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## Administrative Support: What Teachers Say They Need

Jennifer Harris Watson

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Administrative Support: What Teachers Say They Need

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate my work to my girls.

Reagan and Kate, Mommy finally did it!

I also dedicate my work to the teachers in classrooms across South Carolina.

You are the hope for all of our children

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would first like to acknowledge and thank my dissertation committee. Dr. Erik Drasgow, Dr. Jin Liu, Dr. Rachelle Curcio, and Dr. Mitch Yell were all an instrumental part of the doctoral process and my growth as a thinker and a writer. Their expertise was perfectly tempered with their support, feedback, and patience. They stretched my thinking and improved my work. I especially want to thank Dr. Drasgow who never gave up on me (through weeks, months, and sometimes years without a revised draft). Each time I returned, you welcomed me back and supported my writing and my growth. I will forever be your student!

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## **ABSTRACT**

For more than three decades research has shown Administrative Support as a mitigating factor for teacher attrition. It has also been associated with teacher satisfaction and positive school climate. In all of these studies authors have failed to agree on consistent definition of the phenomena and attrition rates along with satisfaction rates have been relatively unchanged.

In 1981, House established four dimensions of worker support (1981) to mitigate worker burnout and attrition. His theoretical framework consisted of emotional support, appraisal support, instrumental support, and informational support in a factory work setting. Littrell et al. (1994) used House's work to attempt to organize specific behaviors of administrative support for teachers by taking these same four dimension and using them in the educational setting.

The purpose of my study is to gain teacher perspectives using a valid and reliable survey along with rigorous methodological strategies to better define administrative support. My study answers the following four questions: 1) Do SC teachers identify the same four dimensions of Administrative Support as those in House's theoretical framework? 2) How do teachers rate the importance of administrative support factors? Are there differences in importance ratings between teachers in different groups? 3) How frequently do teachers receive administrative support? Are there differences in frequency ratings between teachers in different groups? 4) Are there differences in the

importance ratings of teachers and the frequency ratings? How often are teachers receiving the most important supports?

Results from my study found that House's theoretical framework of four dimension continue to be relevant, but can be combined into two new clearer support factors. These factors consist of Value-related behaviors and Logistical-related behaviors. I also found that all support behaviors are not of equal importance to teachers in SC. I was able to order these behaviors into a list from most important to the least important. The most important support behavior for SC teachers was "showing confidence in my teaching" and the least important behavior of the ones in the survey was "assisting with lesson development." I also found that frequency ratings mirrored importance ratings and that the most and least important behaviors were also the most and least frequent behaviors. My results indicate that although there are a few significant differences in importance and frequency ratings by different demographic groups, generally there are more differences within groups than between them. Whereas importance and frequency ratings were similar, my study did find a medium size gap between importance and frequency ratings with teachers reporting higher importance than frequency. Taking all of this into consideration, SC teachers that participated in the study had a 75% satisfaction rate for their building-level administrators' support.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

School administrators provide key leadership roles supporting classroom teachers (e.g., Rosenholtz, 1989, Billingsley, 1992, Cancio et al., 2016). The term administrative support has been widely accepted as a positive influence in literature for the last three decades. A cursory search of Google Scholar for “administrative support for teachers” yielded more than 550 entries. In general, administrative support refers to behaviors that encourage teachers to collaborate with each other (Ax et al., 2001), provide opportunities for growth (Gersten et al., 2001) and/or offer encouragement (Whitaker, 2003). The building-level administrator creates this supportive culture (Billingsley, 2004) that influences all other elements of the school community.

Administrative Support remains fundamental for several reasons. First, Administrative support helps teachers feel satisfied and has been positively linked to classroom performance (Olsen & Huang, 2018). Banarjee et al. (2017), found a positive relationship between teacher satisfaction and positive school culture with the academic progress of students in elementary grades. When surveyed about factors leading to teachers’ job satisfaction, Billingsley et al. (2020), found that teachers reported working in supportive working environments derived from supportive leadership. Second, this support not only influenced the overall satisfaction of teachers (e.g., Conley and You, 2017, Kukla-Acevedo, 2009, Gersten et al., 2001), but it also contributed to teachers remaining in their current teaching assignments (e.g., Boe, 2006). Administrative support

has also been credited with creating schools that better meet the needs of their students (O'Shea et al., 2000).

Past studies defined administrative support in many different ways, included vague descriptions, and even referred to the phenomenon by different names (Cancio et al. 2013). Littrell et al. (1992) used the term “administrative support,” Whitaker (2003) used the term “assistance,” Quinn and Andrews (2004) referred to “principal leadership and support.” Later studies in Educational Leadership materials, refer to “servant leadership” as a form of teacher support (Shaw and Newton, 2014). With researchers not even agreeing to the term used for support, it is even more difficult to find an agreed upon definition.

Although research in the field supports the importance and impact of administrative support (e.g., Billingsley, 1991, Hughes et al., 2015), there is no consensus on the specific behaviors that make up this broad expression. Administrative support has been a part of many researcher projects. Usually these studies were actually measuring other factors—retention, intent to stay, teacher satisfaction, or school climate (e.g., Gersten et al., 2001, Singh and Billingsley, 1998). Within these articles, different research methods measured how administrative support affects teachers. These studies did not focus on what the elements of support actually were. To help advance the field there is a need to define specific support behaviors.

In an attempt to organize support behaviors, Littrell et al. (1992) introduced House's Theoretical Framework for Social Support (1981). This framework was derived from studying support behaviors for workers in a manufacturing plant. House divided support into four interrelated but separate domains and his work was adapted for use in

educational research. These domains of support were emotional support, appraisal support, instrumental support, and informational support. Subsequent research used the four domains to create instruments to study the more general terms of administrative support (Littrell et al., 1992).

Despite the wide-spread reliance on House's Theoretical Framework (House, 1981) to inform administrative preparation and practices (e.g., Littrell et al., 1994 and Otto & Arnold, 2005), I could not find any studies that attempted to validate the psychometric properties of this framework based on feedback from teachers. Cancio et al. (2013), was the closest attempt that I found. The researchers combined House's domains of support (House, 1981) with another, more contemporary, structure from Albrecht et al. (2009). The Cancio (2013) study then used these combined terms for support structures in a section of their survey to determine the support needs of teachers teaching students with Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities. Their multi-section survey had one section dedicated to defining administrative support with these newly constructed domains, while there were also sections about satisfaction, health and well-being, and intent to stay in the field. As part of their study, Cancio et al. (2013) conducted an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to examine the domains of support and their relationship with each other and the other sections of the survey.

The Cancio et al. (2013) study is different from my study in several ways. First, the Cancio et al. (2013) survey was developed with many different sections to measure several different components of support and retention. It also combined frameworks. My study is designed to closely examine the properties of House's theoretical framework (1981) and how it relates to teachers' support needs. While Cancio et al. (2013) used a

sample of like teachers, my study will examine the needs of teachers across content areas and among teachers in both general and special education. My study will also use a Confirmatory Factor Analysis as a primary data analytic procedure along with descriptive statistics.

## **Purpose**

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine teacher perspectives on administrative support. A survey was developed to ask teachers to identify the specific behaviors most important to them and those behaviors most frequently received from building-level administrators. The process included a review of current literature to find, organize, and confirm factors by domains of support, and then survey teachers. The study analyzed data to find the most leveraged support behaviors and examined support needs and frequency differences by teacher groups (elementary vs. secondary, rural vs. urban, special education vs. general education).

This study will examine teacher perspectives on administrative support to gain a more prescriptive description of the term. This study answers the following research questions:

1) Do South Carolina teachers identify the same four dimensions of administrative support as those in House's theoretical framework?

2) How do teachers rate the importance of administrative support factors?

Are there differences in importance ratings between teachers in different groups?

3) How frequently do teachers receive administrative support?

Are there differences in frequency ratings between teachers in different groups?

4) Are there differences in the importance ratings of teachers and the frequency ratings?

How often are teachers receiving the most important supports?



## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Administrative Support

In this chapter, I review the literature on administrative support. In the first section, I provide an overview of the term. In subsequent sections I describe the organizational mechanism for the research in House's (1981) theoretical framework. I organize the research into the four domains of that framework. Finally, I conclude with an explanation for the need for more research to specify supports that will have the greatest impacts for teachers.

Below is a table summarizing research on Administrative Support, different terms used to define the behaviors, and the methodology used to measure supports.

**Table 2.1 Administrative Support in Educational Research**

Authors	Term Used	Description	Methodology
Littrell, et al., 1994	Administrative Support	Knowing teachers and giving input	Survey- Path Analysis, Descriptive, Cronbach's Alpha to confirm dimensions n= 698 (385 SPED, 313 GENED)

Singh, Billingsley, 1998	Professional Support/Principal Leadership	Fairness in evaluation Clear communication/expectations Staff recognition Clarity of goals Support and encouragement Enforces rules	Survey- Data pulled from National Center for Educational Statistics, 1990 School and Staffing Survey (SASS) 10 items related to Principal Support pulled from original survey n=9,040 (only fulltime teachers)  Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (focus professional support and professional commitment)
Ax et al., 2001	Administrative Support	Try to alleviate the feeling of isolation and not blaming teachers for the behaviors/issues of the most difficult students in the building	Survey- simple descriptive statistics  n=237 (ED/BD teachers in Wisconsin)

Gersten et al., 2001	Building level support	Set inclusive tone for school's culture Understand the role of the teacher Set tone for collaboration	Survey- Working in Special Education n= 887  Exploratory Factor Analysis – used to cluster items for path analysis for supports (not limited to building level support) Criterion variable analysis for intent to stay in field
Nichols, Sosnowsky, 2002	Admin support/ Building level support	Establish social networks to alleviate social isolation, opportunities for social networking	Conceptual Idea of Administrative Support Primary Focus- Burnout Factors Survey- 2 instruments Maslach Burnout Inventory- Educators Survey and SDOSS  ANOVA, descriptive analysis  n=77

Whitaker 2003	Assistance	Listening, sharing experiences, and encouragement	Survey- and Follow- up survey Descriptive Statistics and Differential index of need vs. assistance  n=156, First year Special Education Teachers in South Carolina
Quinn, Andrews, 2004	Principal Leadership/ Support	Assistance with instruction Personal/emotional support Access to materials and supplies Information about school Help with classroom management Suggestions for dealing with parents	Survey and Interview- Spearman Rho, Descriptive statistics n= 136 for survey n= 57 follow-up interview
Gehrke, Murri, 2006	Supportive Administrator	Receptive, being “hands off”, “staying out of the way”, accessible	Open-ended interviews and a 10-item follow-up survey of n= 8 first year special education graduates from large Southwest University in their first year teaching

Kukla-Acevedo, 2009	Administrative Support	Classroom Autonomy, behavioral climate	Data from Survey- 1999-2000- National Center for Educational Statistics – School and Staff Survey (SASS) public use survey and the 2000-2001- National Center for Educational Statistics- NTF public use survey n= 3,505 Cronbach’s Alpha, correlational relationships, descriptive statistics
Fall, Billingsley, 2011	Principal Support	Recognizes staff for job well done, backs you up when you need it, understands what you do	Teacher Interviews developed by US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs Stratified Sample n= 1,061 Service providers from an n= 370 Schools/Local Education Agencies

Shaw, Newton 2014	Servant Leadership	Know the teachers, learns from others, humility, empowering, vision, and trust	Descriptive statistics, One- way ANOVAs, chi-squares, and reliability analyses Study of work conditions and disparities including principal support Quasi- experimental, quantitative Correlational study using Survey methods- Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument (SLAI) n= 234 teachers from 15 schools Pearson Correlation between perceived servant leadership and job satisfaction Point- biserial correlation for perceived servant leadership and retention
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## **House's Theoretical Framework**

A framework of organization is required when developing the most effective model of support. Information without this type of organization becomes merely lists of information. For my research, I have chosen to focus on the theoretical framework developed by House (1981) and modified by Littrell et al. (1994). House's framework is the most prominent framework in the body of research on administrative support (e.g., Billingsley, 1994, Cancio, 2013). There are few other models in the literature as the topic of administrative support lacks consistent review and use.

In 1981, Dr. James House from the University of Michigan published *Work Stress and Social Support*, as part of a series on occupational stress. Within this document, he shared his findings on social supports as mitigating factors for work stress. Also, in his work, House introduced the domains of support and divided perceived and objective support into four domains. These domains of support were: emotional support, appraisal support, informational support, and instrumental support.

House's investigation involving support for workers and how this support helps lessen the effects of stress became an integral piece of literature used by notable researchers' future work on teacher stress. Littrell, et al. (1994), leading experts in the field of special education teacher retention and support, based their domains of support on Houses' model of support. Other researchers in the area of teacher support/retention used these same domains as a way of organizing interventions to keep teachers in the classroom.

## **Emotional Support**

In his work, House (1981) identified emotional Support as the most important type of social support because it provides strong buffering for those working under stress. Emotional Support involves “providing empathy, caring, love, and trust” (p. 24). House purports that when people initially think support they primarily think of emotional support first. House’s work influenced others studying teacher retention.

When organizing support behaviors of building-level administrators, emotional support is a prominent factor. It includes behaviors that were cited as the most helpful in shielding teachers from negative factors (Littrell et al., 1994). Examples of these buffers include showing concerns for teachers and their students and including input into decision making. These supports are found to be essential in the field of education because of the lack of overt honors bestowed upon teaching professionals (Littrell et al., 1994).

## **Appraisal Support**

House (1981) explained appraisal support as transmission of information relevant to “self-evaluation.” With this type of support, other people in the work environment (both administrators and colleagues) provide information that individuals use to evaluate themselves. Likert (1961, p.101) as referenced by House (1981, p. 95) describes appraisal attributes of a supervisor who “sees that all subordinates are well trained” and “coaches and assists employees whose performance is below standard (p. 96).” This description of a supportive supervisor easily translates to the role of a building-level principal as a major administrative role is instructional supervision.



Analyzing survey results from the Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (SPeNSE), Littrell, et al. (1994) found appraisal support as the second most important type of support for both general education and special education teachers. For special education teachers, who are more likely to experience role ambiguity (Gerke & Murri, 2006), this appraisal support may be even more important. Interestingly enough, although the area of support was determined to be the second highest need, it was found the least in their review of current literature. Littrell, et al., defined appraisal support as the principal providing on-going constructive feedback and an overall trust in staff judgment. Appraisal support allows teachers using current practices to set the standard for learning and growth (George, et al., 1995). Essential components of this type of support include the building administrator knowing students' needs in the classroom, visiting the classroom enough to make accurate judgments about the instructional practices of the teachers, and sharing feedback from those judgments (Littrell, et al., 1994).

### **Instrumental Support**

House (1981, p. 24) proclaims instrumental support as the easiest form of support to distinguish from the other domains of support. This active domain of support involves helping other people, "do their work, take care of themselves, or pay their bills" (p.25). House's 1981 work referencing a 1978 study by House and Wells asked respondents to report how helpful supervisors and colleagues were in getting jobs completed. This work refers to instrumental support. Another item asked respondents to rate their supervisors' competency, as designed to measure perceived instrumental support (p. 71). Likert (1961, p. 101), as referenced in House (1981, p. 95), described instrumental supportive leaders as "seeing that each subordinate is well-trained for his particular job helping subordinates

to be promoted...giving relevant experiences and coaching whenever the opportunity offers.”

In their 1994 article, Littrell et al. defined instrumental support as a “principal directly help(ing) teachers with work-related tasks” (p. 298). Administrators giving instrumental support provided resources such as space, materials, and time to perform required tasks. It also includes assisting with “managerial-type” concerns (p. 298). Both general and special education teachers (Littrell, Billingsley, 1994) found this type of support to be the third most supportive.

### **Informational Support**

According to House (1981, p. 25) informational support means “providing a person with information that the person can use in coping with personal or environmental problems.” As explained in House’s work, the information given to workers does not offer support in itself, but allows employees to help themselves. These results may provide the primary difference between informational support and instrumental support.

Using House’s theoretical framework, Littrell and Billingsley (1994) explained the informational support domain of administrative support as the “principal providing useful information.” This domain overlaps with instrumental support domain in the area of professional development, but for the purposes of this work informational support will refer to only providing other types of information. In the Littrell, Billingsley (1994) study, teachers reported informational support as the least helpful domain of support, but also noted that it was available more often than the appraisal aspect of support.

A summary of these domains and behaviors is found in the table below.

**Table 2.2 House's Domains of Support and Administrator Behaviors**

<b>Support Domain</b>	<b>Meaning from House's Theoretical Framework</b>	<b>Administrative Support Behaviors</b>
Emotional Support	providing empathy, caring, love, and trust	acknowledging teacher work, valuing teacher input, encouraging collegiality
Appraisal Support	providing information for self-evaluation	setting clear expectations, providing clear and consistent feedback, showing fairness in evaluations
Instrumental Support	helping worker to complete tasks and prioritize self-care	providing resources, assisting with classroom management, enforcing norms
Informational Support	providing a person with information that the person can use in coping with personal or environmental problems	providing useful information to teachers, sharing teacher needs with district, communicating a clear school vision

### **Implications in the Research- Emotional Support**

Littrell et al. (1994), used House's (1981) framework for their early research. Survey results of both special and general education teachers in Virginia confirmed House's theory that those who provided emotional supports were perceived to be "supportive." Building-level administrators and teachers worked together to form caring relationships and promoted a sense of importance that teachers also perceived as supportive. Researchers found that emotional support offered mitigating factors for

teachers, as it was for House's workers. Emotional support specifically helped teachers feel less stress and report fewer health problems.

