Combating Teacher Turnover Through Teacher Development in a Collaborative Culture of Teacher Leadership

Nina M. Johnson
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COMBATING TEACHER TURNOVER THROUGH TEACHER DEVELOPMENT IN A
COLLABORATIVE CULTURE OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

A Dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the Department of Leadership and Counselor Education
The University of Mississippi

by
NINA M. JOHNSON

August 2023
ABSTRACT

This applied action research with program evaluation aimed to determine if teacher-led professional development and empowerment initiatives such as the Teacher Leader Collaborative (TLC) contributed to a group of teachers' efficacy and professional growth to reduce teacher turnover of English Language Arts (ELA) teachers at Bernard Williams Middle School (BWMS). Each year the middle school has a turnover trend in the ELA department. As a result, sustainable school improvement efforts have waned, and teachers have had limited access to professional growth initiatives because of these transitions. The outcome has led to student achievement challenges. Therefore, this applied research study comprises two components: self-directed professional development and teacher-leader collaboratives. The applied research aims to develop empowering working conditions to retain 60% of ELA teachers at BWMS. It explored an empowerment retention strategy and its impact on the professional growth and collective efficacy of ELA teachers to retain them as teacher leaders at BWMS. The data was collected using surveys, interviews, observational notes, and student benchmark data. The findings confirm the benefits of such an initiative, as it assisted educators in making instructional decisions, created a positive work community, and increased student achievement. Teachers were adamant about providing suggestions and improving the program. However, increased collective efficacy did not result in meeting the program’s goal.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to God for giving me the grace to finish. Most importantly, I dedicate this dissertation in memory of my father, William Bernard Massey, and father-in-love, Charles Johnson. Both men demonstrated how the simple things in life when helping others, leave an imprint in this world. I thank them for encouraging me to further my education and being love in service to others. Your legacies live on.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Dr. Jill Cabrera: I would like to thank you for everything. Your support and unwavering guidance helped me press through.

To Dr. Douglas Davis: Thank you for the opportunity and for being a listening ear.

To Dr. Mark Deschaine: Thank you for your insight and enthusiasm.

To Dr. Angus Mungal: Thank you for consistently challenging me to dig deeper and learn more.

To Dr. Dennis Bunch: Thank you for your ingenious guidance and statistical know-how.

To Dr. Tom Brady: Thank you for your perspective and encouragement.

To my District Administrator: I thank you for your grace and the opportunity to realize my dream.

To the courageous staff of teachers and leaders at BWMS who gave insight and shared in the heart of this study, I give you all of the respect, honor, and appreciation you deserve.

To the rest of my family and friends, I am in awe of how much you put into play to help make this adventure possible. Thank you for sacrificing to give me what I needed to make this happen.

To the irreplaceable cohort six members. Thank you for never letting me quit.

To my moms, Shirley Massey and Regina Johnson, thank you for your prayers and love.

To my husband, Carlos Johnson, I give thanks and appreciation for your patience, understanding, encouragement, and love while writing. This one was for us!
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Teacher turnover is referred to as a consistent change of teachers from one year to the next (Sorensen & Ladd, 2020). This turnover affects teacher attrition which entails the percentage of teachers who leave the education profession altogether (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). An increased teacher turnover rate can negatively affect a school, and its students as it interrupts school improvement efforts, and the school incurs a monetary cost for replacing teachers. Additionally, high turnover in a particular subject area can limit the quality and effectiveness of the instruction students can experience. When experienced teachers leave and are replaced by teachers with fewer years of experience and content knowledge, students' performance suffers (Sorensen & Ladd, 2020). Teacher turnover also affects teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about their ability to improve student achievement. Although teacher turnover is not a new problem, its effects are more prevalent in specific areas of the United States, specifically in hard-to-staff schools.

Statement of the Problem

Teacher turnover concerns the English Language Arts (ELA) department at Bernard Williams Middle School (BWMS) because students need help to attain proficiency in ELA on high-stakes assessments as teachers leave the school and profession each year. When ELA teachers leave, they take their knowledge, trusting relationships, community partnerships, background knowledge of the students and their families, as well as collegial collaborations to improve teaching and to learn with them. This struggle has caused the school to confront the various reasons for teacher departures and implement strategies to retain teachers in ELA.
Therefore, this study focused first on the causes of teacher turnover and attrition. Next, the researcher examined and implemented an action plan using suggested teacher development and engagement strategies to retain ELA teachers at BWMS. Finally, a program evaluation was used to assess the program’s action plan.

**Causation of Exodus**

While school closures, teacher shortages, and increased demands on educators have forced some teachers to leave the profession, some people have decided teaching is not the profession to enter (Barth et al., 2016; Robinson et al., 2022). For example, sitting at the dinner table in a typical restaurant, sorority sisters discuss their jobs to get to know each other. One of the younger sisters expressed her initial desire to become a teacher. However, she quickly changed her mind as she saw her mother, an educator, come home from work stressed by the additional demands and long work hours. The young sorority sister’s mother complained about her work being overwhelming daily. Her mother’s dissatisfaction was enough to help her change her mind about becoming an educator. She chose to enter another profession, as education seemed to be a stressful career field, complying with the ever-increasing mandates and regulations magnified by the coronavirus (COVID), where teachers needed to learn and implement new technological methods with little to no prior training.

**Professional Disposition**

Not only did this sorority sister feel this way, but many other young people like her similarly perceived the educational profession as unbearable. Effective teacher policies aim to accomplish the following three main goals: attracting talented potential teachers, retaining teachers, and developing effective teachers (OECD, 2018). In doing so, forecasting who will enter the profession is common practice. To analyze the state of attracting talent in education, a
review from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) provided insights regarding high school students who expected to teach after graduating. For example, 15-year-old students from across the globe who reported wanting to enter the teaching profession declined from five percent in 2006 to 4.2% in 2015 (OECD, 2018). This perception is also indicated by a more than 30% decline in student enrollment in traditional education preservice programs and a decline in students completing alternative programs, according to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) (Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019; Will, 2022a, 2022b).

The second goal of retaining teachers has also posited a problem. Higher-performing teacher candidates often enter but do not remain in the profession as teachers (OECD, 2018). The Market Data Retrieval (2022) report captured descriptive perceptions of teachers, and the message was prolific. As one teacher stated,

If we could teach and be trusted to do our jobs as professionals… it would make a difference. As it is, there is so much PD, meetings, committees, paperwork…and way too many hours of our own time and spending our own money for the classroom…no time or energy left for your family. (Market Data Retrieval, 2022, p. 21)

In another report studying the causes of a decreased commitment of teachers to the profession, only 10% of current teachers indicated strongly recommending the teaching profession to upcoming young people (Market Data Retrieval, 2022). Education has lost its attractiveness as a new profession while also becoming even less attractive to educators already in the field.

The third goal of developing effective teachers requires professional development (PD) (Guskey, 2002). Effective PD is “structured professional learning that results in changes to teacher knowledge and practices and [improves] student learning outcomes” (Darling-Hammond
et al., 2017, p. 2). However, the same PISA report conveyed teachers’ desire to participate in (PD) but expressed the lack of time available during the school day (OECD, 2018). As a result, teachers must use time outside of the school day to hone their craft. Additional work hours outside the school day can lead to job dissatisfaction and create teacher work-life imbalances (Market Data Retrieval, 2022).

This disposition makes recruitment and sustainability of highly qualified teachers difficult. According to Darling-Hammond and Podolsky (2019), “When recruitment is difficult, many children are often taught by individuals who have not completed - or often even started - preparation for teaching” (p. 5). The supply of highly qualified teachers is lower than the demand from school districts, leading to teacher shortages (Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019). Therefore, investing in teachers is the bedrock of effectively improving teaching and learning as teachers greatly impact student achievement, school culture and climate, and school operations, and influence students’ lives. Teachers influence what and how students learn, as teaching consists of more than numerical values. Although content knowledge gaps may exist, relationships, efficacy, and continuous learning are simultaneously crucial to teacher and student growth.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, educational leaders faced old and new challenges when schools closed their doors without scripted solutions (Barth et al., 2016; Harris & Jones, 2020; Robinson et al., 2022). These leaders were in limbo on state education departments for answers and direction. The state departments of education were waiting on the governors, and the governors waited for advice from state and federal health agencies about the next steps. In this top-down response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the public and teachers became restless with the agencies’ lack of action. As a result, parents and community members began creating and
investing in alternative modes to educate children with options such as learning pods, homeschooling, hiring private tutors, using a voucher system for an open school district, or enrolling their children in a private school altogether (Deschaine, 2021). In the COVID-19 era, education was on the cusp of change as people questioned if the everyday operations and pathways of the past were best for the present (Harris & Jones, 2020). The six mentioned pathways for future schooling included the bureaucratic/top-down school system, extended private schools, core social centers, targeted learning centers, de-schooling, learning networks, and teacher exodus, which leads to a school system “meltdown” (Walden, 2009). These predications of school organizations exist in some form in society today.

In retrospect, Walden (2009) declared teachers face physical and mental adversity when schools close their doors due to an educational system “meltdown.” The school closures brought about by COVID-19 nearly reflected the emergence of all six pathways. Teachers were waiting in limbo for direction as leaders had to shift from focused visions and constant relationship-building to relying heavily on responsive leadership (Harris & Jones, 2020). Once teachers were given instructions, they adapted teaching methods to provide students with virtual and hybrid learning opportunities during these closures. Implementing these innovations rapidly and without the ability to properly train and effectively plan for the transition created additional pressures for leaders and teachers (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020; Harris & Jones, 2020). These changes increased teachers’ workload as they took on the responsibility of acquiring new learning to provide virtual and hybrid education. As a result of the increasing workload, teachers are leaving because of experiencing burnout (Harris & Jones, 2020).

Consequently, teachers incur more stress and anxiety, influencing their desire to leave the educational profession (Fullard, 2021; Gerald, 2019; Hanover Research, 2022; Jotkoff, 2022;
Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021). This trend in K-12 public education indicates a problem with the rising teacher attrition rate, as 77% of teachers feel “somewhat or extremely stressed” (Hanover Research, 2022). This problem has been consistently similar in other countries. In the United Kingdom, Fullard (2021) found that teachers’ intention to leave the profession increased each summer, with up to 21% intending to leave in 2021, up to 29% planning to leave in 2022, and potentially up to 43% intending to go by the summer of 2025. The top-down response to the COVID-19 pandemic also influenced many teachers’ desires to leave the profession; as a teacher survey indicated, 71% of UK teachers responded with discontent with the government’s response to COVID-19 and expressed their decreasing motivation to continue teaching (Fullard, 2021).

If time does not allow teachers to grow, teacher turnover and attrition pose a problem in the Mississippi Delta, where black and brown children in rural communities are served. Teacher turnover poses a problem explicitly in the region of the school site and the school’s ELA subject area. High-stakes testing contributes to low morale, which can lead to increased teacher turnover of effective teachers (Longo-Schmid, 2016). Therefore, there is a need for essential change in the field of K-12 education to end the increasing exodus of educators and attract a new generation of innovators to the profession by providing teachers with voice, agency, and action.

