on giving my best during our professional learning community time. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
3	Administrators provide a good model for me to follow for our professional learning community time. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
	Teacher Workplace Isolation
4	I have an administrator who conducts walk throughs in my classroom. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree

5	I have an administrator who supports me in my professional learning community. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
6	I have administrators who support me at work with instructional strategies. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
7	I feel like I am a valued member of my professional learning community. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
Walk Through Effectiveness	
8	Our school implements walk throughs on a regular basis. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
9	The walk through tool describes effective teaching. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
10	Face-to-face feedback is provided after each classroom observation. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
11	Aligning my practices with the walk through framework helps me improve my instruction. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
12	The walk through process helps teachers develop their instructional strategies. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
13	The walk through process supports my development as a teacher. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
14	I am confident the walk through process fairly reflects my teaching effectiveness and instructional strategies. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
15	I am satisfied with the discussions of my performance with the principal or assistant principal who observed me.

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
16	I am satisfied with the feedback I received from the principal or assistant principal who observed me. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
Professional Learning Communities	
17	Our school implements professional learning communities with fidelity. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
18	My professional learning community team is open and honest about their instructional weaknesses. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
19	My professional learning community solves important issues during team meetings. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
20	My professional learning community team challenges one another in order to make informed decisions. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
21	My professional learning community team is able to come to agreement without compromising individual members' perspective. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
22	My professional learning community team meetings end with a clear and specific understanding of actions to be taken. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
23	My professional learning community team works as a group equitably to distribute the workload. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
24	My professional learning community team is willing to make sacrifices for the achievement of our goals. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree

Trust in Administrators	
25	The administrators align what they actually do with what they say they will do. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
26	The administrators follow through on commitments. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
27	The administrators show concern for the need of my professional learning community team. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
28	The administrators demonstrate knowledge of teaching and learning using the walk through tool. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
29	The administrators demonstrate knowledge of teaching and learning in their feedback given after the walk through observation. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree

Basic Information:

Including this year, how many years have you taught?

Including this year, how many years have you taught in your current school?

School Name/location number:

Type of walk through tool used at your school:

APPENDIX B
Administrator Survey

The purpose of this survey is to obtain your feedback on professional learning communities and walk through as supports. Your answers will be used to understand the ways in which these supports can be improved. Final inventory data will not identify schools or individuals and all survey responses will be kept confidential.

I agree to participate: Yes

Please read each question and provide your answer by circling one of the following:

Strongly Disagree / Disagree / Somewhat Disagree / Unsure / Somewhat Agree / Agree / Strongly Agree

Item	Domain/Question
	Transformational Leadership Behavior
1	I ask questions that prompt teachers to think in professional learning communities. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
2	I insist on teachers giving their best during professional learning team. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
3	I provide a good model for teachers to follow for the professional learning team. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
	Teacher Workplace Isolation
4	I support teachers at work by conducting walk throughs. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree

5	I support teachers at work by participating in their professional learning communities. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
Walk Through Effectiveness	
6	Our school implements walk throughs on a regular basis. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
7	The walk through tool describes effective teaching. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
8	The walk through process takes more effort than the results are worth. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
9	Face-to-face feedback is provided after each classroom observation. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
10	Aligning teacher practices with the walk through framework helps teachers improve instruction. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
11	I ask questions that prompt teachers to think when I conduct a walk through. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
12	The walk through process helps teacher develop their instructional strategies. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
13	I am confident the walk through process fairly reflects the effectiveness of instructional strategies. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
Professional Learning Communities	
14	Our school implements professional learning communities with fidelity. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree

15	My professional learning community content team is open and honest about their instructional weaknesses. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
16	My professional learning community content team solves important issues during team meetings. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
17	My professional learning community content team challenges one another in order to make informed decisions. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
18	My professional learning community content team is able to come to agreement without compromising individual members' perspective. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
19	My professional learning community content team meetings end with clear and specific understanding of actions to be taken. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
20	My professional learning community content team works as a group equitably to distribute the workload. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
21	My professional learning community content team is willing to make sacrifices for the achievement of our goals. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
Trust in Administrators	
22	I align what I actually do with what I say I will do. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
23	I follow through on my commitments. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
24	I show concern for the needs of professional learning community teams.

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
25	I demonstrate knowledge of teaching and learning using the walk through tool. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree
26	I demonstrate knowledge of teaching and learning in feedback after the walk through observation. Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Somewhat Disagree/Unsure/Somewhat Agree/Agree/Strongly Agree

Basic Information:

Including this year, how many total years have you been an administrator?

Including this year, how many years have you been an administrator in your current school?