In the educational research, House's original definition changed slightly to fit the new setting. Littrell et al., (1994) defined emotional administrative support as showing appreciation, taking an interest in work, and empowering teachers. The authors also examined emotional support as perceived by general and special education teachers. Their research found that teachers, in both groups of educators perceived emotional support as their administrator knowing them and the needs of their students. Emotionally supportive principals, in this study, showed appreciation and trust, maintained open-communication, and showed interest in the teachers' work.

The information gleaned from Littrell et al. (1994) confirmed Cross and Billingsley's findings (1991) that studied the factors causing teachers to transfer out of special education and into general education. These findings indicated that 14% of teachers transferring cited leaving special education because of school administration not understanding or appreciating their work. Administrators showing an understanding and appreciation for work, support behaviors are considered to be in the emotional support category.

While the respondents were all Special Education teachers in a study by Ax et al. (2001); their study presented the same theme of emotional support needs. This research showed that of teachers of students with Emotional/ Behavior Disorders also valued principal emotional support. These teachers highlighted the opportunities for building-level administrators to create schools where their beliefs and ideas permeated throughout

the school setting. When administrators created an environment of acceptance and support those same values manifested in teachers at their schools. In this way, administrative support combatted the feelings of isolation that many special education teachers have expressed. This in turn affected their intentions to stay in their school. Nichols and Sosnowsky (2002) found these same needs when they surveyed teachers with cross-categorical classrooms. These teachers cited the principal's effects on working conditions. These teachers in this study praised principals who established social networks to support collegial relationships alleviated isolation and exhibited emotional support.

In an effort to gain knowledge on administrative supports, Whitaker (2003) surveyed 200 novice special education teachers in South Carolina. Respondents referred to emotional administrative support as the second leading need during their first year. Whitaker's research confirmed the importance of beginning special education teachers' need for administrators to listen, encourage, and share experiences, including the necessary self-focus of the first year of teaching. She related emotional support needs to a new teacher transitioning from a position as student (where all of the focus was on self) to the position of teacher (where the focus would eventually be on the well-being and needs of students).

In 2004, Andrews and Quinn studied both special education and regular education first-year teachers and found similar themes as Whitaker's work. Their survey study completed for one, large school district, also found emotional support as the second greatest need. Teachers' introductions to colleagues positively influenced the perception of support for these teachers. Teachers also perceived administrators as more supportive

when the school leaders spoke with them frequently and exhibited overall supportive behavior especially if there were collegial or parental conflicts. During this transition period, the teachers in both the Whitaker (2003) and Andrews, Quinn (2004) studies needed significant emotional support.

Gehrke and Murri (2006) found several themes in their interviews with eight beginning special education teachers related to administrative emotional support. Teachers' experiences ranged from very, active supportive principals who had experience with special education to principals who were reported to be not very supportive, but "stayed out of the way" and were "hands off" (p. 183).

Kukla-Acevedo (2009) used results from the National Center for Education Statistics Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and Follow-up Survey (TFS) to make assumptions about the needs of both general and special education, first year and experienced teachers in a national sample. Administrative support directly affected workplace conditions that influenced whether teachers would stay in the field, stay in their current positions, or leave education. These emotional support factors included direct communication from supervisors. The study also found a positive link between this type of support and teacher outcomes.

Another form of administrative support included public recognition and acknowledgement. Recognition and acknowledgement are also categorized as emotional supports by the definition proposed by Littrell and Billingsley (1994). This study mirrored the study by Singh, Billingsley (1998) that also found public recognition and frequent conversations about practices, paired with encouragement as positive factors influencing teachers' experiences and their commitment to the field.

Like Kukla-Acevedo's findings, Fall and Billingsley (2011) found that emotional administrative support led directly to positive work conditions. Their study of early career special education teachers in high- and low- poverty districts found that while student-teacher ratios, the diversity of student needs, and amount of resources varied in the two settings differed by district poverty levels, teacher reports of support needs did not differ by these same factors. The teachers in the higher- poverty and lower-poverty schools both referred to "the principal backing you up," "the principal understanding what you do," and "staff members being recognized for a job well done." These factors all related to teachers' needs for emotional support.

Educational leadership literature rarely mentions emotional support. Shaw and Newton's article (2014), referred to an aspect of servant leadership as emotional support. Their research suggested that servant leaders know their teachers and offer needed emotional support. Servant leaders show trust and empower teachers to take charge of their classrooms, while showing love and humility.

### **Implications in the Literature- Appraisal Support**

After surveying approximately 950 special education and general education teachers in Virginia, Billingsley and Cross (1992) identified input and shared performance ratings as important aspects of appraisal leadership support. The researchers suggested these principal behaviors as strategies for increasing commitment among teachers. Three years later, George et al. (1995) published an article examining differing perceptions of teachers planning to stay or leave the field of special education. In this later study, teachers shared concerns about the "type and quality" of supervisory feedback. Identifying appraisal support as lacking, teachers' concerns focused on

building-level supervisors who were responsible for teacher evaluations, but who lacked knowledge of special education methodology and practices. Appraisal feedback was reported by the participants in this study to be very infrequent and basic in nature. Given in this way, the support was not seen as helpful.

In 1998, Singh and Billingsley shared their analysis of the 1987-1988 School and Staffing Survey results. The survey carried out by the U.S. Bureau of Census for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The survey found principal/leadership support was broken into ten support mechanisms. The study listed fairness in evaluation as a significant factor. These leadership dimensions serve as components of support that were positively associated with commitment. In 2011, Fall and Billingsley analyzed the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education SPeNSE interview data. The authors suggested that principals' behavior providing feedback and suggestions to enhance instructional practices to be perceived as important support behaviors.

Although appraisal support may be included in other dimensions of support, Fall and Billingsley (2011), found that providing relevant professional development based on classroom performance needs and assisting with exceptional learners' needs specifically related to perceived supports and intentions to stay in the field.

### **Implications in the Research--Instrumental Support**

Even before Littrell et al. (1994) published the "domains of support" as they related to teachers' needs, researchers were surveying teachers to find reasons for attrition and supports that helped retain teachers. These surveys indicated instrumental support as an essential element for teacher retention. Billingsley and Cross (1991), shared many results related to instrumental support. Their results were based on a 28-item,



checklist-type, survey sent to teachers in Virginia who were certified in special education, but teaching in non-special education assignments. Many of the items were very general and only related to lack of administrative support and work related stress as reasons for leaving special education teaching assignments. 31.5% of respondents also cited too much paperwork. Inadequate teaching materials was noted by 18.9% of respondents. In addition, 9.4% of respondents also identified difficulties with mainstreaming students as a reason for leaving. Of those who responded, 5.9% checked involuntary transfers as a major reason for leaving special education.

In 1998, Singh and Billingsley published an article based on an analysis of the most recent (at the time, 1987-88) SASS results at the time. Singh and Billingsley aimed to research teachers' commitment to the field and their analysis model presented the findings of leadership dimensions including clear expectations and frequent communication about instructional practices. Respondents indicated enforcing school rules, helping teachers improve practices, and solving instructional and/or management problems indicated supportive principals. Interestingly the study found the relationship between the principals' instrumental support of teachers and how that translates to collegial instrumental support. Respondents that indicated a higher score for principal leadership most related to instrumental support also indicated a higher score for peer support. Both of these factors related to teachers' commitments to stay in the field.

Ingersoll (2001) also used the NCES' nationally representative SASS. His analysis used the 1990-1991 data. While he was less interested in the commitment level of particular sub-groups, his study was more concerned with the organizational conditions that promote retention. His analysis found several instrumental factors related

to intent to stay in teaching. These support factors all related to administrative support and were linked to student discipline, instructional methods, and providing curriculum.

Gersten et al. (2001) focused on “alterable” influences of teacher retention. These efforts intended to identify lower cost aspects of organizations that administrators might use to control and foster special education teachers’ intent to stay. Using a guided paths analysis of a survey developed specifically for the study, the authors found that providing relevant professional development and assisting with the thought process of meeting exceptional learners’ needs to be factors related to perceptions support and intentions to stay in the field. Building-level administrators also included assisting special education teachers in problem solving strategies for assisting students and working with other professionals in the school using these low-cost, high-support options.

Only a year later, Ingersoll and Smith (2003), again suggested school-level administrative support as an alterable influence on new teachers’ retention. The article defines instrumental administrative support in the form of disciplining students, providing supplies, and assigning mentors to new teachers. While the authors possibly over-simplified the issue when they started by stating that increasing positive working conditions in these slight ways could lower rates of new teacher turnover and diminish school staffing problems, this vital article remains one of the few in the educational leadership field that focuses on administrative support.

Kukla-Acevedo (2009) also investigated alterable workplace conditions that relate to teachers leaving, moving, and staying in the field. Using data from the NCEs SASS from 1999-2000, that administrators’ roles in supporting student behavior and discipline to develop as a significant protective factor. This finding was comparable to the findings

of Fall, Billingsley (2011) where they examined the support needs of early career special education teachers focusing on high- and low-poverty districts. Using data from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, SPeNSE computer-assisted telephone interviews, Fall and Billingsley found several district and school supports that influenced responders' work satisfaction (and interconnected retention rates). Fall and Billingsley reported that a principal's enforcement of school rules provided significant factors in work satisfaction.

Nichols and Sosnowsky (2002) had another focus for their research on support/stress for special education teachers. Their study focused on the needs of teachers in cross-categorical classrooms. Because of the students' diversity and varying needs, teachers in this study relied on building-level support even more intensely. A lack of professional development opportunities meeting teachers' specific needs heavily influenced the teachers' perceptions of lack of administrative support.

Quinn and Andrews (2004) conducted a small study of new teachers in a single school district. Although the demographics varied in this study, the results mirror other, large-scale studies. Principal support remained a significant factor in the perception of overall teacher support. This principal support rating was based on the teachers' perception of support for acquiring materials and supplies, assisting with lesson development, and supporting discipline decisions. The rating also influenced the indirect support of assigning of teaching mentors. Similar results provided in the Gehrke and Murri (2006) study of eight new special education teachers confirmed the need for mentor. They, too, found that participants in their interviews and follow-up surveys prioritized classroom management and accessing materials and resources as essential

elements of administrative support. Teachers in this study declared that useful and appropriate professional development opportunities were difficult to access and were linked to perceived administrative support.

Whitaker's work in 2003 focused specifically on the needs of new special education teachers in South Carolina. She found a consistent pattern with respondents indicated their number one need as support with classroom management. New special education teachers needed assistance with obtaining instructional materials, planning, and organizing instruction. Whitaker purported that these instrumental needs could most effectively be supported by a building-level administrator finding resources and pairing the new teachers with knowledgeable mentors.

More recently, a study by Shaw and Newton (2014) considered the effects of "servant leadership." While the terminology is different than administrative support, the overall meaning remains similar. Their study was to find the correlation of three variables: perception of building administrator's servant leadership, job satisfaction, and retention rate. The researchers found a definite correlation between leaders' ability to share newly acquired knowledge as instrumental in both teachers' job satisfaction and retention rates.

A recent article by Thibodeaux et al. (2015) also examines administrative leadership types and teacher retention. Using mixed methods, the authors found overall trends of leadership qualities that positively affected teachers' intent to stay in the field of education. Key trends included support with student discipline, allocating resources to support collaboration and planning, and allowing for teacher input. These factors related to the instrumental domain of administrative support. This domain of support is the third

most important domain of support indicated by the participants in the Littrell et al. (1994) study. It has received the most attention in both special education and general education literature. The reason for the prevalence of this type of support may be because it is the easiest domain of support to quantify and describe or because it most directly relates to student outcomes.

### **Implication in the Literature- Informational Support**

Billingsley and Cross (1992) studied the differences between special education and general education teachers in respect to predictors of commitment, job satisfaction, and intentions to stay in teaching. The study presented overall agreement that administrative support, specifically including informational support, continues as an important factor in teachers' overall commitment to the field. Both groups identified informational support clarifying roles and expectations of building-level administrators as important factors. Differences between the two groups showed that special education respondents reported a greater level of role conflict and ambiguity than their general education counterparts.

Like Billingsley and Cross (1992), Ax et al. (2001) studied principal support and its effects on retention. These researchers focused specifically on the needs of special educators in the field of emotional/behavioral disorders. As designed, the study measured the reasons these teachers enter the field and exit the field of special education. One important finding in this study, confirms the principal as clarifying the many, varied roles and responsibilities of their staff. Principals' responsibilities include encouraging teachers to continue to learning and growing. This complex and unique task combines giving information and providing support strategies.

Singh and Billingsley (1998) found that principals influence teachers' work experiences through communication and learning opportunities. The administrator establishes expectations including the communication of goals. Informational supportive principals "know what kind of school he/she wants and communicate it to the staff." This allows staff to know their roles in the school and offers greater commitment. Quinn and Andrews (2004) also found clear communication of school goals as vital to the respondents of their single district survey. They also found that teachers needed information about school and district procedures and policies. Teachers also indicated a need for orientation to share specific information about where to locate materials, who to go to for specific information, locations of parts of the school campus, and the rules governing them.

The eight new special education teachers in the Gehrke and Murri (2006) shared evidence regarding teachers' frustration with the lack of informational support as related to being given clear information from the school and district. Schools and districts offering different information about roles and expectations proved to be particularly challenging. Providing building-level administrators to answer questions about program design, roles, expectations, and inclusion policies proved to be helpful solutions to stress and emotional burnout.

Similarly, Kukla-Acevedo (2009) found that teachers valued support from building-level administrators who exhibited informational support when communicating expectations. This level of perceived administrative support was related to novice teachers who remain at the same school and class for the following year. Fall and Billingsley (2011) referred to "leadership support," in part, as administrators knowing

their schools and communicating what they want it to become. This finding was more significant regarding the relationship to retention, than any other factor.

### **Need for Further Study**

While House's study provided some information, the research focused on a non-educational setting. Furthermore, it focused on informal sources of support (not supervisory). Littrell et al., (1994) took this research and specialized the data to the field of education. In their work in 1994, Littrell et al., used the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each of the four dimensions of House's model to indicate their distinctiveness. Since that time, other studies have assumed these domains are distinct and helpful in defining administrative support but have not analyzed them. As a researcher, I will explore factors through an analysis of each component found in the literature review and use a more precise statistical analysis. One key to this vital research involves developing a more prescriptive model of support.

I used a survey to evaluate whether each supportive factor/behavior is in fact considered a support for different teachers and if these support behaviors are being used currently as a provision for teachers.

While an essential leadership skill of school administrators (e.g., Leech and Fulton, 2001, Kettle, 2006), administrative support is a skill-set rarely discussed in Educational Leadership programs across the state. A text search of the National Education Leadership Preparation Standards (NELP), formerly known as the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards, found nothing for the term "administrative support." This indicates a need for a clearer understanding of how teachers (and different groups of teachers) define administrative support.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study examined teacher perspectives on administrative support to gain a more prescriptive description of the term. This work answered the following research questions:

1) Do South Carolina teachers identify the same four dimensions of Administrative Support as those in House's theoretical framework?

2) How do teachers rate the importance of administrative support factors?

Are there differences in importance ratings between teachers in different groups?

3) How frequently do teachers receive administrative support?

Are there differences in frequency ratings between teachers in different groups?

4) Are there differences in the importance ratings of teachers and the frequency ratings?

How often are teachers receiving the most important supports?

### Participant Description

While several groups of educators provided the target populations for this study, all participants were Prekindergarten- 12<sup>th</sup> grade public school *full-time classroom teachers*, certified by the state of SC and held the following positions: Early Childhood/Elementary teaching positions in any subject, middle level teachers of any subject, and high school Level teachers of any subject.



For the purpose of this study, full time classroom teachers identified themselves as *Special Education* or *General Education* teachers. A *special education teacher* was defined as a full-time, certified, instructor whose caseload has more than 50% of students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs). These teachers provide services in any setting (pull-out, push-in, inclusion, special class, and special school) and hold certifications in at least one of the following areas: Special Education- Hearing Impairments, Special Education-Visual Impairments, Special Education Early Childhood, Special Education-Emotional Disabilities, Special Education- Intellectual Disabilities, Special Education-Learning Disabilities, Special Education- Multi-categorical, or Special Education-Severe Disabilities.

A *general education teacher* was defined as a full-time, certified, instructor with a caseload including less than 50% of students with IEPs.

For the purpose of this study the definition of *classroom teachers* excluded Counselors, Social Workers, School Psychologists, Teacher Support Specialists, Speech- Language Pathologists, Media Specialists, or any other certified staff who do not work directly with students for more than 75% of their work day.

### **Recruitment Procedures**

The South Carolina Department of Education recently approved a research data request to obtain email addresses for teachers in South Carolina who are currently teaching and have current certification status. Email addresses were used to send electronic surveys to potential respondents. Information did not include any identifying factors. All South Carolina teachers had an equal chance of receiving and email as emails

were sent to all addresses provided.(Fowler, 2014). This included over 47,000 email addresses.

A two-phase approach encouraged participation. First, each teacher received an email soliciting participation. Then, after two weeks, a reminder with the link was resent. The survey remained opened for an additional four weeks to give participants time to complete the questions and submit.

### **Instrument Development**

I developed the Dimensions of Administrative Support Inventory (DASI) to assess educators' perceptions of the diverse dimensions of support within the valuable scope of administrative support. Survey development began with studying the survey used in the work of Littrell et al. (1994). The original survey found in their work was used for a different purpose than the one in this study and with different analysis. The Littrell et al. (1994) measurement tool provided the foundation for much of the work in administrative support. After completing a comprehensive web search using Google Scholar, the research showed the authors – together or separately—in at least 1,700 works. Several survey items in the DASI were adapted from their original survey.