**Trends in the United States**

Teacher attrition has increased nationally by three percent due to the teachers’ turnover rate, which accounted for 125,000 new teacher openings just three years ago (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Sutcher et al., 2019). Although Goldhaber and Theobald (2022) examined the impact of COVID on teacher attrition and found teacher attrition rates within the standard range of pre-COVID attrition rates, there was an increase in teacher attrition and turnover. This indicates a trend of increasing turnover, but not to the degree of a national crisis (Goldhaber & Theobald,
However, the Bureau of Labor and Statistics reported 567,000 fewer educators in the American education systems post-COVID (Jotkoff, 2022; Kamenetz, 2022). In the same Hanover Research report on trends in K-12 public education, 33% of teachers reported leaving the field within two years. Of the three million teachers who took a National Education Association’s (NEA) public survey in January 2022, 55% of educators expressed their desire to leave the profession (Kamenetz, 2022; Will, 2022c). Previously reported in pre-COVID years, only 44% of new teachers would leave the profession within five years (Hanover Research, 2019). However, this problem increases in the southern region of the United States, indicating a regional variation in teacher turnover in the United States (Nguyen, 2021).

Moreover, minorities represent an even higher proportion of teachers who exit the profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Grissom & Keiser, 2011; Ingersoll et al., 2019). Recruitment policies have been used to diversify the teaching field to assign minority teachers in minority-serving, hard-to-staff schools (Ingersoll et al., 2019). Suppose a minority teacher wanted to get a teaching certification through their school. In that case, they could enroll in an alternative certification program which would be paid for by the school with the contingency of a two-to-three-year commitment to remain at the school after receiving an alternative license (Ingersoll et al., 2019). As a result of teaching in schools with high turnover and attaining a teaching license through an alternative certification program, recruited minority teachers to account for higher turnover rates and are 25% more likely to leave than those who attain teaching certification through a traditional education program to leave (Ingersoll et al., 2019). Furthermore, the working conditions of a school are statistically significant to teacher turnover. A subsection of working conditions at school is administrative support or the lack thereof. It strongly predicts teacher turnover (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019).
A total of 14 out of 46 teachers, which equated to 30% of the teaching staff, left their positions at my previous school at the end of the year (Educator, personal communication, June 2020) as more mandated requirements without additional time, training, and resources left teachers dissatisfied and stressed. This issue was magnified when I transferred to a new school as an assistant principal. The school was in a rural, minority area in Mississippi. According to the attestation documentation of my current school, the overall percentage of inexperienced teachers increased from 13% in 2021 to 51% in 2022 (School leader, personal communication, September 12, 2022). Moreover, only one ELA teacher out of six had more than two years of experience teaching in the Joliet Will County School District (JWCSD). Two additional teachers had experience teaching ELA in other school districts. Therefore, the homegrown teacher with more experience was familiar with the hidden cultural curriculum, or the happenings of school which changed students’ values, behaviors, and beliefs outside of academics (Glatthorn, 1987), and academic school improvement efforts and was in a stressful position to mentor all others. This situation is too familiar in southern minority schools and indicates a high turnover in the ELA department.

The seemingly surmounting pressures of the profession represent several factors leading to teacher exodus. These factors are increased anxiety, depression, unfavorable working conditions, testing accountability, lack of administrative support, autonomy, respect, promotional opportunities, and additional job responsibilities (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). This exodus reflects burnout and teacher exhaustion as teachers try to fulfill multiple roles because of teacher shortages within their districts and schools. The National Education Association President, Becky Pringle, spoke to the uncommon teacher shortages in every
profession category as a significant alarm and declared the need to show educators “our collective respect” (Jotkoff, 2022, p. 1). Other stakeholders have suggested actions by district and school leaders to recruit and retain teachers by supporting their well-being.

A Hanover Research (2019) infographic describes methods that include seeking the input of teachers through surveys, focus groups, and interviews with new and existing teachers regarding adequate support and school improvement initiatives to be implemented by principals to retain teachers. Once teachers have input, engaging teachers in decision-making and providing a collaborative process to monitor and evaluate their efforts will indicate which strategies increase the school’s ability to retain them (Hanover Research, 2019). The daily practice includes:

- Creating a positive school culture
- Providing teachers with the needed materials
- Improving working conditions
- Creating space for meaningful collegial, collaborative relationships
- New teacher support through mentoring and induction programs
- Offering practical and continuous professional development
- Recognition of teachers’ contribution to the school’s improvement
- Active and visible leadership. (Hanover Research, 2019)

By implementing or improving these strategies, leaders need to engage and empower teachers through intangible benefits, their development, and schoolwork to retain general and minority teachers specifically (Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019; Gerald, 2019; Grissom & Keiser, 2011; Hanover Research, 2019; Sorensen & Ladd, 2020; Torres, 2020). Teacher retention efforts should be specifically tailored to meet the needs of a specific school within
positively structured working conditions. To address this concern, one must consider how “teacher retention does not have a one-size-fits-all solution, and that each school division and individual school must work purposefully to devise plans to retain its most effective teachers” (Holmes et al., 2019, p. 1).

**Background to the Problem**

As a new assistant principal at the school, I have watched the behaviors and motivators of the staff and students at BWMS. Therefore, my perspectives influence the ideas throughout my discussion. Pineville County (PC) is a rural area with around 9,810 residents in 2020 in comparison to 9,988 in 2019 and is known for opportunities for economic development due to its location. Of the total residents in PC, 99.6% are American citizens, compared to 97.8% in 2019. The city of Pineville had an estimated 1180 residents in 2020 compared to 1155 in 2019. About 97.8% of the county’s population were American-born citizens in 2019 and 99.6% in 2020, as seen in Table 1 (see Appendix A) (Data USA, n.d.). As a result, the number of county residents has declined, and the number of city residents has increased.

In PC, Blacks represented 80.3% of the population in 2020 compared to only 78.4% in 2019. All other races, which include White non-Hispanics, represented roughly 18.6% of the population in 2020, and multiracial residents made up less than one percent and are considered a minority in the area. There was a percent change from 2019 to 2020. Whites represented 19% of the population, Asians (non-Hispanics) represented 1.4%, and multi-racial represented less than one-fourth of a percent of the population in PC, as presented in Table 2 (see Appendix A) (Data USA, n.d.). All racial groups are leaving the county; however, Whites and Hispanics are moving into the city but are not enrolling their children in the public school district. This population shift could be a result of the economic shifts in family income.
Nevertheless, it is unique, offering a relatively small town/homegrown atmosphere, access to city resources in a nearby metropolitan area, and a reasonable commute for the working class. However, most of the community’s Black families live under the money income threshold used by the Census Bureau, are from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and represent 26.6% of the population. This income threshold varies depending on the make-up and size of the family. This threshold is confirmed by The Office of Management and Budget Statistical Policy Directive 14 (Bureau, 2021). These individuals are females between the ages of 25 to 34, males between the ages of six to 11, and 35 to 44. Blacks represent the largest group of people in the community living below the poverty line (Data USA, n.d.). This socioeconomic issue provides barriers to community growth.

Although education is the second largest industry in the community, there are effects of a low-income population. For example, in PC, the average income decreased to $34,485 in 2020 from $39,370 in 2019. The average income of Pineville residents was $39,716 in 2020, down from $51,607 the previous year, and is less than the average income of Mississippi residents, which is $46,511, as displayed in Table 1 (see Appendix A). It is also less than the $64,994 average income of the United States (Data USA, n.d.; National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). The average income has declined in both the city and county from 2019 to 2020, making it difficult to attract and maintain employees. Low-income status challenges getting individuals to come back to the community after leaving for college or drawing new people to the area. For example, after the school’s administrators reviewed the Attestation Form, a document completed to verify teacher and staff qualifications for Federal Programs, we noticed a change in the number of inexperienced teachers from 2021 (13.7%) to 2022 (51.7%). Inexperienced teachers in this document are defined as having fewer than three years of experience. This means several
teachers left the school between 2020 to 2022. This analysis helped the administration team pose questions as to why teachers were deciding to leave the school and explore retention strategies to maintain a balance of new and experienced staff. Additionally, four of the six ELA teachers also had alternative teaching certifications.

Although the poverty rate of 31.7% in 2020 was high, the cost of living is relatively low. Home prices average out to about $101,800, which is low compared to the state and national average (Data USA, n.d.). Because lower-cost housing is available in this area, many families from impoverished backgrounds settle in this community. The opposite is true for foreign-born residents. These individuals are leaving the area as the population has changed from 2.7% foreign-born citizens in 2019 to less than one percent in 2020 (Data USA, n.d.). White residents are moving into the area but are not enrolling their children in the county school district. Hispanic families are transitioning into the community. The migration of families into this community brings with them additional student needs. The community and school’s well-rounded staff must be equipped to provide for students’ holistic needs, which is challenging if staff members’ well-being is not nurtured in an organized and supportive environment.

Table 1

*Population Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pineville County 2019</th>
<th>Pineville County 2020</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Pineville 2019</th>
<th>Pineville 2020</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>9,988</td>
<td>9,810</td>
<td>-1.81%</td>
<td>1155</td>
<td>1180</td>
<td>+2.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Born</td>
<td>97.8%</td>
<td>99.6%</td>
<td>+1.8%</td>
<td>98.4%</td>
<td>98.5%</td>
<td>+.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Income</td>
<td>$39,370</td>
<td>$34,485</td>
<td>-12.4%</td>
<td>$51,607</td>
<td>$39,716</td>
<td>-23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

Racial Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pineville County 2019</th>
<th>Pineville County 2020</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Pineville 2019</th>
<th>Pineville 2020</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
<td>80.3%</td>
<td>-1.9%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>24.70%</td>
<td>-10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>-.04%</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
<td>69.50%</td>
<td>+11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>5.51%</td>
<td>+1.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-1.4%</td>
<td>.60%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.25%</td>
<td>.12%</td>
<td>-.13%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>.25%</td>
<td>+.03</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Pineville has recently undergone business negotiations to bring additional attractions to the area and generate additional revenue modes. Furthermore, these business negotiations explain how the school district will receive financial and human capital from the economic and business industries. In contrast, the new endeavors could also push current education professionals into other sectors due to higher wages and compensation as businesses move into the area. For example, several manufacturing, aerospace, and oil and gas companies have invested in the area, in addition to the large agricultural presence. This affects the school districts’ ability to staff and prepare students for the future and the workforce.

School Site

Within Pineville, BWMS is located on the side of a local highway in one of the newest buildings in the JWCSD. Located near BWMS and the Bernard Williams Career and Technical Center (BWCTC), BWMS is the primary transition point for the three elementary feeder schools within the school district. Students matriculate through BWMS and BWHS; some graduates return as educators and staff members. Two of the three administrators were born and raised in the community. The principal was able to share historical context because she was a product of
the district’s educational system. The assistant principal was also a product of the community; his father was a beloved science teacher in the school district. Several teachers also had roots in the area. The staff was familiar with students’ needs because they had relationships with the students’ parents. Many of the teachers attended school with the students’ parents. These relationships indicate the teachers’ commitment to the school and the students.