School Name/location number:

Type of walk through tool used at your school:

APPENDIX C
Informational Letter to Participants

Common Core State Standards: Teacher Perceptions of Administrator Supports with a Focus on Professional Learning Communities and Walk Throughs

January 19, 2016

Dear Participant:

You are being invited to participate in a research study by answering the attached survey about the perceptions of supports offered by administrators, specifically focusing on professional learning communities and walk throughs. There are no known risks for your participation in this research study. The information collected may not benefit you directly. The information learned in this study may be helpful to others. The information you provide will further explore professional learning communities and walk throughs as supports to teachers and instructional practices. Your completed survey will be stored at a secure computer of the investigator**.** The survey will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes time to complete.

Individuals from the Department of Educational Leadership, Evaluation, and Organizational Development, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the Human Subjects Protection Program Office (HSPPO), and other regulatory agencies may inspect these records. In all other respects, however, the data will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Should the data be published, your identity will not be disclosed.

Taking part in this study is voluntary. By completing this survey you agree to take part in this research study. You do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable**.** You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to be in this study you may stop taking part at any time. If you decide not to be in this study or if you stop taking part at any time, you will not lose any benefits for which you may qualify.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research study, please contact: Jason Immekus at 502-852-3825.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Human Subjects Protection Program Office at (502) 852-5188. You can discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject, in private, with a member of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may also call this number if you have other

questions about the research, and you cannot reach the research staff, or want to talk to someone else. The IRB is an independent committee made up of people from the University community, staff of the institutions, as well as people from the community not connected with these institutions. The IRB has reviewed this research study.
If you have concerns or complaints about the research or research staff and you do not wish to give your name, you may call 1-877-852-1167. This is a 24 hour hot line answered by people who do not work at the University of Louisville.

Sincerely,

Jason C. Immekus, Ph.D.
Kara J. Ammerman, Ed.D. student
Amy Colucci, Ed.D. student

CURRICULUM VITAE

KARA J. AMMERMAN
3129 Maywood Place
Louisville, KY 40220
(859) 608-3965
kara.ammerman@jefferson.kyschools.us

EDUCATION

Doctor of Education, Ed.D. ----------August, 2016
University of Louisville: Louisville, KY
Leadership, Evaluation, and Organizational Development

Educational Leadership Licensure, Ed.S. ------December, 2013
University of Louisville: Louisville, KY

Master of Education ----------May, 2008
University of Louisville: Louisville, KY

Bachelor of Arts in Health and Sport Science --------May, 2007
University of Louisville: Louisville, KY

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

2016- current **Assistant Principal, Grades 9-12**
Waggener High School
Jefferson County Public Schools
Louisville, KY

2014-2016 **Assistant Principal, Grades 7-8**

Myers Middle School
Jefferson County Public Schools
Louisville, KY

As an assistant principal, I assume a variety of responsibilities associated with school management and instructional leadership. I have worked to establish Professional Learning Communities within my school to increase student achievement. Additionally, I have emphasized building capacity among teachers to continue instructional excellence. Examples of my leadership responsibilities include the following:

- Implementing the school's progressive school discipline plan with the best interest of students and families
- Teacher evaluation through classroom observation
- Supporting teachers instructionally through Professional Learning Communities
- Conducting Walk Throughs to offer instructional feedback to teachers
- Transportation schedule and supervision
- Supervision of students at extracurricular and athletic events
- Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) Lead, analyzing student behaviors and proactive solutions for teachers
- Chair of the Supplies Committee
- Administration of the school's Freshman Academy
- Participate in the NISL cohort
- Coordinator of the Student Support Team (SST)
- College Access Time coordinator

2008-2012 **Health and PE Teacher and Intervention Specialist**
Doss High School
Jefferson County Public Schools
Louisville, KY

As a teacher leader, I worked collaboratively with other teachers to develop an intervention system. I also chaired on committees to further educate students about life after high school. Examples of my responsibilities include the following:

- Department Chair
- School Based Decision Making Counsel member
- Developed Alcopops Curriculum for the district
- School intervention academic coordinator

- Co-chair of the Advisory program
- Class Sponsor
- Presented at PE and Health state conference

ADDITIONAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

2016- Present	Administrative Lead, Freshman Academy, Waggener High School
2012-2014	Behavior Coach, Waggener High School
2012-2014	Committee Member, Instructional Leadership Team, Waggener High School
2010-2012	Committee Member, Instructional Leadership Team, Doss High School
2010-2012	Committee Member, Advisory Committee, Doss High School

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

JCAPA, Jefferson County Assistant Principals Association
JCASA, Jefferson County Association of School Administrators
KAHPERD, Kentucky Association for Health, Physical Education Recreation, and Dance
NEA, National Education Association

HONORS AND AWARDS

2011	Most Inspirational Teacher Award, Doss High School
2008	Joseph R Trabue Department of Health and Sport Sciences Award, UofL
2007	National Society of Collegiate Scholars, UofL
2007	Cum Laude with distinction, UofL
2004-2008	College of Education and Human Development Dean's List, UofL
2003-2007	Women's Volleyball Scholarship, UofL
2003-2007	Red & Black Scholar Athlete, UofL