**Table 3.1 Comparison of Littrell et al. (1994) Survey and DASI items**

<i>Littrell et al. Support Behavior Items</i>	<i>DASI- Support Behavior Survey Items</i>
<i>Extent: 1 = no extent to 4 = great extent</i>	<i>Frequency: 1- never, 2- rare, 3- often, 4- always</i>
<i>Importance: 1 = not important to 4 = very important</i>	<i>Importance: 1- Not at all, 2- Slightly, 3- Moderately, 4- Extremely</i>
<u><i>Items</i></u>	<u><i>Items</i></u>
1. Acts friendly toward me	1. Supporting my collaboration efforts with my colleagues
2. Is easy to approach	2. Clarifying my role in the school and with my team
3. Gives me undivided attention when I am talking	3. Understanding my work with my students
4. Is honest and straightforward with the staff	4. Sharing legislative updates and initiatives with staff
5. Gives me a sense of importance and that I make a difference	5. Allowing my input when discussing my performance
6. Considers my ideas	6. Providing clear communication about the school mission
7. Allows me input into decisions that affect me	7. Setting a clear standard of expectations for everyone
8. Supports me on decisions	8. Encouraging me to continue learning
9. Shows genuine concern for my program and students	9. Showing confidence in my actions as a teacher
10. Notices what I do	
11. Shows appreciation for my work	

<i>12. Treats me as one of the faculty</i>	<i>10. Having conversations about performance</i>
<i>13. Gives clear guidelines regarding job responsibilities</i>	<i>11. Showing understanding of my practices in the classroom</i>
<i>14. Provides standards for performance</i>	<i>12. Showing an appreciation for my work</i>
<i>15. Offers constructive feedback after observing my teaching</i>	<i>13. Speaking to me (greetings)</i>
<i>16. Provides frequent feedback about my performance</i>	<i>14. Sharing information about different learning opportunities outside of school</i>
<i>17. Helps me evaluate my needs</i>	<i>15. Handling any student discipline</i>
<i>18. Trusts my judgment in making classroom decisions</i>	<i>16. Enforcing school rules</i>
<i>19. Shows confidence in my actions</i>	<i>17. Providing professional development opportunities</i>
<i>20. Provides helpful information for improving personal coping skills</i>	<i>18. Coaching me when I need it</i>
<i>21. Provides information on up-to-date instructional techniques</i>	<i>21. Providing on-going constructive feedback</i>
<i>22. Provides knowledge of current legal policies and administrative regulations</i>	<i>22. Establishing a social network to support collegial relationships</i>
<i>23. Provides opportunities for me to attend workshops, attend conferences, and take courses</i>	<i>23. Including my input into decision making</i>
<i>24. Encourages professional growth</i>	<i>24. Providing planning time for me</i>
<i>25. Provides suggestions for me to improve instruction</i>	<i>25. Providing clear communication of the district goals</i>
<i>26. Identifies resource personnel to contact for specific problems he or she is unable to solve</i>	<i>26. Communicating teacher needs to others in the district</i>
	<i>27. Setting a tone for acceptance and understanding among teachers</i>

27. <i>Assists with proper identification of special education students</i>	28. <i>Sharing information between different groups in the school</i>
28. <i>Is available to help when needed</i>	29. <i>Listening to me and encouraging me</i>
29. <i>Helps me establish my schedule</i>	30. <i>Providing curriculum for my classroom</i>
30. <i>Helps me solve problems and conflicts that occur</i>	31. <i>Providing needed materials for my classroom</i>
31. <i>Establishes channels of communication between general and special education teaching and other professionals</i>	32. <i>Assisting with lesson development</i>
32. <i>Helps me with classroom discipline problems</i>	
33. <i>Helps me during parent confrontations, when needed</i>	
34. <i>Provides time for various nonteaching responsibilities (e.g., IEPs, conferences)</i>	
35. <i>Provides adequate planning time</i>	
36. <i>Provides material, space, and resource needs</i>	
37. <i>Participates in child study/eligibility/IEP meetings/parent conferences</i>	
38. <i>Works with me to plan specific goals and objectives for my program and students</i>	
39. <i>Provides extra assistance when I become overloaded</i>	
40. <i>Equally distributes resources and unpopular chores</i>	

Other items included in the DASI were derived and adapted from an extensive study of the literature in teacher support and teacher retention/attrition, including more than 150 articles. The methodology in the articles reviewed ranged from observations in the field, to teacher interviews, to surveys of specific groups, to the use of national teaching surveys. An extensive search was conducted by choosing search selections: “teacher retention,” “Special Education teacher retention,” “teacher support,” “administrative support,” “principal support,” and “attrition factors.” A copy of the DASI is found in Appendix B.

### **Section 1: Demographics**

The survey’s first section collected demographic information, including asking participants to identify themselves as general education teachers or special education teacher (based on the above definition). This section also collected information on *school level, years in education, number of building-level administrators in their school, and the size of their district*. All of these questions were used to determine if there were other factors that influenced the type of administrative support needed by teachers. Later analysis of this information was used to compare differences between and among different demographic groups. Reporting this information adds to the field by allowing a more prescriptive definition of support behaviors for different groups of teachers.

### **Section 2: Support Behavior Ratings**

The second section of the survey utilized closed response items to allow teachers to rate the importance and frequency of support behaviors. These closed- response items were chosen for this section to allow a statistical comparison within and across groups of

teachers (Johnson and Morgan, 2016). I also employed Johnson and Morgan (2016) guidelines for addressing item structure. Each item probe in the survey was written to be brief and presents one single idea. Positive wording is used and there was a purposeful effort to limit the reading load of respondents (p. 58).

The behaviors presented in these items were derived from the literature review and were originally organized into “mini-sections” based on House’s (1981) dimensions support. These dimensions are 1) emotional support, 2) appraisal support, 3) instrumental support, and 4) informational support. A review of the literature in Special Education Teacher Retention, Teacher Retention in general, Administrative and Principal Support, and Administrative Leadership offered study results, which were categorized into the four broad dimensions.

The foundation of current research is derived from studies in the 1990’s. Littrell, et al., (1994) developed a survey to better measure the support teachers received from principals. While using modified aspects of this survey, there are several specific differences. Earlier instruments addressed the importance of measuring supports related to teachers’ intent to stay or leave. The Littrell et al. (1994) survey only addressed the needs of special education teachers. More recently, teacher attrition trends have occurred across all fields, requiring a diverse survey sample including participants across all content areas (CERRA, 2019).

For each survey item, respondents were asked to complete two Likert-rating scales. The first component rated the importance of that behavior as a support mechanism. The range for this part of the survey was from 1 (not at all important) to 4 (extremely important). The second rating related to the frequency of receiving the

specific supports. The range for these items was from 1 (never) to 4 (always). Four-point scales were used intentionally to avoid neutral responses (Johnson and Morgan, 2016). The purpose for the two-part questioning was to measure whether teachers perceive specific administrative behaviors as important and whether they were currently receiving specific supports from their building-level administrators. In an effort to offer participants a non-biased measurement tool, I randomized placement of items in the DASI survey tool.

Emotional Support items were developed first and derived from a review of the available research. These items, found most often in the literature about support, aimed to focus on administrators treating the teachers as professionals, showing concern for teachers and their students, considering teachers' ideas, and developing a culture of learning.

**Table 3.2 Emotional Support Survey Item Development**

Research	Example	Survey Item Number
Cross, Billingsley (1991)	Show an appreciation Understanding work	3, 12
Billingsley, Littrell (1994)	Include teachers input into decision making	23
Ax et al. (2001)	Set a tone for acceptance and understanding of each other	27
Nicholas, Sosnowsky (2002)	Establish social networks to support collegial relationships	22
Whitaker (2003)	Listen and encourage	28
Andrews, Quinn (2004)	Spoke to them frequently	13



Kukla- Acevedo (2009), Singh, Billingsley (1998) Fall, Billingsley (2011)	Public recognition and acknowledgement	20
Fall, Billingsley (2011)	Back up teachers and understand the role of teachers	26

Appraisal support items related to frequent feedback based on understanding of teacher responsibilities and content. This support allows workers to reflect and participate in “self-evaluation” (House, 1981, p.95). Often cited as the second leading need for teachers, this specific form for support rarely appears in educational stu

**Table 3.3 Appraisal Support Survey Item Development**

<b>Research</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Survey Item Number</b>
Likert (1961, p. 101)	Coach and assist employees who need it	18
Billingsley, Littrell (1994)	Provide on-going constructive feedback, Show confidence in the actions of teachers	9, 21
Billingsley, Cross (1992)	Have conversations about performance ratings and allow input	5,10
George et al. (1995)	Understand current practices and methodology of teachers, Give Frequent feedback	11
Singh, Billingsley (1998)	Show fairness in evaluation	19

Instrumental support items related to providing materials, space, and resources to support teaching. Previous research indicates this support as the third most influential support mechanism. Found very frequently when conducting searches related to teacher support, behaviors related to this area of support are often referred to as direct assistance and addressing managerial-type tasks (Littrell, Billingsley, 1994).

**Table 3.4 Instrumental Support Item Development**

<b>Research</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Survey Item Number</b>
Billingsley, Cross (1991)	Provide teaching materials, support meeting needs of students	31
Singh, Billingsley (1998)	Enforce school rules, solve management problems	16
Ingersoll (2001) Ingersoll, Smith (2003)	Provide curriculum (supplies), assign mentors	30

Gersten et al. (2001) Shaw, Newton (2014)	Provide relevant professional development	8,14,17
Kukla-Acevedo (2009) Ingersoll (2001) Ingersoll, Smith (2003) Fall, Billingsley (2011) Quinn, Andrews (2004)	Handle student behavior and discipline	15
	Assist with lesson development	32
Whitaker (2003)	Provide planning and assist with organization	24
Thibodeaux et al. (2015)	Support planning and collaboration	1

Informational support items aimed to provide useful information, clarify roles, and foster growth opportunities. These supports allowed teachers to take and use items for their own betterment and differ from instrumental support in that they are more indirect. These behaviors were found less often in the literature.

**Table 3.5 Informational Support Item Development**

Research	Example	Survey Item Number
Billingsley, Cross (1992) Kukla- Acevedo (2009) Ax, et al. (2001)	Clarify roles, Share building-level expectations Encourage teachers to continue learning	2,7, 28 8
Signh, Billingsley (1998) Quinn, Andrews (2004) Fall, Billingsley (2011) Gehrke, Murri (2006)	Clear communication of the goals of the school Clear communication of district goals	6 25
	Sharing legislative updates	4

Although the amount of research in the different dimensions of support varied, the numbers of items for each section matched in order to not bias participants and provide more information in the areas that need more research, as little is found in already published works. For each of the four domains there are eight, two part, Likert scale items that ask participants to indicate the importance of support and the frequency they receive that specific support from their building-level administrator, allowing for a more uniform structure.

### **Instrument Refinement**

#### **Expert Review**

After the initial development of the survey instrument, I met with members of my dissertation committee. My dissertation committee consisted of four Ph.D. researchers at the University of South Carolina. These four, published, committee members have experience conducting research and analyzing survey results. My dissertation chair was an expert in the field of special education. Another committee member was an expert in special education programs and law, One of the members of my committee was an expert in survey development and analysis. She was a leading researcher with the university. Last, another committee member with a background in both elementary education and special education, also had a background in administration and leadership, and currently works preparing teachers for classrooms. She also works directly with Professional Development Schools and engages in action research. Their combined expert feedback led to an important revisions of the original survey tool. The next version of the Dimensions of Administrative Support Inventory (DASI) reflected this change. I added a

single yes/no question at the end of the survey to have respondents answer if they were satisfied with the support they received from their building-level administrators.

### **Content Review**

After initially developing my survey and a review by my dissertation committee, a group of educators were asked to take and review the instrument. A total of nine current educators were part of the initial review panel. This panel included three general education teachers, three special education teachers, and three building-level administrators. These initial panelists were asked to assess and provide feedback on the instrument in the areas of 1) ease and access, 2) relevance, and 3) clarity. They answered the following specific questions based on their experiences with the survey.

- 1) Were you able to access the survey with ease given the survey link?
- 2) Were you able to respond to each survey item? Was there always an option that met your desired answer?
- 3) Were you able to understand what each item was asking? Or was there any confusion when reading and responding to items?

A more in-depth description of the experts is included in the table below.

**Table 3. 6 Expert Review Panel**

Expert Role	Description of Current Setting
General Education 1	Elementary teacher with +10 years of experience
General Education 2	Middle School Teacher with 5-10 years of experience
General Education 3	High School teacher with 0-5 years of experience
Special Education 1	Elementary teacher with 0- 5 years of experience

Special Education 2	Middle School teacher with +10 years of experience
Special Education 3	High School teacher with 5-10 years of experience
Administrator 1	Elementary Principal with +20 years of experience
Administrator 2	Elementary Principal with 0-5 years of experience
Administrator 3	Middle School Principal with 5-10 years of experience

No revisions were needed after collecting responses from content experts.

### **Pilot Testing**

After experts in the field reviewed the instrument, the instrument was piloted with teachers and administrators in my district. These respondents had similar characteristics as the intended participants. A convenience sample of educators was used and the results from the pilot testing were not be used in the final analysis. The pilot study aimed to solicit feedback. A third section of the survey was added to ask about the ease of accessing and completing the survey, clarifying intent and wording of items, and perceived relevance to their roles. The last section was only used to solicit feedback and was taken out of the survey before the final version is sent to real participants.

**Table 3.7 Pilot Testing**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>School Level</b>	<b>Years of Experience</b>
Gen Ed 1	Elementary	20+
Gen Ed 2	Elementary	10+
Gen Ed 3	Middle	10+
Gen Ed 4	Middle	Less than 5

Gen Ed 5	High	5-10
Sp Ed 1	Elementary Resource	Less than 5
Sp Ed 2	Elementary SC	10+
Sp Ed 3	Middle SC	20+
Sp Ed 4	High Resource	10+
Sp Ed 5	High SC	5-10

### **Survey Distribution**

The survey was developed using formstack (an online survey tool). The survey was distributed online and all information was collected using this online format. Individual responses were saved in the CSV file for analysis. The CSV file was then imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to be analyzed to answer the research questions. By using this method, data entry errors were eliminated. This distribution and collection method also allowed participants to maintain a sense of anonymity.

### **Data Analysis**

#### **Reliability and Validity**

After the survey was administered, results were collected and analyzed. Cronbach's Alpha was conducted to assess the internal reliability of the survey. Cronbach's Alpha is a commonly used method measures internal consistency and assesses the probability of respondents answering the same way if given the survey

multiple times (McClave & Sincich, 2009). The internal reliability is greater when the value is closer to 1.0.

### **Analysis for Research Question One**

In the original study by Littrell, Billingsley, and Cross (1994), Cronbach's Alpha provided a rudimentary strategy to measure internal reliability within House's domains of support. They also used the drop in Cronbach's Alpha between domains to support that each domain was distinct. This study will not rely on Cronbach's Alpha. Instead, I completed an exploratory factor analysis for frequency items to determine an underlying factor structure to House's dimensions of administrative support. I used frequency items in this analysis, as they are highly correlated to satisfaction ratings. Importance ratings are generally less variable and not as highly correlated to satisfaction ratings. Exploratory Factor Analysis followed by Confirmatory Factor Analysis allowed me to answer my first research question and determined the number of distinct constructs assessed by a set of measures (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2012). This analysis allowed formation of a more specific and prescriptive model of administrative support by determining if the theoretical framework that has been used for decades really exists.

### **Analysis for Research Questions Two, Three, and Four**

To address the other research questions, an analysis was conducted finding the range, mean, and variance of scores for each Likert item in the closed item "dimensions matrix" section. Comparisons were made between the means for the rank and frequency of each support behaviors. These comparisons helped to answer the questions related to the most important support behaviors and the most received support behaviors.



Further analysis included cross tabulating results disaggregated by demographic groups. I employed ANOVA and t-tests for statistical analysis. These methods of analysis helped to identify if there are differences between the support needs of different groups. For example, whether special education teachers in more rural settings valued the principal including them in decision making more than general education teachers in the same type settings?

**Table 3.8 Research Analysis**

Research Question	Data Source	Analysis
Do South Carolina teachers identify the same four dimensions of Administrative Support as those in House's theoretical framework?	Survey Instrument	Factor Analysis
How do teachers rate the importance of administrative support factors?		Descriptive statistics (range, mean, standard deviation)
Are there differences in importance ratings between teachers in different groups?		Disaggregation of data, ANOVA, and t-tests
How frequently do teachers receive administrative support?	Survey Instrument	Descriptive statistics (range, mean, standard deviation)
Are there differences in frequency ratings between teachers in different groups?		Disaggregation of data, ANOVA, and t-tests

Are there differences in the importance ratings of teachers and the frequency ratings? How often are teachers receiving the most important supports?		Disaggregation of data And Cohen's-d for Effect Size
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## Summary

Administrative support provides an important aspect of building-level administrators' jobs. To effectively support teachers, administrators must have a clear understanding of staff support needs. By surveying teachers in South Carolina, this study contributes to the literature information about which support behaviors are most important to teachers in the state. The study also identified whether different groups of teachers need different supports. This information could be used to improve the effectiveness of currently practicing building-level administrators and could influence leadership development programs by informing their training for new administrators.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

The purpose of my study was to examine teacher perspectives on administrative support. This study answers the following research questions:

- 1) Do South Carolina teachers identify the same four dimensions of administrative support as those in House's theoretical framework?
- 2) How do teachers rate the importance of administrative support factors? Are there differences in importance ratings between teachers in different groups?
- 3) How frequently do teachers receive administrative support? Are there differences in frequency ratings between teachers in different groups?
- 4) Are there differences in the importance ratings of teachers and the frequency ratings? How often are teachers receiving the most important supports?