As former students of BWMS, teachers often reminisce over their educational experiences, and a sense of pride and community rings true in their new roles as teachers and administrators. Students walk through the school doors looking for belonging and purpose. The school and its agents act as catalysts to help students recognize their purpose through intentional instruction and strategic organizational practices. One area of collective pride in Pineville is seen in the sense of community among the residents. This concept is reflected within the county’s public school district’s vision, with all six schools focused on teaching, learning, and safety. As a result, the high school graduation rate of Pineville residents is 86.4% compared to the state rate of 88.4% (Mississippi Succeeds Report Card, 2021). The teachers serve many students from low socioeconomic backgrounds with single-parent households. Most (56%) of the residents live in apartment complexes in highly impoverished neighborhoods. Only 26.9% of families own homes compared to 72.7% of families renting a home. Additionally, 52.3% of families receive government food assistance (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.).

BWMS is a Title I School. Title 1 is a federal grant provided to local educational agencies which serve a large percentage of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds to meet their needs (US Department of Education, 2018). Staffing concerns exist, considering the demographics of the teaching staff at BWMS. Title I schools have a higher teacher turnover rate than schools not receiving Title I funds (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The report
also showed a greater teacher turnover rate for schools serving a majority of students of color, with fewer years of experience and more teachers with alternative certification pathways to teacher licensure (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

At BWMS, Blacks represent 97.4% of the student body and 93% of the staff. I provide instructional leadership to approximately 10 teachers: six ELA, three Social Studies, and one inclusion teacher. The school employs roughly 47 staff members, two assistant principals, one principal, one school counselor, a behavior specialist, and an English Language (EL) teacher shared throughout the district. A school nurse provides healthcare to students and staff through the community partnership with a local health clinic housed at the middle school. There are 37 female staff members and 10 male staff members. The school operates on 50-minute periods for sixth through eighth grades. Each departmental team meets with the assistant principal or principal every Thursday in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to discuss leading and lagging student data. The administrators prepare and facilitate each departmental and data meeting in PLCs. The PLCs are facilitated as news update meetings to ensure everyone knows expectations, where students are, and the action plan to move students forward. As a team, we have reflected on this practice. This approach to PLC meetings is not centered on teacher empowerment and teacher-led innovation sessions since it is an administratively led practice.

Moreover, professional development is still structured in all-inclusive, one-stop workshops. It is pedagogical in structure and focuses on providing instruction to teachers. As a result, teachers only sometimes take ownership and engage in the learning process due to being overwhelmed and needing more autonomy (Davis & Fowler, 2020). Although teachers attain professional capital when engaged in autonomous learning processes, Hargreaves and Fullan (2020) indicated, “professional capital is about teachers having more independence from
bureaucracies, but more interdependence with parents and each other. It’s about open and collaborative professionalism, not individually autonomous professionalism” (p. 331). Lacking autonomy has caused some teachers to move on to new professions. Although, over the past year, this norm of the teacher as a pedagogical learner is changing.

**Justification of the Problem**

Utilizing Deming’s improvement cycle – researching, planning, implementing, and evaluating best practices – entails leaving no child behind at BWMS (Deming, 2000). The goal is for each child to experience effective instruction to ensure the “growth of all students,” as outlined in the school’s vision. The shared work entails developing and maintaining a highly qualified, motivated, and innovative professional staff to support instruction and accelerate student learning. Although teachers have worked through an educational crisis, the field is still stressful, and more pressures from rapid transitions and additional demands contribute to more teacher exoduses. The increase in teacher attrition and low student performance has an even greater impact on schools with higher economically disadvantaged students (Grissom & Bartanten, 2019; Miller, 2013; Mulford et al., 2004). These districts cannot fill some positions and must determine new ways to educate students. Staffing inexperienced teachers justifies the need to establish teacher collaboratives to influence practice, reduce stress, and engage in the school’s work.

There are several specific reasons to address teacher attrition. Retaining teachers and maintaining a balanced of new and experienced staff is essential. This stability helps to ensure that all students receive a high-quality education to prepare for life in general and develop skills to be productive citizens. Therefore, addressing teacher attrition is vital since it contributes to teacher shortages (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017), affects the labor markets
(Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019), interrupts school improvement efforts, contributes to hiring more inexperienced teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2021; Sorensen & Ladd, 2020), affects student learning (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019), and impedes meaningful collegial collaboration, and limits development. However, overall, teacher attrition matters because it explicitly harms student learning. Sorensen and Ladd (2020) examined the hidden effects of teacher turnover. Their findings reveal notable and lasting “negative consequences for the quality of the instructional staff and student achievement” (Sorensen & Ladd, 2020, p. 1). Not only did the transitions impact student performance, but they also impacted school operations and implementations. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond’s (2019) study found teacher turnover higher among teachers attaining alternative teacher certification. Many of these characteristics are attributed to BWMS.

In 2022, BWMS began the year without being fully staffed. There were three subject area vacancies in ELA, math, and science. Three teacher assistants (TA) taught subject area classes through emergency certification. This type of teacher certification was used to help teacher candidates who have not met the state requirements or schools with unfilled vacancies obtain a one to three-year provisional license. One assistant was issued an emergency license to teach the math-tested area. This paraprofessional was in the process of completing her alternative program. In addition, an English major was hired to teach ELA. Another TA managed the science classroom while a highly qualified teacher provided instruction via Zoom in the TA’s classroom, taking on a hybrid instructional format. Therefore, the eighth-grade science teacher provided instruction to eighth- and seventh-grade classes with a paraprofessional in the seventh-grade room to facilitate the teaching. This process in science continued for eight weeks. The principal searched the database for candidates continuously to no avail. She stated there were no
candidates for the open position (School leader, personal communication, October 5, 2022).

When the principal interviewed for a paraprofessional position, the candidates had a background in science. The principal moved to put the candidates into the science classroom to relieve the eighth-grade teacher as she became overwhelmed by taking on dual roles and responsibilities. This candidate did not return, and another teacher was hired the week of October 21, 2022.

Furthermore, I needed to teach sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade ELA classes for several entire school days due to teacher shortages and teacher absences. Although teacher positions are filled with candidates who may not be traditionally licensed, these individuals have their own skill sets and backgrounds, which can contribute to the group’s collective work.

As the instructional leader of the school’s ELA and Social Studies departments, I worked with passionate and motivated professional educators who wanted to explore best practices to increase student achievement. Due to most of the teachers being in their early years in the profession, this moment was a prime time to provide an atmosphere of continuous learning, considering the need to increase the capacity of some ELA teachers while providing opportunities for teacher autonomy and decision-making for others.

**Credentials**

One ELA teacher was endorsed with a five-year renewable English content knowledge license. There was one ELA teacher endorsed with a five-year renewable elementary education license. One teacher was endorsed with a five-year Social Studies license, which teaches ELA as a Learning Strategies teacher. The other three teachers had a three-year license endorsed in English; two taught ELA, and the other taught a learning strategies class. Ms. Blue began her second year in 2022. Mrs. Harold entered her fourth year in 2022. Ms. Tramble had less than a year of experience, and Ms. Flaggerton started her first year in 2022. Ms. Salizar was entering
her 16th year as an educator. As the years of experience indicated by teacher demographics in Table 3 (see Appendix A), there had been retention concerns in the ELA department at BWMS. Research on teacher productivity and effectiveness denotes how “on average, brand new teachers are less effective than those with some experience…” (Rice, 2010, p. 1). As a result of teacher turnover, the ELA department was an area of growth for the school and district. Suggestions to retain new and alternatively certified teachers from former research include collaboration with colleagues, mentor and administrator support, and collective efficacy influenced these teachers to stay and develop instructional strategies (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Therefore, consistent training and collaboration assisted in garnering the capacity of each teacher and helping them develop their craft.

**Table 3**

*Teacher Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Licensure</th>
<th>Certification</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Blue</td>
<td>1.4 years</td>
<td>Secondary ELA</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Harold</td>
<td>4.4 years</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Tramble</td>
<td>1.1 years</td>
<td>Secondary ELA</td>
<td>Alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Flaggerton</td>
<td>0 years</td>
<td>Secondary ELA</td>
<td>Alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Salizar</td>
<td>15.4 years</td>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Tudor</td>
<td>4.4 years</td>
<td>Secondary ELA</td>
<td>Alternative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: ELA = English Language Arts*

Our school is in a southern state. The majority of the teaching staff in ELA has earned an alternative teaching certification. As a result of the transitions of ELA teachers at BWMS, student proficiency scores continue to suffer. Of the 414 enrolled students at BWMS, roughly 97.41% of students enrolled are Black (Mississippi Department of Education Reports, n.d.).
Although student demographics have not changed, student accountability has experienced various changes over the years. In 2016, the state accountability rating BWMS was “D.” Due to a change in assessment, the school kept its “D” rating for the 2017 and 2018 school years. In 2019, the school attained a “C” accountability rating, as depicted in Table 4 (see Appendix A) (Mississippi Department of Education, 2017, 2018, 2019). Much of this improvement happened under the leadership of the school district’s conservator since taking over in 2015. A Conservator is appointed by the State Board of Education to lead a school district into a corrective action plan when the governor has declared a state of emergency in the school district according to the Mississippi Recovery School District policy found on MS Code §37-17-6.

The takeover resulted from the district violating 25 of the 31 school process standards. This is significant due to the educational interest of the students and staff in the school district. However, her leadership will end in December 2023 as the school district has achieved a “B” accountability rating. This shift in leadership can be attributed to some teacher turnover and teacher attrition; however, the interim superintendent worked with the people already working in the district. When the next transition takes place in 2023, what school improvement practices will remain in place, and who will continue to facilitate these efforts as the district creates working conditions to retain and attract educators?

Table 4

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA Proficiency</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: ELA = English Language Arts, MAAP = Mississippi Achievement Assessment Program*
As the only middle school in the school district, BWMS has made more strides by being temporarily removed from the Mississippi Department of Education’s (MDE) additionally targeted and supported improvement list and has gained an accountability rating of a “B” school. This requires a leader to achieve favorable results from high-stakes testing. Although the school has made remarkable strides, work is yet to be done. There is a need to research, plan, and implement effective reading interventions, as some students are reading at a first-grade level. For example, my heart broke after completing a diagnostic with a 14-year-old male student. This young man could not read word patterns with the vowel “u.” He struggled to read simple three-letter words such as “tut,” “mut,” and “nut.” After this reading attempt, this young man cried. At his age, his choices are limited.

A problem-solving initiative called a Teacher Leader Collaborative (TLC) would allow teachers to brainstorm specific action steps to assist this young man. Working together to provide continuous interventions to meet each child’s needs helps teachers develop their craft, use best practices, and attain leadership capacities. Unfortunately, other students face these challenges. Similar to this student, more students create an immediate need for teacher collaboration and innovation. If these students fall through the cracks, the kind of livelihood they will experience will be dismal because once they leave school, they are no longer protected in a school environment. These students’ life paths will be difficult if someone does not take up the mantle to address this dilemma with actionable change. If teachers are overwhelmed and do not believe in their ability to help students achieve, there will be more young men like the student I tested.