To answer these questions, I developed and sent the Dimensions of Administrative Support Inventory (DASI) survey, found in appendix B, to teachers in South Carolina through email. A copy of the email with the survey link is found in appendix C. Through a Memorandum of Agreement with the SC Department of Education I obtained teacher names and email addresses. Of the 2,525 unique views, 1,103 teachers completed the survey (answering each item). This was a response rate of 43.76%.

To analyze the reliability of the survey a Cronbach's Alpha level was calculated for two separate scales (importance and frequency). The Cronbach's Alpha for the 32

Importance Ratings was calculated to be .948. In addition, the Cronbach's Alpha was within .01 difference if any item was deleted. The Cronbach's Alpha for the 32 Frequency Ratings was calculated to be .974. Again, Cronbach's Alpha was within .01 if any item was deleted from the scale. These findings are significant in determining very little variance and high reliability for the survey items in each scale.

## **Demographics**

Table 4.1 shows the demographic information about the teachers that completed the survey: years in teaching; general education or special education; school level; school location; number of school-level administrators on campus; and current teaching mode.

Demographic information of the respondents:

- 37% had 21+ years of teaching experience, 34.9% had 11-20 years of teaching experience, 15.59% had 6-10 years of teaching experience, and 12.15% had 0-5 years of teaching experience.
- 84% of respondents reported being a general education teacher, while 16% reported teaching special education
- 40% of respondents teach in traditional elementary schools, while 25% teach in traditional middle schools and 28% teach in traditional high schools. 7% of teachers responded that they teach in a setting other than these traditional, leveled settings.

**Table 4.1 Demographic Information**

Category	n	% (n=1103)
<u>Years Teaching Experience</u>		
21+ Years	411	37%
11-20 Years	386	35%
6-10 Years	172	16%
0-5 Years	134	12%
<u>Type of Teacher</u>		
General Education	923	84%
Special Education	180	16%
<u>School Level</u>		
Traditional Elementary School	440	40%
Traditional Middle School	276	25%
Traditional High School	310	28%
Other	77	7%
<u>School Location</u>		
Rural	366	33%
Suburban	553	50%
Urban	184	17%
<u>School Size</u>		
Less than 350 students	145	13%

351-500 students	224	20%
501-750 students	260	24%
751-1000 students	193	17%
1000+ students	281	24%
<u>Number of School- Level Administrators</u>		
1	63	6%
2	319	29%
3	344	31%
4	165	15%
5+	215	19%
<u>Current Teaching Mode</u>		
E-Learning	144	13%
Face to Face	206	19%
Hybrid Teaching	407	37%
Dual Modality	313	28%
Other	33	3%

Table 4.2 shows the certification areas of the teachers that completed the survey. Respondents were asked to indicate their certification areas. Forty-seven certification areas were represented in the responses. This shows the variety of teachers that participated in the study.

**Table 4.2 Certification Areas**

<u>Certification Area</u>	N	%
---------------------------	---	---

	=2,000*	
Agriculture	3	< 1%
Art	37	3%
Biology	37	3%
Business/Marketing/Computer Technology	38	3%
Chemistry	20	2%
Chinese	2	< 1%
Computer Science	12	1%
Dance	3	< 1%
Early Childhood	225	20%
Earth and Space Science	11	1%
Economics	15	1%
Elementary Education	369	33%
English	100	9%
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	46	4%
Family and Consumer Science	9	1%
French	13	1%
Geography	15	1%
German	4	< 1%
Government	11	1%
Health	11	1%
History	39	4%
Industrial Technology Education	5	< 1%
Literacy Teacher	36	3%
Literacy Coach/Specialist	26	2%
Mathematics	62	6%
Middle Level Language Arts	71	6%

Middle Level Math	67	6%
Middle Level Science	50	5%
Middle Level Social Studies	66	6%
Montessori Education	10	1%
Music Education	41	4%
Physical Education	31	3%
Physics	9	< 1%
Portuguese	1	< 1%
Science	52	5%
Social Studies	63	6%
Sociology	8	< 1%
Spanish	37	3%
Special Education: Hearing Impairment	11	1%
Special Education: Early Childhood	32	3%
Special Education: Emotional Disabilities	55	5%
Special Education: Intellectual Disabilities	47	4%
Special Education: Learning Disabilities	104	9%
Special Education: Multi-categorical	71	6%
Special Education: Severe Disabilities	13	1%
Special Education: Visual Impairments	7	< 1%
Theater	5	< 1%

\*1103 Responses (Many teachers have multiple certifications)



**Research Question One: Do SC teachers identify the same four dimensions of administrative support as those in House's theoretical framework?**

House's theoretical framework consisted of four dimensions of work-related support. These dimensions, established in the early 1980's, were emotional support, appraisal support, instrumental support, and informational support. I developed the DASI by using this framework and organizing support behaviors from an extensive review of the literature into these theoretical categories. The first goal of this research was to determine if these support categories actually exist for current teachers in South Carolina.

To address this question of whether the theoretical framework continues to be relevant for teachers in South Carolina I used an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA; Osbourne 2014) first to determine the factor structure of the DASI. I used the frequency ratings of the DASI in my EFA procedures. This allowed for the establishment of a clearer relationship between factors. Frequency ratings were also more strongly related to how the teachers rated their current satisfaction with support and therefore allowed a more stable and significant structure analysis.

To make the analysis easier to interpret I re-ordered the data/responses to items on the survey by their proposed dimension. This was different than the order of the items on the emailed survey as items were originally placed in random order. I then performed a second step to randomly split the data collected into two samples. Using the factor loading process in the Mplus software (v. 8, Murthen & Murthen, 2017) an analysis of all of the frequency items was conducted via the common oblique Promax rotation. I chose to use frequency items to analyze because of their strong relationship to satisfaction ratings as well as the variance between items that allowed for more analysis. The Promax

rotation was chosen as it allows for clearer differences between the factors, assumes factors are correlated, and allows the creation of a simple model (Finch, 2006). At first, all frequency variables were included in the analysis. I explored one to four-factor structures using EFA. I used the following criteria to find the best model fit: eigenvalues, scree plot, and the highest factor loadings. I also took into consideration the fit with House's original theory (1981).

The eigenvalue is a measurement that reflects the relationship between the item value and the latent factor (Osbourne, 2014). A value of  $\geq 1.0$  is needed to show a strong relationship. When running the EFA, only two factors loaded and met this criterion. The scree plot for this data set is found below in Table 4.3. A factor loading threshold for good fit was set at  $\geq .6$  was set.

**Figure 4.1-Scree Plot for EFA**



First I used a four-factor model. This model most closely aligned with House's Dimensions of Support (1981), but was not the optimal model for our instrument. When I ran this analysis using Mplus software (v. 8, Murthen & Murthen, 2017) there were only three items that loaded on the fourth latent factor at higher than .6. This means only three

items showed a strong relationship to the fourth dimension using this model. For this reason, the four-factor model was not considered.

The three-factor model showed similar loading patterns. With this model the third factor only had three items loading at higher than the .6 cutoff. The model also did not make sense with the original theory so it was excluded.

The two-factor loading model had the strongest factor loading with loading ranges from .622 to .921. This model combined two of House's theoretical domains into one for the first factor and two for the second factor. Emotional and appraisal support were combined together to make the first factor. I refer to this emotional/appraisal support factor as the Value Factor. Reviewing the items, this made sense and did not detract from the original work, but explained the relationship to today's teachers in South Carolina. Originally, "showing appreciation for my work" (item 2) was an item in the emotional domain, while "showing confidence in my actions as a teacher" (item 10) was an item in the appraisal domain. Thirteen items were highly loaded on the Value Factor. Informational and instrumental Support made up the third and fourth domains of House's framework. These two domains were combined for the second factor. I referred to this instrumental/informational factor as the Logistical Factor. This factor structure placed items like "clarifying my role in the school and among my team" (formerly in the informational domain) with "Sharing information about different learning opportunities outside of the school (formerly in the instrumental domain). Twelve items were highly loaded on the Logistical Factor. The two-factor analysis within this context made the most practical sense and supported the original theory. For these reasons, I determined the two-factor model was the optimal factor solution.

Several items were deleted because they cross-loaded onto both factors or loaded onto the wrong factor. Deleting these items is a common post-hoc procedure in EFA (Osbourne, 2014) Items four (Setting a tone for acceptance and understanding among teachers), twenty-three (Providing planning time for me), twenty-five (Supporting my collaboration efforts with my colleagues), and twenty-nine (Encouraging me to continue learning) were deleted because of cross loadings on both factors. Items seven (Establishing a social network to support collegial relationships) and eight (Communicating teacher needs to others in the district) were deleted because of a higher loading rate on the unpredicted factor. These did not fit the proposed model. Table 4.3 provides factor loadings with and without these items included in the two-factor model.

**Table 4.3 Two Factor Loading with and without all variables**

#	Item	All Factors		Deleted Factors	
		F 1	F 2	F1	F 2
1	FREQ Understanding my work with my students (Emotional)	0.776	0.661	0.691	0.209
2	FREQ Showing an appreciation for my work (Emotional)	0.902	0.708	0.842	0.080
3	FREQ Including my input into decision making (Emotional)	0.842	0.774	0.609	0.316
4	FREQ Setting a tone for acceptance and understanding among teachers (Emotional)	0.817	0.813		
5	FREQ Listening to me and encouraging me (Emotional)	0.921	0.759	0.798	0.163
6	FREQ Speaking to me casually (Emotional)	0.813	0.614	0.789	0.035

7	FREQ Establishing a social network to support collegial relationships (Emotional)	0.726	0.810		
8	FREQ Communicating teacher needs to 3s in the district (Emotional)	0.758	0.819		
9	FREQ Recognizing my accomplishments publically (Emotional)	0.794	0.686	0.636	0.213
10	FREQ Showing confidence in my actions as a teacher (Appraisal)	0.919	0.682	0.911	0.009
11	FREQ Allowing my input when discussing my performance (Appraisal)	0.839	0.731	0.664	0.237
12	FREQ Having conversations about performance (Appraisal)	0.824	0.762	0.558	0.361
13	FREQ Coaching me when I need it (Appraisal)	0.813	0.786	0.506	0.417
14	FREQ Providing on-going constructive feedback (Appraisal)	0.878	0.798	0.633	0.332
15	FREQ Showing fairness in my evaluation (Appraisal)	0.842	0.689	0.726	0.158
16	FREQ Showing understanding of my practices in the classroom (Appraisal)	0.908	0.735	0.822	0.128
17	FREQ Sharing information about different learning opportunities outside of the school (Instrumental)	0.678	0.791	0.195	0.648
18	FREQ Handling any student discipline problems (Instrumental)	0.617	0.855	-0.019	0.876
19	FREQ Enforcing school rules (Instrumental)	0.588	0.863	-0.100	0.948
20	FREQ Providing curriculum for my classroom (Instrumental)	0.549	0.751	-0.009	0.766
21	FREQ Providing needed materials for my classroom (Instrumental)	0.628	0.721	0.210	0.572

22	FREQ Assisting with lesson development (Instrumental)	0.652	0.806	0.130	0.719
23	FREQ Providing planning time for me (Instrumental)	0.606	0.606		
24	FREQ Providing professional development opportunities (Instrumental)	0.592	0.747	0.075	0.692
25	FREQ Supporting my collaboration efforts with my colleagues (Instrumental)	0.716	0.730		
26	FREQ Providing clear communication about the school mission (Informational)	0.689	0.794	0.230	0.625
27	FREQ Clarifying my role in the school and among my team (Informational)	0.739	0.789	0.381	0.494
28	FREQ Setting a clear standard of expectations for everyone (Informational)	0.712	0.824	0.238	0.640
29	FREQ Encouraging me to continue learning (Informational)	0.746	0.755		
30	FREQ Sharing legislative updates and initiatives with staff (Informational)	0.622	0.743	0.183	0.603
31	FREQ. Providing clear communication of the district goals (Informational)	0.701	0.830	0.214	0.657
32	FREQ Sharing information between different groups in the school (Informational)	0.717	0.838	0.233	0.642

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA; Harrington 2009) was conducted to confirm the factor solution identified from the EFA using the second half sample of data from the survey (550 responses). Again, this analysis examined the frequency ratings as they were better able to fit a model. I completed CFA to test whether the factors found in the DASI loaded on and were a good fit for House's original model domains.

I ran a one-factor, two factor, four-factor, and an enhanced four-factor- higher order analysis to find the best fit. I chose these specific models for analysis because of their relationship to House's theoretical framework (1981) or the EFA results. I

conducted the one-factor analysis to eliminate any theory that administrative support was only a single phenomenon. I analyzed the two-factor model as it was the model established as optimal with my initial EFA. The four-factor model was analyzed as it best fit House's theory of four dimensions of support (1981), and the enhanced four-factor higher order analysis was conducted to determine if there was a hierarchical relationship between any primary and secondary factors (Wetzels et al., 2009).

For this analysis, I used several measures to determine the model that showed the best fit. I used the WSLMV estimation method due to the categorical nature of scale items. I also used the standardized factor loadings across solutions along with the Root Mean Square Error or Approximation (RMSE), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI). The criteria set for a good fit model was  $CFI \text{ or } TLI \geq .95$ ,  $RMSEA \geq .05-.08$ , and  $SRMR \leq .08$  (Burns et al., 2019; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Table 4.4 provides a comparison of each model using these statistics.

A one-factor model assumed that there was one dimension of administrative support that encompassed all items. While this model did meet the adequate fit criteria of a less than one RMSE (.106) and all factors loading on this one domain at a .60 loading factor or higher. It was not the most parsimonious model (Kelloway, 2015) and did not show a good fit with the highest SRMR and lowest fit indices ( $CFI=.950$  and  $TLI=.945$ ). It also did not fit the original hypothesized model of support.

A two-factor model, related to the initial results of our EFA, paired the first two factors together and the second two factors together. This pairing put together emotional and appraisal support into one factor. This factor that included items related to trust,

feedback, and confidence in teaching is now referred to as the Value Factor since these items are related to how the teacher feels the administrators show they value the teacher as a part of the school. It then combined instrumental and informational support into a second factor. This new factor that included items related to day to day school operations, mission, and professional growth is now referred to as the Logistical Factor. This model showed a stronger model fit with lower RMSE (.089) and higher standardized factor loadings (CFI=.965 and TLI=.962). These differences were significant and indicated that the two-factor model was a better fit than the one-factor model.

A four-factor model separated the factors into the four original, correlated support dimensions proposed by House (1981). These factors were emotional support, appraisal support, instrumental support, and informational support. This model also met the good fit criteria with low residual correlations (SRMR=.042) and higher factor loadings (CFI=.968 and TLI=.965). This model was also preferred as it did match the original theory.

I also employed an enhanced, four-factor model with a higher order structure. This model hypothesized the two combined domains as the higher-order, correlated factors and the four domains as the primary factors. With this model I account for the EFA results, while still maintaining the original theoretical hypothesis. This model had the lowest RMSE (.076) and the smallest SRMR (.038) with the highest CFI score (.975). This model also had the highest TLI (.972).

**Table 4.4 Comparison of Confirmatory Factor Models**

$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
	Root Mean Square Error	Standardized Root Mean	Comparative Fit Index	Tucker- Lewis Index



		or	Square		
		Approximation	Residual		
One-Factor	2152.770/299	0.106	0.051	0.950	0.945
Two-Factor	1602.436/298	0.089	0.043	0.965	0.962
Four-Factor	1474.216/293	0.086	0.042	0.968	0.965
Enhanced Four-Factor	1214.101/293	0.076	0.038	0.975	0.972

Comparing standardized factor loading data for each model, with a robust .70 cutoff for good model fit, also allows for the choice to be made on best factor. Table 4.5 shows the comparison between standardized models for each item. The four-factor and four-factor, enhanced models did increase loadings slightly for most items. The enhanced model is the most parsimonious model as it fits the original hypothesis, while incorporating EFA results and being the cleanest model based on the statistically significant fit model results.

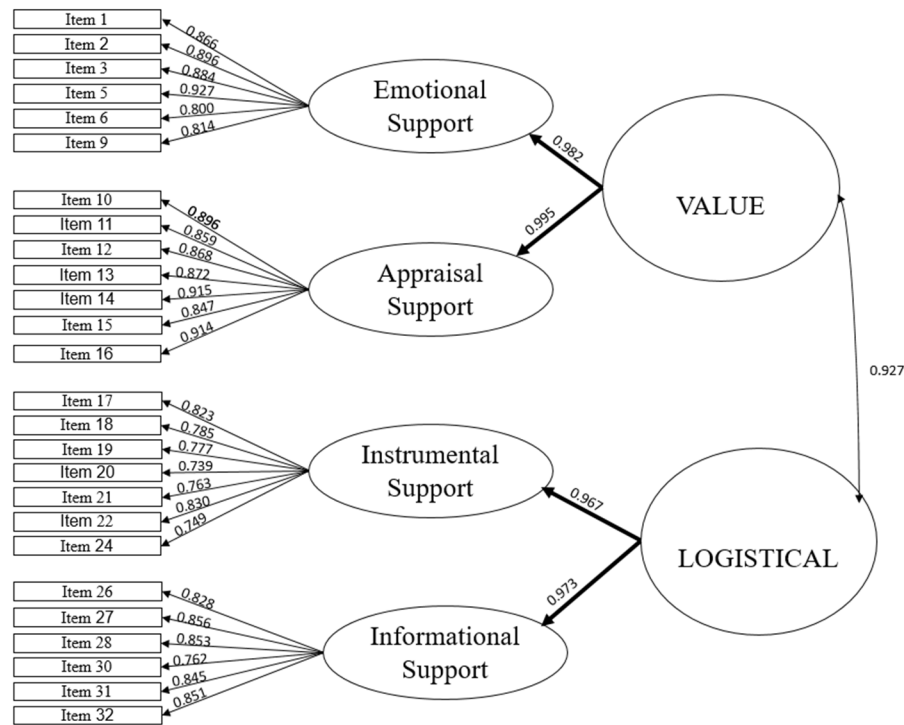
**Table 4.5 Standardized Model Results Comparison**

#	Frequency Item Relationship with Latent Factors	One Factor	Two Factor	Four Factor	Higher Order
1	Understanding my work with my students (Emotional)	0.843	0.856	0.865	0.866
2	Showing an appreciation for my work (Emotional)	0.878	0.888	0.896	0.896
3	Including my input into decision making (Emotional)	0.862	0.876	0.884	0.884
5	Listening to me and encouraging me (Emotional)	0.910	0.919	0.927	0.927
6	Speaking to me casually (Emotional)	0.781	0.793	0.799	0.800
9	Recognizing my accomplishments publically (Emotional)	0.793	0.807	0.814	0.814
10	Showing confidence in my actions as a teacher (Appraisal)	0.884	0.892	0.895	0.896

11	Allowing my input when discussing my performance (Appraisal)	0.843	0.856	0.859	0.859
12	Having conversations about performance (Appraisal)	0.854	0.867	0.869	0.868
13	Coaching me when I need it (Appraisal)	0.856	0.870	0.872	0.872
14	Providing on-going constructive feedback (Appraisal)	0.900	0.912	0.915	0.915
15	Showing fairness in my evaluation (Appraisal)	0.831	0.844	0.846	0.847
16	Showing understanding of my practices in the classroom (Appraisal)	0.902	0.911	0.914	0.914
17	Sharing information about different learning opportunities outside of the school (Instrumental)	0.780	0.809	0.841	0.823
18	Handling any student discipline problems (Instrumental)	0.807	0.832	0.858	0.785
19	Enforcing school rules (Instrumental)	0.801	0.825	0.851	0.777
20	Providing curriculum for my classroom (Instrumental)	0.704	0.727	0.753	0.739
21	Providing needed materials for my classroom (Instrumental)	0.723	0.750	0.778	0.763
22	Assisting with lesson development (Instrumental)	0.787	0.816	0.847	0.850
24	Providing professional development opportunities (Instrumental)	0.713	0.736	0.763	0.749
26	Providing clear communication about the school mission (Informational)	0.792	0.819	0.828	0.828
27	Clarifying my role in the school and among my team (Informational)	0.808	0.846	0.845	0.856
28	Setting a clear standard of expectations for everyone (Informational)	0.812	0.841	0.852	0.853

30	Sharing legislative updates and initiatives with staff (Informational)	0.728	0.753	0.763	0.767
31	Providing clear communication of the district goals (Informational)	0.807	0.835	0.845	0.845
32	Sharing information between different groups in the school (Informational)	0.811	0.839	0.851	0.851

**Figure 4.2 Four-Factor Model with Higher-Order, Correlated Factors Illustration**



Based on EFA and CFA results, House's theoretical framework (1981) is a close, but not a direct match for the support needs of teachers in SC today. House's dimensions of support do continue to be part of the higher-order structure of teacher responses.

**Research Question Two: How do teachers rate the importance of administrative support factors? Are there differences in importance ratings between teachers in different groups?**

To answer the first part of this research question, I will use the results of the DASI collected from teachers across the state. I will first analyze importance ratings at the item level to determine the most valued support behaviors. To accomplish this task, I will employ a descriptive strategy of comparing mean scores and standard deviations for

each item. I will display items in a table listing supports from greatest importance to least importance.

To answer the second part of this research question, I use the results to analyze importance ratings by demographic groups. These group comparisons will include those importance ratings between: teachers teaching in the general education setting and those teaching in a special education settings; teachers in different school levels (elementary, middle, high); teachers of varying years of teaching experience; teachers working in different size schools based on number of students enrolled; teachers in different school locations, and by the modality teachers were using when taking the survey.

To analyze responses of these groups thoroughly, I will compare ratings in several different ways. First, I will compare the ratings by House's proposed dimensions separately. I will analyze results by importance ratings on items in the emotional support dimension, the appraisal support dimension, the instrumental support dimension, and the informational support dimension. I will also analyze these ratings, while imposing the structures found during the Factor Analysis process. For this analysis, I will examine ratings while pairing the emotional and appraisal supports together as the Value Factor. I also pair the instrumental and informational supports together as the Logistical Factor. Finally, to be thorough, I will search for significance in overall Importance ratings by demographic group.

For this analysis, I used an ANOVA score to indicate significance when more than two groups were being compared and t-tests to compare two groups. I calculated this score using SPSS 27.0 (IBM, 2020). Because multiple factors were compared for the same dependent variables, Bonferroni Correction was used to avoid Type 1 errors. With

this correction, a more stringent p-value is used to guard against these errors and is calculated by dividing the typical .05 p-value by the number of independent variables being analyzed (<https://www.statisticssolutions.com/bonferroni-correction/>). For those differences that were significant, I conducted a post hoc analysis using the Tukey. I will share results by demographic area.

Teachers rated the importance of thirty-two support behaviors. Respondents were asked to rate support behaviors on a four-point likert scale (0 =not at all important, 1= slightly important, 2= moderately important, and 3= extremely important). The overall range of responses for the importance scale was 1.26-2.81.

At the item level, the behavior that had the highest importance rating was “showing confidence in my actions as a teacher.” There was also a low level of variance with responses to this item (standard deviation=.512). The next three most important support behaviors all had a mean score of more than 2.75. “Providing planning time,” “showing fairness in my evaluation,” and “setting a clear standard of expectations for everyone” were all rated high. 28 of the 32 support behaviors were within the moderately to extremely important range.

The support that had the lowest importance rating by respondents was “assisting with lesson development.” With this item there was considerably more variance in responses with a standard deviation of 1.025. The following supports were rated in the slightly important range: “recognizing accomplishments publically,” “establishing social networks to support collegial relationships,” and “providing curriculum for my classroom.” Interestingly the two supports that had the most variation were related to providing materials and assisting with lesson development. These supports were also in

the least important range. The table below shows the importance ratings of each support behavior (ranking these from most important to least).

**Table 4.6 Importance Ratings by Most to Least Important**

<b>Support Behavior</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>sd</b>
Showing confidence in my actions as a teacher	2.81	.512
Providing planning time for me	2.80	.545
Showing fairness in my evaluation	2.78	.496
Setting a clear standard of expectations for everyone	2.77	.555
Allowing my input when discussing my performance	2.74	.561
Enforcing school rules	2.72	.593
Setting a tone for acceptance and understanding among teachers	2.67	.621
Showing an appreciation for my work	2.63	.685
Handling any student discipline problems	2.62	.662
Understanding my work with my students	2.59	.705
Showing understanding of my practices in the classroom	2.58	.659
Communicating teacher needs to others in the district	2.56	.737
Listening to me and encouraging me	2.53	.707
Providing clear communication about the school mission	2.52	.710
Providing needed materials for my classroom	2.52	.732
Sharing information between different groups in the school	2.43	.753
Providing clear communication of the district goals	2.42	.748
Supporting my collaboration efforts with my colleagues	2.39	.798
Including my input into decision making	2.36	.754
Speaking to me (casually)	2.32	.778
Having conversations about performance	2.31	.777
Encouraging me to continue learning	2.22	.861
Providing on-going constructive feedback	2.21	.820
Coaching me when I need it	2.21	.831
Clarifying my role in the school and among my team	2.15	.705
Providing professional development opportunities	2.14	.833
Sharing legislative updates and initiatives with staff	2.07	.890
Sharing information about different learning opportunities outside of the school	2.02	.858
Providing curriculum for my classroom	1.91	1.042

Establishing a social network to support collegial relationships	1.69	.980
Recognizing my accomplishments publically	1.66	.994
Assisting with lesson development	1.28	1.025
<i>* highlighted items were removed from the factor analysis and could be excluded from further analysis</i>		

## Comparison of Importance Ratings for Different Groups of Teachers

### General Education Teachers/ Special Education Teachers

For this research, teachers self-reported their current teaching position when given the definitions of both teaching assignment options. These definitions were as follows:

- A *general education teacher* was defined as a full-time, certified, instructor with a caseload including less than 50% of students with IEPs.
- A *special education teacher* was defined as a full-time, certified, instructor whose caseload that has more than 50% of students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs). These teachers provide services in any setting (pull-out, push-in, inclusion, special class, and special school) and hold certifications in at least one of the following areas: Special Education- Hearing Impairments, Special Education-Visual Impairments, Special Education Early Childhood, Special Education- Emotional Disabilities, Special Education- Intellectual Disabilities, Special Education- Learning Disabilities, Special Education- Multi-categorical, or Special Education- Severe Disabilities.



## **Overall Ratings of Importance- General Education Teachers/ Special Education Teachers**

I used an independent- samples t-test to compare importance ratings for the two groups of teachers. There was not a significant difference in the scores for general education teachers ( $M=75.57$ ,  $SD=14.99$ ) and special education teachers ( $M=75.89$ ,  $SD=16.37$ ),  $t(1101) = -.225$ ,  $p=.799 > .025$ . Results were also not significant for each of House's four dimensions (p values ranged from .569 to .837), or for the factors when analyzing Value Factor supports ( $p=.981 > .025$ ) and Logistical Factor supports ( $p=.614 > .025$ ). These results show that there was more variation within the groups of teachers than there was between the groups.. These findings also showed no significant differences when Value Factor Supports and Logistical Factor Supports were combined. General Education and Special Education teaching positions did not have a significant impact on any Importance ratings.

**Table 4.7 Importance Ratings by Position**

Position	N	Mean	Sd
General Education Teachers	923	75.573	.493
Special Education Teachers	180	75.889	1.220

## **Importance Ratings by School Level (elementary, middle, high)**

I collected demographics by teacher self-report of their current school level. For the purposes of this analysis, I define school level by the following definitions:

- Traditional Elementary School (PK-5<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Traditional Middle School (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Traditional High School (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Other (any school that is different from those listed above).

### Overall Importance Ratings by School Level

I conducted a one-way between subjects ANOVA to compare the effect of school level on the overall importance rating of support. When analyzing the responses from teachers from all four subgroups for the entire importance matrix, there were significant differences between the groups,  $F(3/1099) = 5.63$ ,  $p = .00 < .0125$ . To be considered significant, the p-value would need to be  $< .0125$  because of the multiple comparisons. This p-value met the significance threshold. Below is a table of descriptive statistics for each subgroup. The mean for total importance ratings for elementary teachers was significantly higher than all other subgroups of teachers.

**Table 4.8 Comparison of Means by School Level**

<u>School Level</u>	N	Mean	Sd
Traditional Elementary	440	77.905	14.912
Traditional Middle	276	73.870	16.395
Traditional High	310	73.742	14.124
Other	77	75.625	15.215

Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for Traditional Elementary School Teachers ( $M=77.9$ ,  $SD=14.91$ ) was significantly different than the mean scores for Traditional Middle School Teachers ( $M=73.87$ ,  $SD=16.39$ ) and Traditional High School Teachers ( $M=73.74$ ,  $SD=14.12$ ). Traditional

Elementary teachers value overall support more than their colleagues at the middle and high levels.

### **Importance Ratings by Houses' Proposed Dimensions (Emotional, Appraisal, Instrumental, and Informational) by School Level**

I also conducted a one-way ANOVA test to compare the effects of school level on the importance ratings for emotional support. There were no significant differences between groups for this type of support. When analyzing the differences between groups for appraisal support there were significant differences between groups,  $F(3/1099)=5.626$ ,  $p=.001$ . Post hoc results from the Tukey HSD show significant differences between Elementary ( $M=18.11$ ,  $SD=3.32$ ) and Middle ( $M=17.2$ ,  $SD=3.8$ ) and High School ( $M=17.25$ ,  $SD=3.33$ ) teachers. There were also significant differences between groups for instrumental support,  $F(3/1099)=8.545$ ,  $p=.00$ . Again, post hoc results indicated significant differences between Elementary ( $M=21.25$ ,  $SD=4.61$ ), Middle ( $M=19.96$ ,  $SD=4.98$ ), and High ( $M=19.62$ ,  $SD=4.42$ ). The one-way ANOVA results did not show significant difference for informational support values,  $F(3/1109)=3.32$ ,  $p=.019$ . Generally, teachers in traditional elementary school value these supports, when broken down by dimension, at a greater level than their colleagues in other settings.

### **Importance Ratings by Factors (Value and Logistical Factors) by School Level**

I again used a One-way ANOVA tests to compare differences in the two higher order factors found in the DASI. When emotional/appraisal Support were combined to make the Value Factor there were significant differences between school level groups,  $F(3/1099)=5.27$ ,  $p=.001$ . Post hoc results from the Tukey HSD test show that these differences were significant for Elementary School Teachers ( $M=39.67$ ,  $SD=7.57$ ), when

compared to Middle School Teachers ( $M=37.72$ ,  $SD=8.55$ ) and High School Teachers ( $M=37.83$ ,  $SD=7.35$ ).

Results for the importance ratings when instrumental support/informational support were combined to make the Logistical Factor also showed significant differences between school level groups,  $F(3/1099)=6.43$ ,  $p=.000$ . Post hoc results show these differences are significant Elementary level teachers ( $M=38.23$ ,  $SD=7.92$ ) and Middle ( $M=36.14$ ,  $SD=8.43$ ) and High ( $M=35.91$ ,  $SD=7.52$ ) level teachers. These results confirmed that Elementary teachers do value both factors of support more than their counterparts in middle and high school.

### **Importance Ratings by Years of Teaching Experience**

The demographic of years of experience was broken into the following subgroups by years in education as a teacher:

- 0-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- More than 20 years.

### **Overall Importance Ratings by Years of Teaching Experience**

I used a one-way between subjects ANOVA test to compare the effects of years of teaching experience on reported support importance. For the overall importance ratings by groups, a significant difference was not found [ $F(3/1099)=2.544$ ,  $p=.055$ ]. With these findings, we conclude that years of experience do not significantly affect the value a teacher has for administrative support.

**Table 4.9 Comparisons of Means by Years of Teaching Experience**

Years Experience	N	Mean	Sd
0-5 years	134	78.060	14.453
6-10 years	172	76.529	12.996
11-20 years	385	74.174	15.095
21+ years	412	75.811	16.299

**Importance Ratings by Houses' proposed dimensions (Emotional, Appraisal, Instrumental, and Informational) by Years of Teaching**

When examining importance ratings by House's four domains of support, we first used the one-way between subjects ANOVA test to examine the differences by group for emotional support. For this type of support, the years of teaching experience did not have a significant impact on importance ratings,  $F(3/1099)=.976$ ,  $p=.403$ . For appraisal support, the differences between groups was at a significant level,  $F(3/1099)=4.663$ ,  $p=.003$ . Post hoc testing using the Tukey HSD for multiple comparisons showed significant differences between the appraisal importance ratings teachers with 0-5 years of teaching experience ( $M=18.56$ ,  $SD=3.02$ ) and those teachers with 11-20 years of experience ( $M=17.32$ ,  $SD=3.40$ ) and more than 20 years of experience ( $M=17.51$ ,  $SD=3.78$ ). Significant differences between groups were not found for instrumental support,  $F(3/1099)=2.47$ ,  $p=.06$ . There was not a significant difference found between groups of teachers for informational support,  $F(3/1099)=2.63$ ,  $p=.049$ .

### **Importance Ratings by Factors (Value and Logistical Factors) by Years of Experience**

When emotional/appraisal support were combined for the Value higher order factor, and using a one-way between subjects ANOVA the results were not significant between groups,  $F(3/1099)=2.34$ ,  $p=.072$ . The results of the tests on the Logistical factor combining instrumental/information Support also did not show a significance difference based on years of experience,  $F(3/1099)=2.654$ ,  $p=.047$ . When multiple comparisons were done using the post hoc test these differences did not show significance between specific groups. Appraisal Support was impacted more by years of experience when measured alone than when combined with Emotional Support.

### **Importance by School Size**

School size, as reported by teachers, fell into the following sub-categories by number of students (no matter at what school level). These sub-categories were divided in the following group:

- schools with less than 350 students
- schools with between 351 and 500 students
- schools with between 501 and 750 students
- schools with between 751-1000 students
- schools with more than 1000 students.

### Overall Importance Ratings by School Size

I used the one-way subject ANOVA test to determine if the size of a teacher's school significantly impacted their value of support. Size of school was shown not to significantly impact the overall importance ratings for teachers,  $F(4/1098)=2.60$ ,  $p=.034$ .