One area in which the school needs to focus is maintaining and growing proficient and advanced students in ELA. Additionally, growth in ELA is a relevant component of accountability. The goals are to increase ELA proficiency by 10% and give students a year or
more of growth to perform at proficient levels from year to year. In 2017-2018, only 18.4% of students scored proficient in ELA. Students had a 23.1% proficiency percentage in 2018-2019. However, in the 2020 and 2021 school years, ELA proficiency reverted to a 10% performance rate (Mississippi Department of Education, n.d.a; n.d.b; n.d.c). When analyzing ELA proficiency, paying specific attention to economically disadvantaged (ED) student subgroups is vital. These subgroups represent most of the school’s student population at BWMS and have sizable achievement gaps compared to their Caucasian, middle-class peers in neighboring districts.

Therefore, for this study, I focused on creating supportive working conditions where teachers are respected to seek new learning and develop new skills to help students succeed. This focus promoted collective efficacy as teachers improved their practice and student learning. Teachers need to be in an environment where they can transform from followers to leaders with the proper support, training, and opportunities (Johnson & Hackman, 2018). Leaders can empower teachers to help plan, articulate, and communicate shared academic goals for student learning. The constant involvement of leaders brings about an awareness of their teachers’ needs, skill sets, and motivations. The changes which need to occur should be identified through the collaborative leadership of teachers. Empowering teachers to construct and improve upon the operational and instructional activities garners the need for practical team-oriented problem-solving and evaluation as the results aid in building teachers’ efficacy, job satisfaction, and capacity (Davis & Fowler, 2020; Duyar et al., 2013; Katz & Shahar, 2015) to accelerate student learning. Determining how this change takes place should also rest with the collective decision-making of those who have developed their capacity to implement improvement efforts of teaching and learning- teacher leaders. It is time to rediscover our teachers’ resourcefulness.
according to their denoted strengths and communicate a level of trust and encouragement, which builds their efficacy and job satisfaction (Duyar et al., 2013).

**Significance of the Study for Audiences**

This research used program evaluation to assess the impact of implementing highly research-based strategies to address teacher attrition at BWMS. The focal point of this study was to determine the implications of creating space for meaningful collegial, collaborative relationships and offering practical and continuous professional development for the professional growth of sixth through eighth-grade ELA teachers to retain them at BWMS. Cultivating purposeful opportunities for growth and career advancement can motivate teachers to stay. Additionally, teachers who feel purposeful and positive support also feel a desire and commitment to remain in the profession. Fullan (2001) referred to this changed mindset and action as a shift from teaching to learning. This teacher leadership collaborative initiative includes collecting and analyzing data through observations, interviews, surveys, and documenting reflections which build collective teacher efficacy to retain teachers and improve student performance. This bottom-up leadership approach motivates teachers to come together to solve school improvement problems through collaborative practice and self-directed learning to be more effective educators (Price, 2020).

Leaders will need to foster new ways of working together as teachers learn to build collective efficacy when addressing old and new dilemmas which challenge their work. If leaders ignore the change, it could leave their schools in continuous unstable conditions as students and teachers choose more open alternative modes of education (Deschaine, 2021). The applied action research intended to explore the actions the JWSD and BWMS leaders could take to build collective teacher efficacy and empower them with opportunities to hone their craft while
developing leadership skills to address student learning gaps effectively. The focal point of the study explored the following elements: identifying teachers’ perceptions of leadership and their practice, providing self-selected professional development training, and establishing opportunities for teachers to utilize their training through collaborative teacher leadership practices. By understanding these elements, district and school leaders can map out how to empower teachers to thrive in their profession, leverage teachers’ capacities, and create career advancement paths for teachers which support their personalized goals and sustain their commitment to the field. Utilizing these approaches provides insight into combating the consequences of teacher exodus. The results will indicate the effectiveness and significance of the initiative. When teachers work in a collaborative culture, collaboration improves performance and retention.

As principal and teacher retention policies are adopted, the findings could further influence teacher turnover policies at the state, district, and school levels and inform leaders on how to structure openly self-managed teacher-leader collaboratives. This could be a strategy to maintain consistency in school improvement during teacher or leadership transitions. Furthermore, teachers will gain additional capacities and commit to their roles and responsibilities in the school improvement process. Increased teacher capacity and efficacy have one of the most significant impacts on student learning (Hattie & Clarke, 2018). This engagement will prepare teachers for improving teaching and learning and provide other opportunities for future leadership roles in school districts.

**Purpose Statement**

This applied action research study aimed to determine how teacher-led development and empowerment initiatives such as the TLC contribute to the efficacy and professional growth of a
group of teachers to reduce teacher turnover of ELA teachers at BWMS. For this study, teacher leaders continue teaching and participating in leadership activities. The action plan includes teachers participating in self-selected professional development via a professional development hub and bringing their expertise with them as they engage in reflective collaboratives during PLCs to improve and influence their colleagues’ best practices to solve school-based problems.

The data distributed and collected during the program evaluation phase of the action plan included quantitative descriptive statistics of teacher demographic data (years of experience, endorsements, if any) and six-point Likert scale teacher collective efficacy perception surveys analyzing the frequency of teachers’ perception responses regarding collective efficacy, their ability to lead, and their desire to lead (Akert & Martin, 2012) in the Fall of 2022-2023. The collected data examined the relationship between teachers’ backgrounds and the perceptions of their leadership abilities. A frequency distribution was conducted for each response. A percent change calculation was used to determine teachers’ motivation for leadership and professional training to monitor their growth and influence on their practice and peers. As teachers fulfill their leadership roles, their self-efficacy is expected to increase. Collective leadership has been the catalyst for bottom-up change, and this phenomenon has regained momentum. The school district and building leaders will understand the significance of the collective “power of us” leadership framework and its potential path to leadership succession.

Research Questions

This applied research was steered by two distinct concepts: how teacher leaders develop through collaborative practices (TLC) and what they contribute based on their capacity building (PD). The first set of research questions identified how engagement in professional development improves teacher practice. After building their capacity, the next set of research questions
determined how the collaborative process influences teacher practices. The last set of questions reflected on the evaluation of the program. The Professional Growth Rubric (PGS) guides the self-selected PD, and the teacher-leader collaborative provides collective leadership opportunities and protocols to engage teacher leaders in the change process to more pathways to formal leadership engagement. This reflection informs the research team and stakeholders of the action steps to create an environment for collaborative teacher leaders to engage in andragogy and heutagogy or adult and self-determined learning (Blaschke, 2019) and use their knowledge and influence to lead change in their school. Qualitative and quantitative data collection methods addressed the research questions. The following research questions were used to evaluate the conveyed findings of the action plan:

1. How did self-selected professional development achieve the program goals of changing teacher practice?
   a. How did self-selected professional development build teacher capacity?
   b. How did self-selected professional development improve collective teacher efficacy?

2. How did the development of a Teacher Leadership Collaborative achieve the program goals of changing teacher practice?
   a. How did the Teacher Leadership Collaborative build teacher capacity?
   b. How did the Teacher Leadership Collaborative improve collective teacher efficacy?

3. How did teachers' participation in self-directed professional development and the Teacher Leader Collaborative influence teachers to remain at the school?
4. In what ways can self-selected professional development and teacher-leader collaboration programs be improved?

The program evaluation utilized to measure the findings from these questions will be explained in detail in Chapter III.

**Overview of the Study**

Teachers must understand their vital role in maintaining BWMS school improvement efforts. Taking the initiative to lead these efforts is an essential aspect of sustainability and creates working conditions in which teachers remain engaged in the school’s work and the profession. Individuals who acknowledge their strengths and identify avenues to leverage them through continuous collaboration and improvement efforts reap personal and collective advantages. This action research consists of five chapters. Chapter I justifies the need to empower teachers as leaders and build collective efficacy to combat teacher attrition. Chapter II provides a historical perspective and research regarding teacher attrition and collaborative leadership, more specifically, teacher leadership. Chapter III presents an action plan developed by stakeholders to implement and evaluate empowerment practices to retain ELA teachers at BWMS. Chapter IV presents the data analysis of the program evaluation. Data interpretations, implications, and the following steps to further this research is conveyed in Chapter V.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Teacher turnover threatens the ability of a Local Education Agency (LEA) to provide a high-quality education for all students. If schools have the collective capacity to provide a competitive quality education for all students, teacher capacity-building and leadership development are necessary. Therefore, teacher policies and organizational structures are critical factors in shaping an environment of professional growth to ensure teachers are equipped with leadership opportunities, competencies, and confidence as reflective life-long learners and leaders who positively impact student learning. One such policy includes the Mississippi Educator Professional Growth System (PGS) (Mississippi Department of Education, n.d.).

The PGS (see Appendix B) is a tool developed by the Mississippi Department of Education to increase student learning through continuous feedback to teachers and administrators regarding their development. To improve their practice, “teachers need continuous feedback and high-quality learning experiences…” resulting in student learning (Mississippi Department of Education, n.d., p. 1). The purpose of the PGS rubric is to:

- Present teachers’ areas of strengths and weaknesses
- Guide teachers through reflective practices
- Highlight the goals and expectations of high-quality research-based practices
- Convey a shared understanding of priorities
- Improve teachers' influence on internal (students and colleagues) and external participants (community partners). (Mississippi Department of Education, n.d.)
Having a thorough understanding of the PGS, teachers can effectively engage in reflective cycles of observation and feedback. Using self-reflection, teachers can adjust and refine their practice throughout the year to enhance instructional decision-making. It is also a requirement of the state for administrators to provide teachers with cycles of feedback. However, in this study, the PGS is used as a tool by teachers to reflect on the various features of high-quality teaching and learning as they observe each other’s practice. This process consists of an ongoing systemic method to identify problems of practice and implement practical but effective research-based improvement strategies as teachers continue to hone their craft in today’s demanding workplace.

The increased workload is causing teachers to leave the profession (attrition) or their school (turnover). Teacher attrition constitutes teachers leaving the field of education altogether (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019), and teacher turnover equates to teachers consistently leaving their current school or district (Sorensen & Ladd, 2020). This literature review aims to understand how to combat teacher turnover in hard-to-staff schools through the collective leadership development of teachers in professional learning communities and professional development. The chapter is divided into three parts: a historical account of teacher turnover as it relates to determining an effective way to retain teachers is discussed in section one. The second section includes research on empowerment strategies related to professional development and teacher collaboration, building teachers' capacity, and leadership competencies. The final section of this chapter examines the behavioral influences of the empowerment strategies discussed in the second section. Gaining a greater understanding of the above topics may give greater insight into retaining teachers in hard-to-staff schools and establishing new pathways to collective leadership, which enhances teacher capacity, builds leadership
competency, and increases collective teacher efficacy at BWMS for this study. Additionally, this research can expand the organizational structure of schools by embedding leadership in the activities and functions of all teachers. The research can also provide insight for policies into succession pathways for administration.

**Turnover Trends**

Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) produced a report outlining the challenge of building and maintaining a team of high-quality teachers due to teacher attrition and turnover. As teachers leave the profession, their vacancies are only sometimes filled with teachers who have the knowledge, experience, or fortitude of the teacher who left. Often, the teachers who leave are not replaced in hard-to-staff schools leading to teacher shortages. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) used data from the national teacher survey to identify turnover trends. Their findings signify turnover as a major concern in specific content areas. In addition, other researchers studying teacher turnover found turnover trends occurred more so in regions servicing most students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Sorensen & Ladd, 2020).

Furthermore, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) found greater turnover in Title I schools. This turnover left LEAs with teacher shortages. Understaffed schools have to innovate to address staffing concerns. To gain a greater understanding of the problem at hand, Ingersoll et al. (2019) conducted a comparative study to examine the differences in retention among minority and nonminority teachers using statistical data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS). They found that minority teachers primarily staffed poverty-stricken schools with dismal working conditions. For this reason, the turnover rate of minority teachers was significantly higher than White teachers.
Turnover Factors

Darling-Hammond and Podolsky (2019) studied the factors contributing to the high teacher turnover of high-quality teachers in specific areas. It was found to be attributed to turnover to poor working conditions, underfunding schools, job dissatisfaction, minimal administrative support, testing accountability, lower salaries, and a lack of collaboration and voice. Sorensen and Ladd (2020) focused on the high cost of teacher turnover, leaving LEAs with myriad educational burdens. The focal point of their study was the impact teacher turnover had on the quality of education and instruction students would receive. The researchers used data from math and ELA middle school teachers in North Carolina from the 1990s to 2016 to examine the effects of teacher changes (exiting and entering). The historical results stated in the study revealed a high attrition rate for teachers with higher licensure scores using the value-added model as the unit of measurement.

However, Sorensen and Ladd (2020) focused on the effects of teachers' spheres of influence in the educational setting based on placement, experience, academic pathway, and licensure scores. They conducted classroom observations each year and collected descriptive teacher data. The findings revealed that “21% of teachers have three or fewer years of experience, 12% have lateral or provisional licenses, and 29% are teaching outside of their certification,” representing 62% of the teaching staff (Sorensen & Ladd, 2020, p. 4). The teachers' licensure exam scores were below the average score of all teachers. They also found higher turnover among schools near neighboring schools or a greater number of employment industries nearby. The findings revealed teachers with fewer years of experience and provisional licenses had a higher turnover and changed the dynamics of the entire school. The higher
turnover in hard-to-staff schools makes them more dependent on unlicensed teachers, adversely affecting student achievement outcomes.

Another factor associated with teacher attrition is the emotional influence on teachers' decision to remain in the profession (Torres, 2020). The study included two semi-structured interviews with responses from 25 former teachers who left the teaching field within the first five years. The participants represented a mixture of male and female participants who taught in high-needs schools. The interviews were transcribed using coding software to pinpoint relevant themes. Of the participants, 23 of 25 felt negative when they left teaching. From those who felt negative emotions, some former teachers had low self-efficacy and did not feel they could accomplish what they expected to achieve while teaching. Those who were happy to leave expressed burnout and low efficacy as well. Some former teachers changed their minds as they evolved and faced the disconnect between expectations, influence, their ability to impact change, commitment, and their reality. Therefore, the study “suggests that examining emotions, identity, and commitment could be critical to understanding teacher retention” (Torres, 2020, p. 517). All of the researchers mentioned the above-identified factors associated with teacher turnover (Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019; Sorensen & Ladd, 2020; Torres, 2020). They provided intellectual and behavioral strategies, additional collaborative training, and a community of emotional support to combat teacher turnover.

**Turnover Retention Strategies**

Torres (2020) suggested focusing on investing in the support of teachers as an effective retention strategy. Additionally, Sorensen and Ladd (2020) suggested creating policies which improve teacher pay (Clotfelter et al., 2008), provide induction and mentoring support, provide better working conditions (Boyd et al., 2005), offer professional development, give teachers a
voice through inclusive opportunities for shared decision-making, promoting strong school leadership (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016), and retain experienced teachers through professional development or shared decision-making roles.

Specifically, shared decision-making and site-based management were the educational reform of the 1990s and focused on building teacher capacity in a change process based on democratic principles (Enderlin-Lampe, 1997). This targeted learning-centered participatory collaboration model inadvertently lacked clarity in defining what shared decision-making authority teachers should have and what authority other stakeholders would have. The improper planning, training, and implementation soon caused the reform to fade out. Moreover, the implementation process was unclear and inconsistent (Enderlin-Lampe, 1997). The clarity has since been provided in the emergence of a comprehensive design of teaching and learning through professional development and professional learning communities.

**Professional Development**

Professional development (PD) is the systematized learning of teachers to enhance their practice in improving student learning. Teacher instruction directly impacts student achievement (Burroughs et al., 2019); therefore, teacher development accelerates efficient teaching and learning. However, the one-stop workshop method is far from what cultivates development (Schmoker, 2006). Teachers are empowered when they can learn something new and share it with their team in a practical and applicable manner. The process is similar to the personal training of a sports player. To prepare for the big game, the players must attend team practices, watch plays, and have workout sessions for conditioning. Similarly, teachers focus on not only what is learned but how learning will take place (instructional conditioning) prior to regrouping
for classroom instructional delivery. PDs are a form of instructional conditioning in which professional learning takes place.

Guskey (2002) examined the impact of professional learning on teacher practice. According to Guskey (2002), PD changes teachers’ practices, attitudes, and student learning outcomes. This change process must address teachers’ capacity to help students and benefit their professional practice. All PD does not result in changes in practice or belief. There are barriers limiting the effectiveness of PDs. One such barrier Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) denoted is teacher turnover, as it reduces teacher access to school improvement. Another barrier to effective PD is the irrelevance of the content in addressing teacher capacity and the problem of practice.

In comparison, Guskey (2002) and Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) found that change models or PD designs were successful among teachers when they included self-reporting, observing, and reflection on student needs and teacher performance using in-house data. These successful changes in teacher-classroom practice led to improved student learning outcomes and changes in teachers’ beliefs and attitudes. The confidence in their ability is an aftermath of the successful application of the innovation. As a result, teachers increase their motivation to continue engaging in school improvement initiatives (Guskey, 2002). Therefore, initiating effective PDs is imperative if students are to be positively impacted by the changes teachers make regarding student growth.

**Effective PDs**

Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) emphasized the need to utilize effective PD to support the change process for teaching and learning. In her study, she used a comparison model to analyze 35 PD studies for the purpose of identifying the characteristics of effective PD. By coding the outcomes of 35 studies on PD models, the researcher could identify the general
characteristics of successful PDs. According to the study, effective PDs have seven common characteristics which have resulted in positive teacher and student learning outcomes. These features include the following:

1. Content-Focused: content specific and aligned to the mission and vision of the school (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017)

2. Active Learning: teachers engage in active learning, which uses prior knowledge to make connections to new learning through collective and reflective practices (Mattos et al., 2016)

3. Collaboration for On-the-Job Problems: teacher collaboration encompassing individual, small group, and school or district-wide problem and solution-centered networks (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017)

4. Modeling of Evidence-Based Practices: anchor visuals of instructional practices through videos demonstrations, live demonstrations, lesson planning, peer observations, and analyzing sample assessments and student work (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017)

5. Coaching Support: experts or educators who support teachers through modeling and student work analysis collaboration (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017)

6. Feedback and Reflection: structured time to process what works, what does not, and the next steps to improve instruction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017)

7. Consistently Ongoing: multiple opportunities to learn ideas and practice them over time (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017)

One study examined was inclusive of each feature listed above. In a Reading Recovery study, 3,747 teachers engaged in PD learning which was composed of a yearlong training provided by a
literacy coach. The training included the literacy coach modeling lessons, teachers observing other demonstrations of teaching strategies in the classroom, and collaboration with colleagues regarding their observations. The teachers also received coaching from university partners and ongoing support from a reading recovery teacher leader for a minimum of six sessions. Additional conference attendance and training opportunities were provided. The students of the teachers who were participants in the initiative outperformed their peers. This type of PD allows teachers to analyze the situation, attempt to implement improvement initiatives, and reflect on the processes and outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

In another Darling-Hammond (2017) study, participants engaged in professional learning for a Science Teachers Learning from Lesson Analysis program (STeLLA) (Roth et al., 2011). In this program, teachers learned ways to address student misconceptions and increase student understanding through a focused PD on teaching strategies related to their content and student understanding. Teachers in STeLLA attended a three-week training program facilitated by local university professors. Throughout the process, teachers examined and collaborated through video analysis of teaching. They modeled lessons and then observed and provided feedback on the lessons for improvement purposes. As a result, they developed content-specific PD with their colleagues. Other content area colleagues could also use strategies to enhance their instructional delivery and increase student learning. The results indicated a significant increase in student achievement among those teachers who participated in the study. This study provided empirical evidence supporting the need for teachers to actively engage in creating, improving, and practicing teaching strategies. Teachers could implement these strategies in their classrooms, which became routine to increase student engagement and collaboration. The participating teachers’ students had higher learning gains than their peers whose teachers did not participate in
STeLLA, which was demonstrated by pre and post-content area assessments. The collaboration aspect of the PD allowed teachers to model and share new, effective instructional practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Effective implementation of PDs takes time, and depending on the structure of the school day, time constraints can become a barrier. However, teachers can still engage in effective PD programs situated on the continuum of learning, drawing on three learning approaches: pedagogy, andragogy, and heutagogy (Hase & Kenyon, 2000; Knowles, 1980). Pedagogy is a long-standing teaching method used to transfer knowledge and skills to children. On the contrary, andragogy is a learning method used by self-directing and self-driven learners. These learners thrive in independent and experimental learning experiences which draw on their internal motivations to answer clear objectives, which results in valuable outcomes. Both pedagogy and andragogy learning approaches position teachers as the determinant of the learning objectives.

Heutagogy, on the other hand, focuses on the learner determining what and how they will learn. Shaha and Ellsworth (2013) depicted an heutagogy approach to an online PD program design that offers individual PD opportunities for educators to participate in PD sessions individually through “objective-setting, videos, forums, and communities” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. 13). The study included 734 schools utilizing an organized online PD in which correlational data was analyzed based on the teachers’ engagement in relation to student achievement, educator success, and retention. The findings support the conclusion that high levels of engagement correlate with higher student learning and educator development (Shaha & Ellsworth, 2013). High teacher engagement matters in creating a supportive working environment where teachers remain at their school.
Engagement

In addition to the elements of effective PDs outlined by Darling-Hammond (2017), Bayar (2014) signified the importance of engaging teachers in designing and planning PD based on the needs of the specific teachers and schools. Bayar (2014) conducted a study entailing interviews with 16 elementary teachers from a Turkish city to understand and identify critical components of effective PD activities based on the teachers’ experiences over the course of a year. The group of participating teachers included both males and females. The participants provided the following insights into the critical components of effective PD activities:

1. addresses current teacher needs
2. addresses current school needs
3. teachers engaged in the design and planning of PD activities,
4. active engagement opportunities,
5. ongoing engagement,
6. effective instructors. (Bayar, 2014)

As professional educators, teachers require highly effective learning experiences to enhance their skills and increase their efficacy. The more involved in professional development, the more impact a teacher will have on student learning. According to Shaha and Ellsworth (2013), “Schools with higher teacher engagement... significantly outperformed their lower engagement counterparts in student achievement and measures of school and educator success, including teacher retention” (p. 1). Shaha and Ellsworth (2013) researched the effects of PD with high and low engagement over the course of a two-year period. A comparison of an online/on-demand pre-PD (year 1) and post-PD (year 2) was conducted using a quasi-experimental research design as they related to changes in student performance. The findings indicated a
positive effect for schools with higher engagement in PD than those with lower PD engagement. The more engaged teachers were in PDs which went beyond simply participating, then led to higher student gains (Shaha & Ellsworth, 2013). Again, the sit-and-get pedagogical platform of professional development is not as impactful as the engaged teacher who is developing their craft and leadership capacity.