**Table 4.10 Comparisons of Means by School Size**

Size of School	N	Mean	Sd
Less than 350 students	145	76.752	14.935
351-500 students	222	77.410	16.088
501-750 students	260	75.819	15.185
751-1000 students	192	75.833	14.243
1001+ students	284	73.335	15.145

### Importance Ratings by Houses' proposed dimensions (Emotional, Appraisal, Instrumental, and Informational) by School Size

I conducted a one-way between subjects ANOVA to measure differences between groups of teachers depending on school size for the dimension of emotional support. There was not a significance difference found in the value of this support based on school size,  $F(4/1098)=1.674$ ,  $p=.154$ . There was also not a significant impact on appraisal support importance based on school size,  $F(4/1098)=3.006$ ,  $p=.018$ . However, there were significant differences based on size of school and its impact on instrumental support importance ratings,  $F(4/1098)=3.515$ ,  $p=.007$ . When post hoc analysis was conducted the groups with the significant differences were the teachers in the smallest schools ( $M=20.924$ ,  $SD=4.58$ ) and those in the largest schools ( $M=19.556$ ,  $SD=4.65$ ). An analysis of difference by size did not show a significant impact on importance ratings of informational support,  $F(4/1098)=1.955$ ,  $p=.099$ . Thus, the size of the school had the

greatest impact on teachers' ratings of importance for Instrumental Support. Generally, teachers in the largest schools rate these supports as less important than their colleagues in the smallest schools in the state.

### **Importance Ratings by Factors (Value and Logistical Factors) by School Size**

I analyzed the Value Factor by also using the one-way between subject ANOVA output. When combining the emotional and support dimensions to make the Value Factor and comparing groups of teachers by their school size, there was not a significant difference [ $F(4/1098)=2.385, p=.05$ ] between teachers in schools with different size student bodies. Logistical Factor differences by size of school were also not significant [ $F(4/1098)=2.912, p=.021$ ].

### **Importance by School Location**

Demographics of school location, were self-reported by teachers, by the following descriptions of the community setting in which the school is located. These descriptions are as follows:

- Rural Area with the school located in an area that is less densely populated outside of the city;
- Urban Area with the school located in a larger city; or
- Suburban Area with the school located in a community right outside a larger city.

### **Overall Importance Ratings by School Location**

I examined differences of importance ratings for groups of teachers by school community. When teachers' responses were studied using the one-way between subjects ANOVA test for this demographic there were no significant differences found in overall



support importance ratings,  $F(2/1000)=2.317$ ,  $p=.099$ . The table below shows a comparison of the means of the different groups.

**Table 4.11 Comparison of Mean by School Location**

School Location	N	Mean	Sd
Rural Community	363	76.937	15.487
Urban Community	184	75.734	16.247
Suburban Community	556	74.732	14.637

**Importance Ratings by Houses' proposed dimensions (Emotional, Appraisal, Instrumental, and Informational) by School Location**

When studying one-way between subjects ANOVA results for the impact school location has on emotional support, there was no significant relationship,  $F(2/1100)=.652$ ,  $p=.521$ . There was also less than a significant impact on the teachers' importance ratings for appraisal support,  $F(2/1100)=2.535$ ,  $p=.080$ . Again, there was less than a significant impact on instrumental support values,  $F(2/1100)=2.698$ ,  $p=.068$  and on informational support,  $F(2/1100)=3.970$ ,  $p=.019$ .

**Importance Ratings by Factors (Value and Logistical) by School Location**

I conducted an analysis for this group of teachers to examine whether the location of the school impacts the higher order factor of Value. Results for this factor were not found to be significant when comparing these groups,  $F(2/1100)=1.186$ ,  $p=.306$ . Analyzing data by the Logistical Factor and examining differences between groups based on location did not render significant results,  $F(2/1100)=3.605$ ,  $p=.028$ .

### **Importance by Instructional Modality**

As I sent out surveys in November and December 2020, many teachers in South Carolina were teaching under different conditions and using different modalities of instruction. Teachers were asked to report their current modality of teaching students based on the following descriptions:

- E-learning Teaching Model is the model when all instruction takes place over the internet, whether asynchronous or synchronous.
- Face to Face Teaching Model is the model when all course content and learning material are taught in person.
- Hybrid Teaching Model was described as a teaching model when students learn through a mix of in-person and on-line activities.
- Dual Modality Teaching Model is an instructional model where some attend face to face, while others are taught on-line.

### **Overall Importance Ratings by Instructional Modality**

I conducted a one-way between subjects ANOVA to make comparisons for this last demographic group. Overall importance ratings by instructional modality did not yield significant results,  $F(3/1067)=1.289$ ,  $p=.277$ . This shows that overall value for administrative support is not significantly affected by the instructional modality that the teacher is currently using. The table below compares the means between these groups of teachers.

**Table 4.12 Comparison of Means by Instructional Modality**

Teaching Modality	N	Mean	Sd
E-Learning	144	76.340	14.956
Face to Face	206	77.252	12.652
Hybrid	408	74.978	16.662
Dual Modality	313	75.613	15.080

**Importance Ratings by Houses' proposed dimensions (Emotional, Appraisal, Instrumental, and Informational) by Instructional Modality**

I also used a one-way between subjects ANOVA to compare importance ratings for each of House's Dimensions of support. For emotional support [ $F(3/1067)=1.778$ ,  $p=.150$ ], appraisal support [ $F(3/1067)=1.683$ ,  $p=.169$ ], instrumental support [ $F(3/1067)=1.480$ ,  $p=.218$ ], and informational support [ $F(3/1067)=.406$ ,  $p=.749$ ] the analysis showed no significant differences between groups based on instructional modality. This means there were no significant value rating differences per dimension based on this demographic group.

**Importance Ratings by Factors (Value and Logistical) by Instructional Modality**

When combining the factors of emotional/appraisal Support into the Value Factor I found similar results to analyzing the dimensions separately for this demographic group. Using the one-way between subjects ANOVA there was no significant difference in this combined factor based on instructional modality,  $F(3/1067)=1.725$ ,  $p=.160$ . Similarly, the results of the two combined dimensions to make the Logistical Factor when tested for differences in teachers using different instructional modalities showed less than significant results  $F(3/1067)=.906$ ,  $p=.437$ . Instructional Modality was the only demographic variable that did not significantly affect any importance rating at all.

## **Further Analysis- Importance Ratings by Needs Met**

### **Overall Importance Ratings**

The last question on the DASI survey asked respondents to answer a yes/no/question as to whether their building-level administrators are meeting their support needs. This separated our respondents into two (non-demographic related) groups. An independent-samples t-test as conducted to the teachers that report having their needs met to those that do not for overall importance ratings. There were significant differences in overall importance ratings for teachers who perceived their support needs as being met ( $M=76.697$ ,  $SD=13.405$ ) as compared to those that do not ( $M=72.310$ ,  $SD= 72.310$ );  $t(-4.152)$ ,  $p=.000$ .

**Table 4.13 Importance by Needs Met**

Category	N	Mean	Sd
Needs Met	271	72.310	1.173
Needs Not Met	823	76.696	.4673

### **Importance Ratings by Houses' proposed dimensions (Emotional, Appraisal, Instrumental, and Informational) by Needs Met**

Performing the independent-sample t-test by the two groups to compare means for emotional support, a significant difference was found. Teachers with their needs met ( $M=21.265$ ,  $SD=4.286$ ) valued this type of support more than their counterparts ( $M=20.2362$ ,  $SD=6.0$ );  $t(-3.082)$ ,  $p=.002$ . There were also significant differences in the importance ratings for appraisal support with supported teachers ( $M=17.9113$ ,  $SD=3.0797$ ) valuing this type of support more than their colleagues that do not feel

adequately supported ( $M=16.800$ ,  $SD=4.418$ );  $t(-4.584)$ ,  $p=.000$ . Differences were also significant for instrumental support with teachers feeling supported ( $M=20.735$ ,  $SD=4.32$ ) again having higher importance ratings than the teachers that felt less than supported ( $M=19.303$ ,  $SD=5.649$ );  $t(-4.359)$ ,  $p=.000$ . The independent- sample t-test rendered significant results for informational support with, again, teachers that reported having their needs met ( $M=16.785$ ,  $SD=3.443$ ) valuing this dimension of support more than their colleagues that did not ( $M=15.971$ ,  $SD=4.624$ );  $t(-3.085)$ ,  $p=.002$ .

### **Importance Ratings by Factors (Value and Logistical) by Needs Met**

An independent-sample t-test also showed a significance difference in ratings when Value Factor supports were analyzed. Teachers that report having their support needs met ( $M=39.176$ ,  $SD=6.844$ ) rated this factor significantly higher than teachers that reported their needs were not being met ( $M=37.037$ ,  $SD=10.066$ );  $t(-3.933)$ ,  $p=.000$ . Very similar results were found for the Logistical Factor. Again, teachers that felt their support needs were being met ( $M=37.520$ ,  $SD=7.237$ ) rated this factor of support significantly higher than their peers that did not feel supported ( $M=35.273$ ,  $SD=9.84$ );  $t(=4.030)$ ,  $p=.00$ .

### **Importance by Groups- Conclusions**

There were three demographic groupings that had no significant impact on the importance ratings overall, within/between dimensions, or within/between factors. These demographics were category of position, school location, and modality. It did not matter if teachers were teaching in a General Education or Special Education role; if they were in a rural, suburban or urban community; or if they were teaching online, face to face, hybrid, or using dual modality. School size and years of teaching only affected the

importance ratings of one dimension of support. Teachers teaching in schools with the smallest student populations valued instrumental Support more than their peers that teach in schools with 1001 or more students. Newer teachers valued appraisal support more than their colleagues with more teaching experience.

There was one demographic category that significantly impacted the ratings for almost all of the importance measurements. School level impacted overall importance ratings as well as both factors of support. Of House's four proposed dimensions, the only one that was not significantly impacted was the emotional support dimension. Teachers teaching at the elementary school level rated all of these areas higher than their colleagues in high school settings.

When comparing teachers that rate their support needs as being met to those that report their needs not being met, there were significant differences in every level of support measures. So, there are differences in importance ratings by certain demographic or teacher groups, but not between all teacher groups. These are important to know for practitioners and future researchers.

**Table 4.14 Significance-Importance**

Demo-graphic	Significance Threshold	Overall	Dimensions		Factors	
School Level	p=.0125	p=.000	Appraisal	p=.001	Value	p=.001
			Instrumental	p=.00		
			Informational	p=.019	Logistical	p=.00
Yrs. Of Teaching	p=.0125		Appraisal	p=.003		
School Size	p=.01		Instrumental	p=.007		
Support Needs	p=.025		Emotional	p=.002	Value	p=.00
			Appraisal	p=.000		
			Instrumental	p=.000	Logistical	p=.00
			Informational	p=.002		

**Research Question Three: How frequently do teachers receive administrative support? Are there differences in frequency ratings between teachers in different groups?**

For the third research question, I examined teacher perceptions of how frequently they experienced specific support behaviors from their school-level administration. In the frequency section of the survey, respondents were asked to rate the frequency of support behaviors from a range of never to always (0=never, 1= rarely, 2=often, and 3= always). The frequency means of the support behaviors ranged from 2.41 to 1.16. Fourteen of the thirty-two support behaviors had a mean score that fell within the often to always ratings. When analyzing the most frequently reported frequency ratings, I found that overall frequency ratings were slightly lower than importance ratings.

Like with the second research question, I analyzed results of the DASI survey responses to answer this research question. Frequency ratings were analyzed at the item level as well as at the dimension, factor, and overall levels. I also studied the frequency responses to find any significant differences for ratings between teachers in different demographic groups.

Overall, respondents rated “fairness in my evaluation” as the most frequent support behavior with a mean score of 2.41. The next most frequent behavior was “providing planning time” which had a mean score of 2.21, followed by “showing confidence in my actions as a teacher” with a mean score of 2.19. Teachers also rated these support behaviors as the highest in importance.

The lowest frequency results were in “assisting me with my lesson development” with a mean score of 1.16. This score was significantly lower than the next lowest score of 1.53 for “establishing a social network to support collegial relationships.” In the bottom three-frequency ratings was also “recognizing my accomplishments publically” with a mean score of 1.55. These three behaviors were also the three lowest rated support behaviors by importance. The table below shows the frequency ratings of all of the support behaviors from most frequent to the least frequent.

**Table 4.15 Overall Frequency Ratings**

Support Behavior	Mean	SD
Showing fairness in my evaluation	2.41	.751
Providing planning time for me	2.21	.873
Showing confidence in my actions as a teacher	2.19	.898
Providing clear communication about the school mission	2.18	.869
Enforcing school rules	2.15	.814
Allowing my input when discussing my performance	2.15	.865
Providing professional development opportunities	2.10	.828
Supporting my collaboration efforts with my colleagues	2.09	.817
Setting a tone for acceptance and understanding among teachers)	2.09	.946
Providing clear communication of the district goals	2.08	.880
Handling any student discipline problems	2.07	.846
Setting a clear standard of expectations for everyone	2.07	.920
Providing needed materials for my classroom	2.06	.905
Speaking to me (casually)	2.06	.913
Showing an appreciation for my work	1.96	.954
Listening to me and encouraging me	1.96	.970
Understanding my work with my students	1.95	.894
Showing understanding of my practices in the classroom	1.88	.933
Encouraging me to continue learning	1.88	.937
Sharing information between different groups in the school	1.85	.927
Having conversations about performance	1.84	.884
Sharing information about different learning opportunities outside of the school	1.78	.914
Communicating teacher needs to others in the district	1.78	.967
Providing on-going constructive feedback	1.77	.920
Clarifying my role in the school and among my team	1.76	.886
Coaching me when I need it	1.76	.950



Providing curriculum for my classroom	1.68	1.038
Including my input into decision making	1.64	.976
Sharing legislative updates and initiatives with staff	1.59	.990
Recognizing my accomplishments publically	1.55	.978
Establishing a social network to support collegial relationships	1.53	1.00
Assisting with lesson development	1.16	1.025
<i>* highlighted items were removed from the factor analysis and could be excluded from further analysis</i>		

## Frequency for Different Groups of Teachers

### General Education Teachers/ Special Education Teachers

I conducted an independent- samples t-test to compare overall frequency ratings for teachers based on their current teaching position being that of a general education teacher or a special education teacher. Using this analysis, there was not a significant difference in scores for general education teachers (M=61.724, SD=21.504) and special education teachers (M=58.672, SD=23.358);  $t(1101)$ ,  $p=.086$ .

**Table 4.16 Frequency Ratings by Category**

Position	N	Mean	Sd
General Education Teachers	923	61.724	.7078
Special Education Teachers	180	58.672	1.741

### Frequency by Houses' proposed dimensions (Emotional, Appraisal, Instrumental, and Informational) by General Education Teachers/ Special Education Teachers

I analyzed the differences between the two groups using the t-test to investigate whether there were significant differences in frequency ratings for each of Houses' four dimensions of support. The comparison of results for emotional support were not significant [ $t(1101)$ ,  $p=.039$ ]. There were not significant differences in the means of the

general education teachers and special education teachers when comparing frequency ratings of appraisal support [t(1101),  $p=.044$ ]. Results of the t-test did not render significant results between the groups for instrumental support [t(1101),  $p=.118$ ] or informational support [t(1101),  $p=.501$ ].

### **Frequency by Factors (Value and Logistical) - General Education Teachers/ Special Education Teachers**

When emotional and appraisal support behaviors were combined to make the Value Factor and the t-test was used to compare differences between the means for both groups for this factor, there was not a significant difference [t(1101),  $p=.028$ ]. There also were not significant differences between frequency ratings for the Logistical Support Factor [t(1101),  $p=.234$ ].

### **Frequency Ratings by School Level (elementary, middle, high)**

#### **Overall Frequency Ratings by School Level**

I also conducted a one-way between subjects ANOVA to compare the effect of school level on the overall perceived frequency rating. There was a significant effect of school level on the frequency ratings,  $F(3/1099)=5.044$ ,  $p=.002$ . Post hoc analysis using the Tukey HSD showed that there was a significant difference between frequency ratings of teachers that teach at the elementary level ( $M= 64.050$ ,  $SD= 22.0568$ ) and those that teach at the high school level ( $M=58.319$ ,  $SD=20.878$ ).

**Table 4.17 Overall Frequency Ratings by School Level**

School Level	N	Mean	Sd
Traditional Elementary	440	64.050	22.057
Traditional Middle	276	60.989	21.717

Traditional High	310	58.319	20.878
Other	77	57.636	23.027

**Frequency Ratings by Houses' proposed dimensions (Emotional, Appraisal, Instrumental, and Informational) by School Level**

I also used the one-way between subjects ANOVA results to study the frequency differences between groups for each of House's four dimensions of support. For emotional support there were significant differences between groups for frequency,  $F(3/1099)=4.094$ ,  $p=.007$ . Post hoc analysis comparing multiple means showed that the significance difference was between the elementary school teachers ( $M=17.325$ ,  $SD=7.17$ ) and high school teachers ( $M=15.6065$ ,  $SD=6.828$ ). There was also a significant difference in the rating results between school levels for the frequency of appraisal support,  $F(3/1099)=4.380$ ,  $p=.004$ . Post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD indicated that the mean score for the traditional elementary school teachers ( $M=14.6045$ ,  $SD=5.200$ ) was significantly different than the mean scores of traditional high school teachers ( $M=13.442$ ,  $SD=4.87$ ) and those teachers teaching in "other" settings ( $M=12.922$ ,  $SD=5.512$ ). Elementary teachers experienced higher frequencies of support than their colleagues in high schools and even more than their colleagues in "other" settings. Using the one-way between subject ANOVA comparisons between subgroups by frequency in the area of instrumental support, the differences were significant,  $F(3/1099)=3.885$ ,  $p=.009$ . Post hoc results show that there is a significant difference between traditional elementary school teachers ( $M=17.984$ ,  $SD=5.92$ ) and those that teach in the high school setting ( $M=16.677$ ,  $SD=5.56$ ). There were also significant differences between teacher groups for the information support frequencies,  $F(3.1099)=6.360$ ,  $p=.000$ . Again, post

hoc results rendered significant differences between traditional elementary teachers ( $M=14.1364$ ,  $SD=4.902$ ) and traditional high school teachers ( $M=12.594$ ,  $SD=5.103$ ). Elementary teachers received each domain of support at significantly higher rates than their colleagues, especially those at the high school level.