Since teachers are at the forefront of teaching and learning and are the direct implementors of improvement initiatives, they should be a part of the decision-making process of developing an effective PD. According to Chi Keung (2008), shared decision-making is a valuable characteristic of an effective school. In a study, Chi Keung (2008) sought to identify a causal relationship between teacher participation and quality decision-making. This participatory model was constructed from questionnaire responses from 335 teachers in Hong Kong at 20 schools and was developed through a synthesis of theories. The findings indicated emotional associations between job satisfaction, commitment, and perceived work duties as they relate to participating in decisions related to instruction, curriculum, and management (Chi Keung, 2008).

Additionally, researchers found a reciprocal relationship between teacher engagement and self-efficacy. Granziera and Perera (2019) conducted a longitudinal study of pre and post-survey responses from primary and secondary teachers to examine the association between efficacy and teacher engagement. From the 600 teacher responses, self-efficacy predicted work satisfaction through engagement, and engagement predicted teacher self-efficacy. Both are motivating factors in teacher development. Additionally, Li et al. (2022) set out to understand the same two factors: engagement and self-efficacy, as they relate to ongoing teacher professional learning and teacher experience. They used self-reporting questionnaires to measure the effects. The results indicated that teachers’ work engagement positively predicted self-efficacy. Also,
teachers with fewer years of experience increased self-efficacy as they engaged in ongoing professional development. According to Li et al. (2022), “Moreover, for young teachers, the degree of participating in updating, reflective, and collaborative activities was related to the increase of self-efficacy; however, participation in reflective and collaborative activities benefited only experienced teachers” (p. 335). To conclude, involvement in ongoing professional development increases teacher self-efficacy and supports the younger teacher.

**Self-Efficacy**

In Bandura’s (1977) social cognitive theory, self-efficacy depicts a person’s belief in self and the capacity to make an impact. Teachers who are motivated by their belief and capacity to bring about change often take part in the change-making process, and successful outcomes bring about teachers’ emotional satisfaction and the ability to get the job done. Also, teachers who are encouraged to participate in the curriculum and school leadership increase their efficacy. In essence, collective efficacy has an even greater impact on teacher retention and student learning. Confident and knowledgeable teachers committed to the process of improving learning, improve learning. This impact is magnified when efficacy is a shared value among the collective organization.

Additionally, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2019) examined the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and collective self-efficacy as they relate to perceptions of resources (colleague and leadership support and value consonance) as a motivator for engagement and belonging. A total of 760 elementary and middle school teachers in Norway completed a survey indicating this relationship. They found that teacher self-efficacy moderately correlated with collective teacher efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy motivated teacher engagement, while colleague and leadership support and value consonance promoted collective teacher efficacy. Although collective efficacy
promotes teamwork, teacher self-efficacy encompasses the traction for change in their practice and abilities (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2019). This indicates the need for building capacity and establishing shared goals, as collective teacher efficacy has an even stronger relationship to student achievement than social standing to student performance (Donohoo, 2018).

**Collective Teacher Efficacy**

Hattie and Clarke (2018) defined collective teacher efficacy as the collective belief of teachers’ confidence in their ability to affect student learning positively. According to his visible learning research, collective efficacy strongly correlates to student learning. If teachers believe they can positively impact students, the effects will be conveyed in students’ performance. When teachers believe they can, they take the necessary actions to make their beliefs a reality. The actions motivated by beliefs influence student learning. Donohoo (2018) systematically reviewed the behaviors produced by collective teacher efficacy. From the 34 studies, Donohoo (2018) found that productive behaviors included “deeper implementation of school improvement strategies and teachers assuming leadership roles” (p. 329). Additionally, teachers were more likely to take risks, have targeted goals, establish high expectations, and be open to innovation. Donohoo (2018) noted, “Beginning teachers were also less likely to leave teaching when employed in schools where educators shared the perception that together they could overcome challenges and meet students’ needs” (p. 329).

The development of efficacy does not just happen, but through instructional leadership, efficacy increases. For example, in a Turkish research study using the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), a causal-comparative study was conducted to determine whether instructional or administrative leadership practices predicted teacher self-efficacy or job satisfaction. The second comparison analyzed was whether the professional collaboration of
teachers predicted teacher self-efficacy or job satisfaction (Duyar et al., 2013). Of 2,967 teachers, the findings showed teacher collaboration as a strong predictor of teacher efficacy and teacher job satisfaction.

Additionally, teacher self-efficacy increases when leaders exhibit instructional leadership behaviors such as observing teacher classrooms, providing feedback and suggestions to teachers, and monitoring students’ performance (Duyar et al., 2013). As an administrative leader, “the more that principals engage in accountability roles (such as ensuring the teachers’ understanding of educational goals, improving the teachers’ teaching skills, holding the teachers accountable for educational results, and involving parents), the higher the teachers’ self-efficacy will be” (Duyar et al., 2013, p. 713). This accountability is communicated effectively through PLCs.

**Professional Learning Communities**

Wagner’s (2004) focused on systemic change stemmed from a lack of systematic reflection for teachers to engage in throughout the change process. He purported systemic reflection to be the proponent of successful and sustainable improvement instead of reactionary action to the external demands of society. Furthermore, systemic reflection is pivotal in developing educators’ knowledge and approaches to lead systemic changes for school improvement, exclaimed by Wagner (2004). He outlined the central questions which guide the transformation process. These questions focus on schools’ goals and the conditions that promote well-informed dialogue and decision-making centered around those goals. Wagner (2004) suggested clearly defining the purposes of the improvement process, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the school, defining the school’s core values, organizing the change process according to priority, defining the structures needed to implement the change process, and identifying the skills and resources needed throughout the transformation process.
Fullan (2016) referred to the change process as a means of capitalizing on the power of a collective group of people. He referred to three elements of professional capital which include: human capital (teacher talent), social capital (internal and external influence), and decisional capital (expertise in making sound judgments). All are key in enhancing change efforts for collaborative cultures to enhance the learning environment when taking part in educational change (Fullan, 2016). Within the implementation of new initiatives is the reality of an implementation dip in performance and efficacy (Fullan, 2007). Schools have to work through this time frame. This requires understanding the cultural context of the school and the people, developing shared goals and values, building relationships embedded in trust in a learning-focused environment, collectively sharing knowledge to promote deep learning, and creating coherence (Fullan, 2016). Fullan (2016) pointed out the need to be knowledgeable and competent, not just confident, regarding leading continuous change. This change process is defined as a professional learning community. In PLCs, the focal point is to create a network of teachers focused on learning through collaboration and reflection centered around intended goals (DuFour, 2004).

DuFour (2004) proposed key components of true PLCs. The first component is student learning. This community of educators is focused on what students will learn, how teachers know students have learned, and what to do if students are not learning. PLC teachers are committed to ensuring all students learn by establishing a plan of action to implement specific interventions for students who are not learning. This indicates the need for a systematic, ongoing analysis of where students perform to ensure all students learn.

To transform schools, Schmoker (2006) posited the need to get past “The Buffer” of isolation as it is the enemy of continuous improvement. He contended that teachers and leaders
must get past the status quo of “business as usual” or “this is always how we have done things” to transform. If students are not learning in the classroom, how are teachers responding? Do teachers move on or stop the entire class to remediate? This is the purpose of PLCs working as a collective group to determine systematic identification of struggling students and develop explicit methods of intervention, so all students will learn. This is done through learning and leading in PLCs.

**Instructional Benefits of PLCs**

The nature of PLCs makes it the most effective method for improving instructional practice because of the learners’ ability to practically apply what and how teachers and students learn. However, the definition and procedural aspects of the PLC must be clearly defined and established to reap the benefits. This includes creating common curricular standards, speaking about observed practices, and analyzing the results to make decisions regarding the follow-up steps (Schmoker, 2006). Teams must continuously focus on how their specific instruction impacts student learning to yield results. Sharma and Deschaine (2022) provided a framework where teachers can collectively engage in a process that streamlines the materials and practices that work for their students. This framework includes providing educators with guidance “that supports opportunities to collect, categorize, critique, conceptualize, and circulate artifacts related to curriculum, processes, organizational memory, culture, workplace, and climate” during PLC (Sharma & Deschaine, 2022, p. 68.) Therefore, teachers can create, share, reflect and compare what has the most sensible impact on student understanding and instructional delivery. A school can capitalize on teachers’ PLC work through digital curation. As a result, novice and veteran teachers alike will have continuous access to what has worked.
An authentic PLC approach to adult learning uses rich practical learning experiences and leverages teachers' previous, pooled knowledge to build capacity through the development of leadership competencies (Teacher Leadership Institute, 2018). This process allows teachers to showcase resources and strategies to their peers and determine their utility through evaluative “collective follow-up, assessment, and adjustment of instruction amongst colleagues” (Schmoker, 2006, p. 109). For example, in a five-year case study at Adlai Stevenson High School (ASHS), teachers took part in a clearly established intervention program.

**PLC Intervention and Resources**

The intervention program included students receiving a progress report after three weeks of instruction, individual discussions between the student and faculty members to identify the underlying problem and help determine a solution, notification sent to parents regarding the issue, then targeted interventions if they continued to struggle with low performance in class. This targeted intervention consists of taking a tutoring class and receiving help from a student mentor and advisor. If the student continues to struggle after six weeks, they are required to attend a tutoring class and participate in weekly check-ins with the school counselor. If students do not meet expectations, they are moved to a tutoring class with a small number of students. The tutoring teacher works with the classroom teacher to aid in the completion of homework. As an integral part of the community, parents meet with the school representatives and agree on the roles and responsibilities of each member of the community to help students reach their intended goals. ASHS is empirical evidence of the PLC model at work. As a result of the school leaders engaging teachers in effective team-based learning communities for continuous improvement, the students show excellent achievement gains (DuFour, 2004). This process posits teachers as our professional experts, as demonstrated in the historical case study of the ASHS PLC model.
Deschaine and Sharma (2022) explained how curated resources from the PLC process help to increase teacher capacity due to the access and organization made possible through technological platforms. All teachers can then share and expand their ability to influence each other and future educators.

A culture of collaboration is the second key component of an effective PLC (DuFour, 2004). This collaboration is defined as a systematic approach where teachers work together to observe, analyze, and improve their classroom practices in a layered approach to learning. They are able to move beyond the surface level of identification to the informed practice of collaborating for improvement purposes. Teachers work together to establish expectations of what students should know and be able to do by the end of a lesson, unit, or course. They determine how students will show mastery by creating formative assessments as checkpoints that show students’ level of understanding. Then the team clarifies what constitutes mastery for the following assessment, which leads to the last key component, attention to results (DuFour, 2004; Lencioni, 2002).

Everything each member engaged in the process of collaboration for school improvement must focus on and pursue the collective goals of the community, however complex and multifaceted the strategies might be (DuFour, 2004; DuFour & Mattos, 2013; Marzano, 2009). Every action of the individuals at ASHS acted on behalf of each other to pursue their united purpose of ensuring all students learned. After interventions are provided, the community returns to the data to evaluate their ability to attain their goals. If the results indicate no change, then the community reconvenes to make needed adjustments to improve the process. When teachers use data to verify effective practice, colleagues will want to replicate what works, change their practice, and restructure their own assumptions (DuFour, 2004).
One drawback to participatory collaboration in PLC is the feeling of inadequacy. Teachers are less likely to engage in such a collaborative culture if they feel they have not been trained in the content or skills required to participate (Enderlin-Lampe, 1997). Therefore, collective efficacy correlates with productive perspectives on professional development (Donohoo, 2018). As a result, coupling professional development training to prepare for PLC work deepens the learning process and promotes teacher interdependence.

**Self-Directed Professional Development in PLCs**

Teachers bring a wealth of knowledge with them from their individual interests and experiences. Therefore, research centered on improving student achievement can be structured in self-directed teacher professional development, which is crucial to deepening the culture of collaboration among teachers in PLCs. It is an improvement strategy for andragogy and heutagogy learning (Blaschke, 2019). The development of self-determined learners who gain knowledge through self-directed learning in online personal learning environments creates lifelong learners who continuously reflect on their practice and next steps. As an aftermath of COVID, more professional development is offered through technological formats, including online webinars, zoom courses, and asynchronous training. To make this training beneficial, Schmoker (2006) recommended using the knowledge from professional development in PLCs to share more of what teachers already know.

In PLCs, teachers learn by doing. This phrase constitutes the ability of teachers to engage in the deepest form of learning when they can perform what is being taught. Teachers can develop a greater understanding when they apply their own experiences to what they are learning (DuFour & Mattos, 2013). The PLC process allows for the acceleration of teacher leadership as teachers engage in the professional work of analyzing and interpreting data, utilizing effective
strategies, and assessing student learning (Wilson, 2016), making PLCs a catalyst for developing teacher leaders as they develop leadership competencies. Lambert (2003a) referred to teacher experiences in educational learning communities as “… processes (which) include problem-solving; broad-based, skillful participation (leadership capacity); task enactment, conversations and stories which… engender a wave of energy and purpose that engages and pulls others into the work of leadership” (p. 424). One such structure of this process is instructional rounds (City, 2011; City et al., 2009).

**Instructional Rounds**

By definition, instructional rounds are a structured method of collective improvement efforts (City, 2011; City et al., 2009). They are a disciplined way to reflect on teaching and learning through descriptive evidence collected from classroom observations. This process focuses on the task, actions, and dialogue between the teacher and students. Once data from classroom observations are accumulated, a network of teacher work to analyze the evidence selects a problem of practice, establishes common goals and methods, selects improvement strategies, and collectively follows up through assessment data review. City (2011) referred to the instructional rounds process as a high-leverage improvement strategy that yields the best results if it is data-driven and connected to ongoing improvement. As a result of teacher engagement in instructional rounds, “teacher learning in a community can be a source of efficacy and confidence in the process of adopting new practices” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. 18).

**Collaborative Leadership**

Teacher leadership studies have identified attributes of teachers who assume leadership roles. The current study expands the literature by adding the theoretical frame of collective leadership. Kouzes and Posner (2002) explained the benefits of having an individual bring
coworkers together to solve a problem collaboratively. This bottom-up approach to leadership is also described as a method to implement school improvement (Muijs & Harris, 2006). In this qualitative study, the researchers described the process of teachers' influence on school improvement efforts and development through formal and informal groupings. This approach was seen as an empowerment strategy by which teachers shared “good” practices. However, specific environmental features were needed to successfully support engagement in innovations and professional development efforts. Teachers needed to work in a culture of trust with some vulnerability to work. Transparency and strong leadership were vital in the qualitative case study, where improved teacher practices facilitated the school's improvement (Muijs & Harris, 2006). Teachers also excel with strong organizational support, which engages teachers in distributive and collaborative leadership practices.

In this action research, collaborative leadership is defined as leadership that “focuses on schoolwide actions directed toward improvement in student learning that is shared among teachers, administrators, and others” (Heck & Hallinger, 2010, p. 228). The researchers, Heck and Hallinger (2010), described the reciprocal relationship between collaborative leadership and school improvement as the changes in these areas mutually receptive to each other. They both can influence positive change in student learning outcomes.

Establishing a collaborative culture of problem-solving and professional development became necessary to build teacher capacity and collective efficacy. Through continuous improvement cycles, teachers, referred to as teacher leaders, lead colleagues through improvement strategies. Fullan (2015) stated that effective change for learning outcomes depends on a “focused learning culture where teachers collectively develop effective teaching practices” (p. 45). A collaborative culture, where teachers learn through collaborative processes
to make decisions regarding the problems in practice, became a reoccurring strategy from various sources (Akert & Martin, 2012; Angell & Dehart, 2011; Chi Keung, 2008; Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Hanover Research, 2019; Lambert, 2003a; Schmoker, 2006; Sorensen & Ladd, 2020); they referred to this process as ongoing support of collaboration in professional development. Ghere and York-Barr (2007) also included the suggestion of a collaborative culture as a strategy for increasing retention not only among teachers, but paraprofessionals, who support teachers, in addition to other methods such as “ensuring a threshold wage, focusing on job matching early in the employment process, providing ongoing support and direction, and developing a team culture in which paraprofessionals feel valued” (p. 21). In a culture of collaboration, professional development becomes the norm and not the exception (Fullan, 2015). Schmoker (2006) claimed professional learning communities done with clarity and focus are one of the most effective ways to increase teacher capacity and lead to improved student learning. He suggested teams meet bi-monthly for at least 45 minutes to do the school's work and cultivate the talents, intelligence, and curiosity teachers already possess.

Derrington and Angelle (2013) studied the characteristics of teachers who assume leadership roles through the lens of collective efficacy using data from five schools in Southeastern and Northwestern states. Teachers from 50 schools completed the Teacher Leadership Inventory (Angelle & DeHart, 2010) and the Teacher Efficacy Belief Scale (Olivier, 2001) to determine if there was an association between teacher leadership and collective efficacy. The researchers used descriptive statistics to correlate the differences in the mean scores of the instrument. The study revealed a significant difference, except for the principal selecting teacher leaders representing a negative relationship with collective efficacy. This
finding indicates the importance of teacher leadership in schools. When teachers perceive their colleagues' abilities and behave in such a way, it positively promotes school success. This reiterates a solid connection between teacher-leader behaviors and collective efficacy (Derrington & Angelle, 2013).

**Teacher-Leader Behaviors**

Researchers have provided qualitative evidence regarding the nature and impact of teacher leadership in the past. In fact, 74% of teacher leadership studies have used qualitative measures (Chen, 2020). This caveat has made it challenging to create a valid and reliable framework for teachers to identify teacher-leader behaviors (TL). Chen (2020) conveyed the need to develop an accurate and reliable quantitative instrument to measure TL behaviors across five domains. The Teacher Leader Instrument (TLI) offers empirical evidence on the nature of TL behaviors and how those behaviors could assist in future research aiming to identify future TL, develop the capacity of current TL, and provide a pathway to follow for aspiring TL (Chen, 2020). This research study aimed to measure how well the TLI could identify salient TL work behaviors.

**Framework**

Chen (2020) used a mixed-method approach to measure the validity and reliability of the TLI. He used several theoretical studies of previous instruments and also analyzed their content, structural, and criterion validity to develop a reliable TLI relevant to secondary school. This theoretical-empirical approach directly impacted the design of the study. The design of the study aimed to answer the following three research questions:

1. What is the content validity of the TLI?
2. What is the structural validity of the TLI?
3. What is the criterion validity of the TLI?

Chen (2020) developed the scale and validation of the instrument based on the guidelines for test development described in the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing and more current research.

**Methods**

The research included three phases. Phase one focused on establishing content validity to test whether the created items were representative of TL work behaviors. This test reflected the responses of TL workshop participants and a panel of experts from the leadership field. The items originated from TL literature, existing measurements, and three empirical studies (Chen, 2020).

**Findings**

From the research, Chen's (2020) TLI instrument distinguished prominent leadership behaviors of teacher leaders at various levels of organizational structure. It supports the TLI's content, structural, and criterion validity, making it a dependable instrument. It helps examine TL behaviors across five domains based on theory and empirical evidence (Chen, 2020). Like effectively selecting and evaluating items to identify personality preferences in a personality test, Chen (2020) created an instrument that identifies consistent TL behaviors commonly associated with five leadership categories. These findings support the procedural and relational constructs of teacher leadership found in the literature (Hunzicker, 2017).

Teacher leaders take on formal and informal roles and responsibilities which foster professional learning, improve instructional practice, encourage collegial collaboration, partake in decision-making processes, and connect with external stakeholders (Chen, 2020). Teacher leaders’ influence spans outside the classroom into more administrative areas of school reform.
and improvement (Flores, 2018; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). The TLI entails capturing these behaviors from a broad scope which helps to improve student learning and school improvement. The researcher noted that the highest average of the participant's responses was associated with the following two domains: Promotion of Professional Learning and Encouraging Collegial Collaboration. There was a positive correlation between the two other parts, Engaging with Decision-Making and Liaising with External Affiliations, even though it had a lower average. Focusing on the learning process yielded a moderate average of improving teaching and learning as a priority of TL. The TLI is a valid instrument based on these results as various samples verified its content, structural, and criterion validity. The instrument could be questionable if the researcher only conducted an EFA because of the subjectivity of the test. Many of the decisions are based on the researcher's preference. However, the conducted CFA confirmed the results of the EFA. This process helped to cross-check the theoretical constructs with different participants.

There were some limitations of the study. Almost half of the TL who participated in each sampling had an average of five to seven years of work experience. This knowledge or lack thereof could impact the participants' responses regarding their perspective of teacher leadership behaviors based on educational experiences alone. In addition, the study took place in China. Therefore, audiences should consider the context of this study because of the differences in cultural and organizational structures of education. Lastly, the correlation between teacher leader behaviors and the five domains has yet to provide empirical evidence of causation to student learning. It does not convey curvilinear relationships. Moreover, the question remains: Does student learning increase due to teacher leadership?
Implications

This study helps stakeholders understand TL, their motivations, and their influences in the change process of school improvement. Audiences can also recognize how teachers are more active in school improvement and expand their sphere of influence beyond the classroom walls. These behaviors and attitudes can help future researchers create a framework to identify, select, and train TL. Due to the instrument’s validity, the findings can be repeated and generalized. As my action research focuses on empowering TL, the TLI could be a validated reflection instrument for teachers to compare their behaviors with the expected behaviors of TL.