#### Frequency Ratings by Factors (Value and Logistical) by School Level

Imposing the CFA structure and combining and analyzing the Value Factor, I used the one-way subject ANOVA comparisons of frequencies by school level to show significant differences between groups,  $F(3.1099)=4.373$ ,  $p=.005$ . Post hoc comparison of means shows significance differences between teachers at the elementary level ( $M=34.416$ ,  $SD=12.67$ ) and high school level ( $M=31.436$ ,  $SD=11.903$ ). Using the Logistical Factor and the one-way subject ANOVA comparisons of frequency I found significant differences [ $f(3/1099)=5.294$ ,  $p=.001$ ] with the post hoc comparison also showing the significant difference being between elementary teachers ( $M=32.121$ ,  $SD=10.500$ ) and those that teachers at the high school level ( $M=29.271$ ,  $SD=10.233$ ). Teachers at the elementary have the highest frequency ratings over all of their other colleagues and especially higher than their high school counterparts.

#### **Frequency Ratings by Years of Teaching Experience**

##### **Overall Frequency Ratings by Years of Teaching Experience**

Using the one-way between subjects ANOVA comparison of teachers with different years of experience on the overall frequency of administrative support I found no significant difference.

**Table 4.18 Overall Frequency Ratings by Years of Experience**

Years Experience	N	Mean	Sd
0-5 years	134	62.351	19.437
6-10 years	172	59.779	20.813
11-20 years	385	59.610	21.911
21+ years	412	62.973	22.824

**Frequency Ratings by Houses' proposed dimensions (Emotional, Appraisal, Instrumental, and Informational) by Years of Teaching Experience**

Analyzing frequency ratings for emotional support and comparing means between groups of teachers with different years of teaching experience I found no significant difference,  $F(3/1099)=1.887$ ,  $p=.130$ . There were also no significant differences in ratings of teachers when looking at the appraisal support dimension [ $F(3/1099)=1.824$ ,  $p=.141$ ] or the instrumental support dimension [ $F(3/1099)=2.219$ ,  $p=.084$ ]. There was not a significant difference in the frequency ratings for informational support as they pertain to years of teaching experience,  $F(3/1099)=2.703$ ,  $p=.044$ .

**Frequency Ratings by Factors (Value and Logistical) by Years of Teaching**

Using a one-way between subject ANOVA comparison of the means of teachers by years of experience for the Value Factor I did not find a significant difference,  $F(3/1099)=1.519$ ,  $p=.208$ . There was also not a significant difference between groups for the Logistical Factor,  $F(3/1099)=2.510$ ,  $p=.057$ .

**Frequency Rating by School size by number of students enrolled**

### Overall Frequency Ratings by School Size

I did not find a significance difference in overall frequency ratings for teachers of different size school using a one-way between subject ANOVA,  $F(4/1098)=3.274$ ,  $p=.011$ .

**Table 4.19 Overall Frequency Ratings by School Size**

Size of School	N	Mean	Sd
Less than 350 students	145	63.593	21.940
351-500 students	222	63.905	22.997
501-750 students	260	60.569	21.388
751-1000 students	192	62.365	20.605
1001+ students	284	57.754	21.705

### Frequency Ratings by Houses' proposed dimensions (Emotional, Appraisal, Instrumental, and Informational) by School Size

Using a one-way between subject ANOVA comparison of the differences between means for the frequency of emotional support behaviors by school size I found a significant difference in ratings,  $F(4/1098)=3.829$ ,  $p=.004$ . Post hoc testing showed the significance difference between means of teachers in schools with 351-500 students ( $M=17.514$ ,  $SD=7.313$ ) and those of teachers in schools with more than 1001 students ( $M=15.377$ ,  $SD=7.085$ ). Analyzing the impact of the school size on frequency ratings for appraisal support rendered insignificant results,  $F(4/1098)=2.576$ ,  $p=.036$ . For instrumental support, findings did not show any significant differences between groups,  $F(4/1098)=2.215$ ,  $p=.065$ . Findings were significant when comparing means for frequency of informational support by school size,  $F(4/1098)=3.403$ ,  $p=.009$ . Post hoc Tukey HSD findings showed significant differences between teachers within schools of

351-500 students ( $M=14.004$ ,  $SD=5.173$ ) and those within schools of more than 1000 students ( $M=12.487$ ,  $SD=5.144$ ).

### **Frequency Ratings by Factors (Value and Logistical) by School Size**

Examining the differences between means for the frequency of the Value factor by school size using the one-way between subject ANOVA did not show a significant difference,  $F(4/1098)=3.289$ ,  $p=.011$ . There was also not a significant difference when the Logistical Factor was compared for frequency between groups,  $F(4/1098)=2.835$ ,  $p=.023$ .

### **Frequency by School Location**

#### **Overall Frequency Ratings by School Location**

Using a one-way between subject ANOVA to compare means between groups of teachers by school location for the overall frequency ratings of support, I found no significant differences,  $F(2/1100)=.114$ ,  $p=.892$ .

**Table 4.20 Overall Frequency Ratings for School Location**

School Location	N	Mean	Sd
Rural Community	363	61.325	21.842
Urban Community	184	60.527	23.168
Suburban Community	556	61.392	21.408

### **Frequency by Houses' proposed dimensions (Emotional, Appraisal, Instrumental, and Informational) by School Location**

Comparing means of groups of teachers by location of school there were no significant differences for the frequency of emotional support [ $F(2/1100)=.111$ ,

$p=.895>.017$ ], appraisal support [ $F(2/1100)=.032$ ,  $p=.969$ ], instrumental support [ $F(2/1100)=.016$ ,  $p=.994>.017$ ], or informational support [ $F(2/1100)=.463$ ,  $p=.630$ ].

### **Frequency by Factors (Value and Logistical) by School Location**

When imposing the CFA structure and using the Value Factor, there was still no significant differences based on school location,  $F(2/1100)=.113$ ,  $p=.893$ . There was also no significant difference in the Logistical Factor,  $F(2/1100)=.158$ ,  $p=.854$ .

### **Frequency by Instructional Modality**

#### **Overall Frequency Ratings by Instructional Modality**

Again, I used the one-way between subjects ANOVA was to examine any differences in the mean for overall frequency. This analysis used the instructional modality as the independent variable and found no significant differences,  $F(3/1067)=.831$ ,  $p=.477$ .

**Table 4.21 Overall Frequency Rating by Instructional Modality**

Teaching Modality	N	Mean	Sd
E-Learning	144	61.708	22.083
Face to Face	206	63.151	21.090
Hybrid	408	60.824	22.651
Dual Modality	313	60.185	21.491

### **Frequency by Houses' proposed dimensions (Emotional, Appraisal, Instrumental, and Informational) by Instructional Modality**

Comparing means of different groups of teachers based on instructional modality also did not render any significant results for frequency of emotional support behavior [ $F(3/1067)=.883$ ,  $p=.449$ ], appraisal support [ $F(3/1067)=.901$ ,  $p=.440$ ],



instrumental support [ $F(3/1067)=.901$ ,  $p=.440$ ], or informational support [ $F(3/1067)=.468$ ,  $p=.705$ ].

### **Frequency Ratings by Factors (Value and Logistical) by Instructional Modality**

One-way between subject ANOVA results for the Value Factor made by combining emotional/appraisal support also rendered no significant results,  $F(3/1067)=.844$ ,  $p=.470$ . Similarly, frequency rating differences between group for the Logistical Factor made by combining instrumental/informational support also yielded no significant differences  $F(3/1067)=.724$ ,  $p=.538$ . Instructional modality of the teacher had no significant impact of frequency ratings at all (on any level).

### **Further Analysis- Frequency Ratings by Needs Met**

#### **Overall Frequency Ratings by Needs Met**

I conducted an independent- samples t-test to compare the mean overall frequency ratings for teachers that reported having their support needs met by their building-level administrators. As expected, there was a significant difference in these overall frequency ratings with the teachers that feel their support needs are met ( $M=69.513$ ,  $SD=16.542$ ) having a frequency mean significantly higher than their counterparts that feel less than supported ( $M=35.956$ ,  $SD=15.503$ );  $t(-29.411)$ ,  $p=.000$ .

#### **Frequency by Houses' proposed dimensions (Emotional, Appraisal, Instrumental, and Informational) by Needs Met**

When comparing means for teachers in both sub-groups for frequency ratings of emotional support, there were significant differences between teachers that rate being supported ( $M=19.263$ ,  $SD=5.283$ ) to those that rated themselves as not supported

( $M=8.200$ ,  $SD=4.835$ );  $t(-30.519)$ ,  $p=.00$ . Results were significant when comparing the two groups' differences in frequency ratings for appraisal support. Teachers that indicated they were adequately supported ( $M=15.876$ ,  $SD=3.913$ ) rated this type of support as happening more often than their counterparts that felt inadequate levels of support by their administrators ( $M=8.288$ ,  $SD=4.215$ );  $t(-27.158)$ ,  $p=.000$ . Frequency ratings were significantly different in the area of instrumental support as well. Those supported teachers ( $M=19.216$ ,  $SD=4.755$ ) had significantly higher frequency ratings for this area than those teachers that did not feel supported ( $M=11.424$ ,  $SD=4.623$ );  $t(-23.559)$ ,  $p=.00$ . Results were also significant when comparing means for the frequency of informational support. Supported teachers ( $M=15.153$ ,  $SD=4.0$ ) rated the frequency of this type of support at a significantly higher level than their colleagues that did not feel supported ( $M=8.044$ ,  $SD=4.157$ );  $t(-25.132)$ ,  $p=.00$ .

### **Frequency Ratings by Factors (Value and Logistical) by Needs Met**

When imposing the factor structure confirmed with earlier analysis and measuring the Value Factor the t-test results showed that there were significant differences between the two groups, [ $(M=37.775$ ,  $SD=9.206)$ ,  $(M=18.244$ ,  $SD=9.197)$ ];  $t(-30.301)$ ,  $p=.00$ . I also used the t-test to compare ratings for the Logistical Factor for these ratings by groups. Again, teachers feeling supported ( $M=34.369$ ,  $SD=8.343$ ) rated the frequency of this factor at significantly higher rates than their peers that did not feel supported ( $M=19.469$ ,  $SD=8.1211$ );  $t(-25.669)$ ,  $p=.00$ .

### **Conclusion- Frequency by Group**

When analyzing frequency by demographics, I found four demographics that did not have any significant impact on frequency ratings by teachers. Teaching position (General Education/ Special Education), years of teaching experience, school location, and instructional modality impacted ratings did not impact frequency ratings at the overall, dimension, or factor levels.

School Size had a significant impact on reported differences in frequency for emotional support and informational support. Teachers in schools with a school population between 351-500 students reported significantly higher frequencies of these supports than teachers at school with student populations of 1001 or more.

Two groups reported significantly different frequencies of support overall, as well as for every dimension and factor. In general, teachers at the elementary level reported significantly higher frequencies of most types of support than their colleagues at the high school level. Not surprisingly the other group of teachers that reported the most significant support frequency differences was the group of teachers that reported having their support needs met when they were compared to teachers that reported inadequate levels of support from their building-level administrators.

**Table 4.22 Significance- Frequency**

Demo-graphic	Significance Threshold	Overall	Dimensions		Factors	
School Level	p=.0125	p=.002	Emotional	p=.007	Emo/App	p=.005
			Appraisal	p=.004		
			Instrumental	p=.009		

School Size	p=.01		Informational	p=.000	Ins/Info	p=.001
			Emotional	p=.004		
			Informational	p=.009		
Support Needs	p=.025	p=.000	Emotional	p=.000	Emo/App	p=.00
			Appraisal	p=.000		
			Instrumental	p=.000	Ins/Info	p=.00
			Informational	p=.00		

**Research Question Four: Are there differences in the importance ratings of teachers and the frequency ratings? How often are teachers receiving the most important supports?**

When comparing importance ratings and frequency ratings for specific support behaviors, I found that in general teachers value the support behaviors more highly than they perceive receiving the supports. This finding is demonstrated by the differences in the mean scores for importance and frequency.

When aligning supports and ordering them from greatest importance and greatest frequency, five supports align in ranking for both importance and frequency. Other items are very closely aligned, within a three to four item difference. With approximately 75% of teachers feeling their support needs are being met, a slight difference in importance and frequency is expected. Overall teachers are frequently receiving the four dimensions of support, as shown through the specific support behaviors. Below is a table comparing the teacher ratings for importance and frequency.

**Table 4.23 Importance and Frequency Comparison**

<u>Importance- Support</u>	<u>mean</u>	<u>sd</u>	<u>Frequency- Support</u>	<u>mean</u>	<u>sd</u>
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Showing confidence in my actions as a teacher	2.81	0.512	Showing fairness in my evaluation	2.41	0.751
Providing planning time for me	2.8	0.545	Providing planning time for me	2.21	0.873
Showing fairness in my evaluation	2.78	0.496	Showing confidence in my actions as a teacher	2.19	0.89
Setting a clear standard of expectations for everyone	2.77	0.555	Providing clear communication about the school mission	2.18	0.869
Allowing my input when discussing my performance	2.74	0.561	Allowing my input when discussing my performance	2.15	0.865
Enforcing school rules	2.72	0.593	Enforcing school rules	2.15	0.814
Setting a tone for acceptance and understanding among teachers	2.67	0.621	Providing professional development opportunities	2.1	0.828
Showing an appreciation for my work	2.63	0.685	Setting a tone for acceptance and understanding among teachers	2.09	0.946
Handling any student discipline problems	2.62	0.662	Supporting my collaboration efforts with my colleagues	2.09	0.817
Understanding my work with my students	2.59	0.705	Providing clear communication of the district goals	2.08	0.88
Showing understanding of my practices in the classroom	2.58	0.659	Setting a clear standard of expectations for everyone	2.07	0.92
Communicating teacher needs to others in the district	2.56	0.737	Handling any student discipline problems	2.07	0.846
Listening to me and encouraging me	2.53	0.707	Speaking to me (casually)	2.06	0.913
Providing clear communication about the school mission	2.52	0.71	Providing needed materials for my classroom	2.06	0.905
Providing needed materials for my classroom	2.52	0.732	Showing an appreciation for my work	1.96	0.954
Sharing information between different groups in the school	2.43	0.753	Listening to me and encouraging me	1.96	0.97

Providing clear communication of the district goals	2.42	0.748	Understanding my work with my students	1.95	0.894
Supporting my collaboration efforts with my colleagues	2.39	0.798	Encouraging me to continue learning	1.88	0.937
Including my input into decision making	2.36	0.754	Showing understanding of my practices in the classroom	1.88	0.933
Speaking to me (casually)	2.32	0.778	Sharing information between different groups in the school	1.85	0.927
Having conversations about performance	2.31	0.777	Having conversations about performance	1.84	0.884
Encouraging me to continue learning	2.22	0.861	Sharing information about different learning opportunities outside of the school	1.78	0.914
Coaching me when I need it	2.21	0.831	Communicating teacher needs to 3s in the district	1.78	0.967
Providing on-going constructive feedback	2.21	0.82	Providing on-going constructive feedback	1.77	0.92
Clarifying my role in the school and among my team	2.15	0.924	Clarifying my role in the school and among my team	1.76	0.886
Providing professional development opportunities	2.14	0.833	Coaching me when I need it	1.76	0.95
Sharing legislative updates and initiatives with staff	2.07	0.89	Providing curriculum for my classroom	1.68	1.038
Sharing information about different learning opportunities outside of the school	2.02	0.858	Including my input into decision making	1.64	0.976
Providing curriculum for my classroom	1.91	1.042	Sharing legislative updates and initiatives with staff	1.59	0.99
Establishing a social network to support collegial relationships	1.69	0.98	Recognizing my accomplishments publically	1.55	0.978
Recognizing my accomplishments publically	1.66	0.994	Establishing a social network to support collegial relationships	1.53	1

Assisting with lesson development	1.28	1.025	Assisting with lesson development	1.16	1.025
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### **Differences Between Importance and Frequency**

To study differences between how teachers rated administrative support at different levels for importance and frequency, descriptive statistics were used. First, I compared overall means for overall importance and overall frequency levels. When making this comparison, the mean for frequency was higher by fourteen points. While the mean for Importance was 75.625, the mean for the frequency of teachers experiencing these support behaviors was 61.2257. Calculating Cohen's-d to measure the effect size difference between the two groups. This score between means was .765 and is in the medium effect size range (.5-.8).

I found the same pattern for each of House's theoretical dimensions of support. An average difference of three points was found between how important the teachers rated supports in each dimension and how frequently they received those supports. For emotional support, appraisal support, instrumental support, and informational support teachers reported higher importance ratings and lower frequency ratings. The Cohen's d score for emotional support importance and frequency was in the medium range (.74). The difference for appraisal support was in the high range (.824). The difference for instrumental support was in the medium range (.654) and in the medium range (.708) for informational Support.

When I examined the Value and Logistical Factors from the higher order factor model established with the factor analysis, the results were similar. The higher order factors had an average of six point differences between the importance and frequency

ratings. For both of these factors, the importance ratings were higher. Using Cohen's *d* to measure effect size of difference, both factors had medium differences between importance and frequency ratings (Emotional/Appraisal=.5479 and Instrumental/Informational=.067).

Table 4.24 shows these differences at the overall, dimension, and factor levels. In general, teachers rated the importance of supports higher than the frequency in which they were given them.

**Table 4.24 Importance and Frequency Differences by Level**

Level of Analysis	Comparison	N=1103	M	Sd
Overall	Overall- IMP		75.625	15.215
<i>Range 0-96.00</i>	Overall- FREQ		61.226	21.835
Dimensions	Emotional- IMP		21.017	4.777
<i>Range 0-27.00</i>	Emotional- FREQ		16.531	7.054
	Appraisal- IMP		17.635	3.490
	Appraisal-FREQ		14.003	5.162
	Instrumental-IMP		20.394	4.742
	Instrumental-FREQ		17.292	4.742
	Informational-IMP		16.579	3.802
	Informational-FREQ		13.399	5.083
Factors	Emo/App- IMP		38.653	7.811
<i>Range 0-48.00</i>	Emo/App-FREQ		32.946	12.491
	Instr/Info-IMP		36.973	8.0461
	Instr/Info-FREQ		30.682	10.517



## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION**

My purpose in this study was to examine teacher perspectives on administrative support. I examined which supports teachers valued most and the differences in these value ratings by different teacher groups. I also measured how frequently teachers reported receiving different types of supports from their building-level administrators. Finally, I compared value ratings and frequency ratings to determine if teachers were receiving those most valued supports.

I developed the Domains of Administrative Support Inventory Survey (DASI) based on my extensive review of the literature and Houses' Four Dimensions of Support Theory (1981). The survey instrument included questions about current demographics and a matrix of items to rate the importance and frequency of specific support behaviors. I collected 1103 responses, including responses from teachers in more than 46 certification areas across a southeastern state. I next summarize my findings and discuss their implications for practice and further research. I organize this discussion by the four main research questions.

### **Research Question One: Do SC teachers identify the same four dimensions of Administrative Support as those in House's theoretical framework?**

I first used an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA; Osbourne, 2014) to determine the factor structure of my survey. EFA is typically used when there is not an imposed

empirical structure in a survey, which was the case with my instrument since it was based only on a theoretical framework. The EFA process takes complex data and organizes it by finding commonalities among item responses. Differences in item responses are also found to distinguish items from each other. Using these commonalities and differences, items are loaded into categories to produce a factor structure (Johnson & Morgan, 2016). Using EFA, I found a two-factor structure. The results of this analysis mean that items fit into two dimensions of support based on these commonalities and differences in responses. The first of the two dimensions is a combination of Emotional and Appraisal Support behaviors from House's theory (1981). I will refer to this new combined factor as the Value Support factor. The second dimension is made up of behaviors related to House's dimensions (1981) of Instrumental and Informational Support. I will refer to this new combined factor as the Logistical Support factor.

I then used a second, more complex, factor analysis method called Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA; Harrington, 2009). I used the second method because my EFA results did not align with the proposed framework of House (1981). CFA is typically used to test a hypothesis that a specific relationship exists between item responses on a survey (Fowler, 2014). Using CFA, I began by testing a one-factor model. Using this one-factor model, there was an assumption that all items aligned into one factor of support. I completed this analysis to eliminate the single factor as an option. I found this model to have the least significant fit when using the statistical fit index.

I then ran CFA procedures to measure the fit of the two-factor model developed while using the EFA results. This procedure increased the fit model index and decreased error index. The model fit index is a measure that compares the observed data to the

hypothesized model (Grace-Martin, 2020). A larger model fit index indicates a better fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The error index is the measure of unexplained variance between observed and predicted values in a model with a lower error index indicating a better fit (Kelloway, 2015). I did not want to ignore House's framework of support dimensions because of its prevalence in the literature, so I then completed the CFA using four dimensions (1981), which also showed a good fit and low error.

The four-factor model based on House's theory (1981) was a slightly better fit than the two-factor structure. Because the results were close in significance and error, I performed a more complex four factor-higher order analysis. This type of analysis is typically used to explore not only the factor structure, but also the hierarchal structure as well as the interfactor relationships. A hierarchal structure indicates the relationships between primary and secondary factors (Wetzels et al., 2009). In my study, House's four dimensions of support were the primary factors and Value Support (Emotional/Appraisal) and Logistical Support (Instrumental/Informational) were the higher order factors (see figure 4.1 on page 66). Using the best fit criteria of lower error score and higher comparative fit index (Kelloway, 2015), I found the enhanced, four factor-higher order model to be the best fit. This model is the most parsimonious model, meaning it has the greatest explanatory value (Kelloway, 2015) as it explains both the original model and the correlation of two factors.

The answer to my first research question is not a simple yes or no. It cannot be a simple yes, because I discovered and confirmed through my factor analysis a higher order model that is the best fit for explaining the current teacher needs. This model recognizes House's Theoretical Framework of four support dimensions (1981), but also

explains the relationship between latent factors as being of a hierarchal nature (Kelloway, 2015). This new model recognizes the correlation between two higher-order, combined dimensions. Those two combined dimensions are the Value and Logistical Supports. House's original theory (1981) does not account for these higher-order correlations. However, the answer cannot be a simple no because the factor structure of my survey based on teacher responses does include House's dimensions as the four primary factors. Having both House's theoretical model and the four factor-higher order model together adds to our conceptual understanding of the current support needs of teachers by explaining the relationships between observed behaviors in the survey and the latent dimensions of support (Johnson & Morgan, 2016).

**Research Question Two: How do teachers rate the importance of administrative support factors?**

**Are there differences in importance ratings between teachers in different groups?**

I found the administrative support behaviors with the highest reported importance ratings to be: Showing confidence in my actions as a teacher (Littrell et al., 1994); providing planning time for me (Whitaker, 2003); showing fairness in my evaluations (Singh & Billingsley, 1998); setting a clear standard of expectations for everyone (Kukla- Acevedo, 2009); and allowing my input when discussing my performance (Billingsley & Cross, 1992). These supports fit into three of Houses' four domains (Appraisal, Instrumental, and Informational), but when using the new higher-order factor framework these supports were evenly distributed between the Value Support factor and the Logistical Support factor. The highest rated Emotional Administrative Support behavior was seventh overall and related to the building-level

administration setting a tone of acceptance and understanding among teachers (Ax et al., 2001). While I did not find that individual Emotional Support behaviors rated as the most important, when I combined all of the Emotional Support behaviors they did have the highest overall importance ratings of all of House's proposed dimensions (1981).

My results confirmed those from Littrell et al.'s (1994) study and House's (1981) theory that Emotional Support was the most important dimension of support when combining all support ratings. However, my results differed from both the Littrell et al. (1994) study and House (1981) theory with the order of the second and third support domains. While House and Littrell found Appraisal Support to be the second highest rated support, my results indicate that teachers in my study rated Instrumental Support as the second most important domain. My study found Appraisal Support as the third most important domain of support. House's (1981) theory, Littrell et al. (1994), and my study all concluded that Informational Support is the least important support domain for teachers.

Since most research has focused on the needs of a specific group of teachers or has not compared the needs of different groups (e.g., Ax et al. 2001, Gehrke & Murri 2006, Fall & Billingsley, 2011), it could be expected that different groups of teachers would have different support needs. I found this to be partly true. I found no significant differences between educators classified as general education or special education teachers in the way they rated their support needs. These findings were consistent with the findings of Littrell et al. (1994) that also found more similarities than differences in support needs of these two groups. Although degrees of difference varied and for different domains and factors, a few demographic sub-groups did rate importance

significantly different. For example, teachers in smaller (351-500 student population) schools, teachers in elementary settings, and early career teachers rated more support behaviors at significantly higher levels than their counterparts in larger (1001 or more student population) schools, teachers in high schools, and teachers with eleven or more years of teaching experience. A subgroup that also had significantly higher importance ratings were those teachers that felt that their administrators met their support need.

My study results provide information on the specific supports that teachers rated as most and least important from the literature reviewed. By identifying these supports it allows practitioners to focus on high leverage behaviors to support teachers effectively. More research could be done to examine the members of each demographic group and study why those teachers value supports at higher rates. For instance, are the elementary teachers also the teachers that teach in smaller schools since elementary schools are usually smaller than high schools (Overview of Elementary and Secondary Schools and Districts, 2001)?

### **Research Question Three: How frequently do teachers receive administrative support?**

#### **Are there differences in frequency ratings between teachers in different groups?**

I found the most frequent support behaviors teachers experience to be: Showing fairness in my evaluation (Singh & Billingsley, 1998); providing planning time (Whitaker, 2003); showing confidence in the actions of teachers (Billingsley & Littrell, 1994); providing clear communication about the school mission (Quinn & Andrews, 2004; Fall & Billingsley, 2011); and enforcing school rules (Singh & Billingsley, 1998). These fall under the domains of Appraisal Support, Instrumental Support, and

Informational Support. These findings were different from those of Littrell et al. (1994) in which they found Emotional Support to be the most frequent support behavior received by teachers. When broken down into House's (1981) theoretical framework, my results show the most frequent domain of support received is Instrumental Support. Emotional Support, then Appraisal Support, and finally Informational Support followed in ratings of frequency. Using my higher order factor model, the Value Support had the highest frequency ratings leaving the Logistical Support with the lowest ratings. While there are differences in the literature findings and my findings, teachers generally rated the same behaviors as both important and frequent in both studies.

Several demographic factors may influence frequency ratings at significant levels. School level, school size, and satisfaction with support affected frequency ratings of support domains and factors. While teaching position did not influence importance ratings, it did have an impact on Emotional and Value Support frequencies with General Education teachers reporting higher frequencies of these supports than their Special Education peers. Years of teaching significantly influenced only Information Support frequencies, with earlier career teachers reporting higher frequencies of this type of support than their colleagues with more years of experience. One potential explanation for this difference is that there are now mentoring programs and supports in place for new teachers based on studies about teacher needs (Whitaker, 2003); however, there may be an assumption that veteran teachers do not need these same supports.

## **Research Question Four: Are there differences in the importance ratings of teachers and the frequency ratings?**

### **How often are teachers receiving the most important supports?**

I found slight variations in the order of specific supports by importance and frequency. For instance, showing confidence in teaching practices was rated as the most important support, but was the third most frequent. Showing fairness in evaluations was the most frequent support, but teachers rated it as the third most important support. While five administrative support behaviors aligned with importance and need, the other supports were within a three to four ranking difference. This was consistent among all groups of teachers.

More significant findings were the differences in the levels of importance and frequency for each support, dimension, and factor. There were also significant differences in overall ratings of importance and frequency. In general, teachers rated importance higher than frequency at all levels. These findings were consistent with the findings of Littrell, et al. (1994), in which they found a gap in the levels of support teachers reported needing and receiving. One plausible explanation for this could be that a better definition of teacher needs is necessary so that administrators know how to support teachers more effectively. More research could be conducted to examine why differences exist.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

There are several limitations to this study worth considering. First, the study results were limited to one state (i.e., South Carolina). I emailed surveys to teachers in November and December of 2020. During this time, many school districts were using alternative ways to instruct students. These differences could have potentially changed



the support needs of students, although instructional modality was not found to have a significant impact on importance or frequency ratings of support.

In addition, the email addresses obtained from the SCDE included many emails that were either incorrect or were returned through the email system. This may have affected participation. In analyzing returned emails, I found that many were college or university accounts. This may have affected the response rate of teachers with 0-5 years of teaching experience as they accounted for 12.15% of completed surveys.

Future research could focus on more in-depth statistical analysis and other psychometric evidence. This could include invariance testing across demographic group and criterion validity by including another well-developed instrument. Other statistical analysis options would be to use multiple regression to consider all factors together. This steps would lead to a greater understanding of support needs as whole and how different groups perceive importance and frequency.

Future research could examine why there continues to be a gap between support behavior importance and frequency. Administrators could be surveyed to examine their own importance and frequency ratings as compared to how their teachers rate them. Since administrative support is sited as a mitigating factor for teacher retention (e.g., Boe, 2006, Billingsley, 1998), a next step may be adding a question about intent to stay in their current role. This would allow for analysis between support satisfaction and retention.

Implications of this research are important to the practices of South Carolina administrators. A more complete understanding of teacher needs could be developed using the survey results from this study and then exploring the meaning and intent behind some of the practices. For instance, teachers in this study did not report high value for

the support of developing collegial relationships. While this is an area that many administrators focus on developing a strong community. This could be explored through future research as the Value and Logistical Factors of support are explored more fully.

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## **APPENDIX A: MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT**

### **MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE South Carolina DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND JENNIFER WATSON**

This agreement is made and entered into by and between the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) and Jennifer Watson (Researcher), collectively the “parties,” and establishes the procedures relating to an exchange of information between the parties.

The SCDE is a public agency and its duties include conducting research to identify or develop the best education practices to be used in public schools. Researcher is a PhD student performing an educator survey and is eligible for receipt of educator emails to determine administrative support needs.

Various elements of the data maintained by the SCDE is protected by the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552 et seq. For that reason Researcher agrees that she will:

- (1) use the email addresses only for her dissertation survey project;
- (2) not use under any circumstances the email addresses for commercial purposes nor will she transfer the email addresses to anyone else;
- (3) share her survey results with the SCDE;

(4) destroy the email addresses after she completes the research;

(5) inform the SCDE when the email addresses are destroyed.

The SCDE is not required to agree with or endorse the conclusions or results of the survey.

The Researcher acknowledges that the breach of this agreement or its part may result in irreparable and continuing damage to the SCDE for which money damages may not provide adequate relief. In the event of a breach, intended or accidentally or threatened breach of this agreement by the Researcher, the SCDE, in addition to any other rights and remedies available to the SCDE at law or in equity, may be entitled to preliminary and permanent injunctions to enjoin and restrain the breach or threatened breach.

The terms and conditions of this agreement may only be amended by mutual written consent of both the SCDE and the Researcher and the Researcher shall not assign its respective rights or obligations under this agreement without prior written consent of the SCDE. The rights and obligations of each party under this agreement shall inure to the benefit of and shall be binding upon that party and its respective successors and assigns.

The SCDE and the Researcher represent and warrant that they are legally entitled to enter into this agreement.

Either party may cancel this agreement at any time for cause or may cancel without cause on thirty-day (30) written notice.

This confidential data release and use agreement will become effective once the SCDE

and the Researcher have both signed it and it shall remain in effect until terminated or cancelled by one of the parties or upon destruction of the email addresses.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties have executed this agreement effective upon last dated signature.

South Carolina Department of Education

Researcher

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
State Superintendent Molly M. Spearman

BY: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX B: SAMPLE SURVEY

### SECTION 1 - DEMOGRAPHICS

Your current job title \*

- ☐ General Education Teacher (Less than half your students have IEPs)
- ☐ Special Education Teacher (More than half your students have IEPs)

Your current school level \*

- ☐ Traditional Elementary School Level (K-5)
- ☐ Traditional Middle School Level (6-8)
- ☐ Traditional High School Level (9-12)
- ☐ Other

Your years in education (as a teacher): \*

- ☐ 0-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11-20 years
- ☐ 21+

List your areas of certification \*

Size of your school \*

- ☐ Less than 550 students
- ☐ 551- 800 students
- ☐ 801-750 students
- ☐ 751-1000
- ☐ 1000+

Number of building- level administrators on your campus \*

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5+

School Location \*

- ☐ Rural Area
- ☐ Urban Area
- ☐ Suburban Area

How IMPORTANT is it that your building level administrator give you this type of support? \*

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely
1. Supporting my collaboration efforts with my colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Clarifying my role in the school and among my team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Understanding my work with my students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Sharing legislative updates and initiatives with staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Allowing my input when discussing my performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Providing clear communication about the school mission	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Setting a clear standard of expectations for everyone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Encouraging me to continue learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Showing confidence in my actions as a teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Having conversations about performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How FREQUENTLY does your building level administrator give you this type of support? \*

	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
1. Supporting my collaboration efforts with my colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Clarifying my role in the school and among my team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Understanding my work with my students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Sharing legislative updates and initiatives with staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Allowing my input when discussing my performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Providing clear communication about the school mission	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Setting a clear standard of expectations for everyone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Encouraging me to continue learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Showing confidence in my actions as a teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Having conversations about performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

performance				
11. Showing understanding of my practices in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Showing an appreciation for my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Speaking to me (casually)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Sharing information about different learning opportunities outside of the school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Handling any student discipline problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Enforcing school rules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Providing professional development opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Coaching me when I need it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Showing fairness in my evaluation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Recognizing my accomplishments publically	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Providing on-going constructive feedback	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Establishing a social network to support collegial relationships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Showing understanding of my practices in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Showing an appreciation for my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Speaking to me (casually)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Sharing information about different learning opportunities outside of the school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Handling any student discipline problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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17. Providing professional development opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Coaching me when I need it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Showing fairness in my evaluation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Recognizing my accomplishments publically	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Providing on-going constructive feedback	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Establishing a social network to support collegial relationships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Including my input into decision making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Providing planning time for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Providing clear communication of the district goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Communicating teacher needs to others in the district	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Setting a tone for acceptance and understanding among teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. Sharing information between different groups in the school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. Listening to me and encouraging me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. Providing curriculum for my classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. Providing needed materials for my classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. Assisting with lesson development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Including my input into decision making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Providing planning time for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Providing clear communication of the district goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Communicating teacher needs to others in the district	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Setting a tone for acceptance and understanding among teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. Sharing information between different groups in the school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. Listening to me and encouraging me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. Providing curriculum for my classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. Providing needed materials for my classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. Assisting with lesson development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>