Moreover, the TLI can also help teachers and administrators develop specific TL roles needed for school improvement. The strong positive correlations between TL behaviors and the two domains: promoting professional learning and encouraging collegial collaboration. The findings also reinforce the components of my research study, as teacher leadership efforts naturally embed professional development and cooperation in formal and informal ways. The instrument can be used as a framework to evaluate the behaviors and actions of TL.

Cosenza (2015) attempted to define TL, positing it as teachers’ spheres of influence extending beyond the classroom. The development of teachers as leaders is viewed as a crucial element of school improvement and teacher retention. Cosenza (2015) presented a Teacher Leader Model of Standards and guides to initiate teacher leadership. A group of teachers developed the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium in 2008 to study research on teacher leadership. Through their study, they developed teacher leaders’ model standards discussed across seven domains. These standards included:

fostering a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning,

accessing and using research to improve practice and student learning, promoting
professional learning for continuous improvement, facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning, promoting the use of assessments and data for school and district improvement, improving outreach and collaboration with families and community, and advocating for student learning and the profession. (Cosenza, 2015, p. 82)

These standards were developed to establish teacher leadership competencies described in the Teacher Leadership Institute competencies rubric sponsored by the National Education Association (NEA). The tool outlines various ways for teachers to lead the school’s transformation processes through their work to form policy and improve professional instructional practice. This transformation is embedded in the system of professional learning communities. An example of this intervention is demonstrated in the Teachers as Leaders program for Mountain Brook schools in Alabama. Although administrators wanted to create a pool of future principals who would understand the school and the community due to a number of upcoming administrators retiring from the profession, the program was centered on developing teachers for ongoing leadership who would own and preserve the culture of high expectations. The superintendent of Mountain Brook Schools developed various roles where teachers could utilize their leadership skills without taking on formal leadership roles (Searby & Shaddix, 2008, p. 2). These roles included the following behaviors:

- Leaders ask the right, tough questions.
- Leaders can set the tone for meetings and discussions with their energy level, attitudes, and encouragement.
- Leaders are mentors, one-on-one, to others.
- Leaders anticipate needs and meet them without being asked.
• Leaders support other leaders emotionally and professionally.
• Leaders establish their own credibility through competence.
• Leaders learn what they need to know and are willing to share it.
• Leaders interpret reality for others.
• Leaders always ask, “What is our purpose?”
• Leaders ask, “Is this consistent with our values and beliefs?” (Searby & Shaddix, 2008, p. 2).

The program's first goal was to help teachers develop a thorough understanding of the district’s vision and mission and commit to the inclusive work of the schools. The second goal entailed providing opportunities for teachers to analyze and cultivate their own leadership competencies. The last goal involved teachers with opportunities to use their leadership in whatever capacity they served. In this program, administrators nominated teachers to participate in the program. The cohort included 15 teachers who had more than six years of teaching experience, with the exception of three teachers with five or fewer years of teaching experience. The program included six full-day sessions within the school year reflecting own their own practices and beliefs, and issues relating to leadership. The following protocols were used:

• Self-discovery activities (teachers completed personality and leadership inventories)
• External Consultant Coaching (determining how to work under pressure, building relationships, productivity, and learning to lead)
• Informative Sessions (reflection practices)
• Team building (summer training). (Searby & Shaddix, 2008)

The program's effectiveness was measured using qualitative data collected from a survey that included 11 open-ended questions from each participant at the end of the program. The benefit of
the program includes the emergence of teacher mentors, National Board-Certified teachers, department chairs, facilitators of professional development and professional learning communities, and supervisors of student-teachers (Searby & Shaddix, 2008).

The research from Chapter II provides insight into the applied research design and implementation of the problem of practice. From the research insights gathered, professional development and professional learning communities’ improvement strategies were selected to leverage each teacher's human capital to support and enhance the interdependence of the collective. Both strategies incorporate the support needed to reduce teacher turnover (Hanover Research, 2019). Both elements empower teachers to engage in deep thinking and learning through systemic change processes focused on school improvement (Fullan, 2015). The applied research aims to create a collaborative culture of teacher leaders to retain 60% of ELA teachers at BWMS. The evaluation of the action plan components answers the research questions and identifies whether the program’s goals are met.

A supportive system that motivates teachers to remain and engage in school change encompasses all other retention strategies examined. However, further research is needed to determine the strategies and training needed to develop teacher leaders and enhance the professionalization of the teaching profession in the school context. This study will add to the existing literature on teacher retention and teacher empowerment by determining if individualized teacher capacity building and leadership engagement training opportunities help retain and develop teachers as school improvement leaders. This study was carried out as the fulfillment of the current job responsibilities of teachers and the primary investigator for embedded processes and practices.
CHAPTER III: EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODS

Implementing a process to retain and empower teachers with limited training and experience can provide the support ELA teachers need as they grapple with assisting students who struggle to read and write in middle school. Chapter III presents an applied research design and methods used to contend with the effects of teacher turnover by examining how research-based development initiatives can influence ELA teachers to remain in the profession. The applied research was designed to address a problem of practice and evaluate the systematic process of developing teacher leaders to build collective teacher efficacy. The two components of the study include self-selected professional development and teacher-leader collaboratives (TLC). The TLC contributes to the professional growth of teachers to reduce their turnover rate at BWMS.

Overview

The research design guiding this study's applied process is introduced and illustrated in detail in Chapter III. This chapter is broken down into three sections. The first section describes how the action plan was collaboratively developed to understand the effects of teacher turnover and improve the limited capacity of ELA teachers’ content knowledge. This section includes an overview of the participants' collaborative engagement, existing research guiding the development of the study, the data analyzed to develop the plan of action, and a review and timeline of the process.

The second section explains the emergence of a thoroughly developed action plan. The research questions identified in Chapter I are included in this section. The research questions
seek to guide the evaluation of each action plan component. Each component represents empowerment efforts designed to support teacher growth and circumvent the problem of teacher turnover. The components include measurable goals outlining the desired behaviors, capacity, and commitment to help bring change due to the initiatives. This section delineates the organization, processes, needed resources, time, and expectations of the stakeholders involved.

The third section of Chapter III describes a program evaluation of the action plan conducted after one year of the program's implementation. Formative and summative assessments will be used to assess and evaluate each component. This applied research approach uses program evaluation, including various qualitative and quantitative data sources. The evaluation aims to determine whether the goals were achieved and whether the school could retain 60% of the ELA and ELA support teachers at BWMS. The evaluation process will provide the rationale for answering each research question.

Research Questions

This applied research was steered by two distinct concepts: how teacher leaders develop through collaborative practices (PLC) and what they contribute based on their capacity building (PD). The first set of research questions identified how engagement in professional development improves teacher practice. After building their capacity, the next set of research questions determined how the collaborative process influences teacher practices. The last set of questions reflects on the evaluation of the program. The PGS guides the self-selected PD, and the teacher-leader collaborative provides collective leadership opportunities and protocols to engage teacher leaders in the change process to more pathways to formal leadership engagement. This reflection informs the research team and stakeholders of the action steps to create an environment for collaborative teacher leaders to engage in andragogy and heutagogy or adult and self-determined
learning (Blaschke, 2019) and use their knowledge and influence to lead change in their school. Qualitative and quantitative data collection methods addressed the research questions. As listed in Chapter I, the research questions were used to evaluate the conveyed findings of the action plan:

1. How did self-selected professional development achieve the program goals of changing teacher practice?
   a. How did self-selected professional development build teacher capacity?
   b. How did self-selected professional development improve collective teacher efficacy?
2. How did the development of a Teacher Leadership Collaborative achieve the program goals of changing teacher practice?
   a. How did the Teacher Leadership Collaborative build teacher capacity?
   b. How did the Teacher Leadership Collaborative improve collective teacher efficacy?
3. How did teachers’ participation in self-directed professional development and the Teacher Leader Collaborative influence teachers to remain at the school?
4. In what ways can self-selected professional development and teacher-leader collaboration programs be improved?

Demographics of the Research Site

BWMS is a Title I middle school servicing minority students. Of the 414 enrolled students at BWMS, roughly 97.41% of students enrolled are Black (Mississippi Department of Education Report, n.d.). The staff makeup is 93% Black. Staffing concerns exist, considering the turnover and demographic makeup of the teaching staff at BWMS. This year three Teacher
Assistants (TA) are teaching subject area classes. One assistant has been issued an emergency license to teach the math-tested area this year. This paraprofessional is in the process of completing her alternative program. In addition, an English major was hired to teach ELA. Another TA manages the science classroom while a highly qualified teacher provides instruction via zoom in the TA’s classroom, taking on a hybrid instructional format. Therefore, the eighth-grade science teacher provides instruction to both her eighth-graders and the seventh-grade classes with a paraprofessional in the seventh-grade room to facilitate the teaching. Many teachers in ELA have fewer years of experience and a greater number of teachers with alternative certification pathways to teacher licensure. Although teacher positions are filled with candidates who may not be traditionally licensed, these individuals have their own skill sets and background, which can be leveraged to contribute to the team’s collective work and increase student learning.

**Development of the Action Plan**

The school’s administrative team (SAT), which includes the principal, an outsourced ELA consultant, and I met and began discussing the need for teachers to help fulfill the day-to-day functions of the school because of administrative and teacher transitions, which left the school with instructional and operational vacancies. The principal’s role in implementing the action plan is to provide instructional leadership and advise me, the assistant principal, on the practical needs of the school as a whole. As a novice administrator, I initially focused on skill acquisition and did not gauge the staff’s readiness for change. She provided guidance about the buy-in of the staff to engage them in the school's work and distributive leadership. As we continued to reflect on the student performance data and the school’s needs, the topics turned into research themes.
Research Themes

Several themes from the research on teacher turnover emerged to provide an organized and supportive environment: a collaborative leadership culture (Schmoker, 2006) and continuous learning (Guskey, 2002), and changing teachers' beliefs in their ability to increase student learning (Donohoo, 2018). Several teachers were novice teachers or taught out of their content area; therefore, addressing their students' diverse needs was challenging (Humphrey et al., 2006) as they began moving from skill acquisition to reflective practice. As a result, the principal modeled facilitating collaborative sessions for teachers in ELA departmental meetings.

I am the instructional leader for the department. My role is to engage teachers in developing data-driven instructional practices through departmental meetings and provide the needed materials and support for teachers to build their instructional capacity. The outsourced consultant is responsible for coaching and supporting teachers with Tier One instruction. She also works with groups of students to support the direct instruction of ELA teachers. She observes, models, and debriefs with ELA teachers twice a week. As a follow-up protocol, she meets with the principal and me to debrief about the departmental needs as a whole and the needs of specific teachers. The formal and informal administrative debriefing meetings are held weekly.

Data

In 2021, two days before school started, an ELA teacher at BWMS was switched with an ELA teacher from the high school. On the last day of a district professional development series, the new teacher gave the principal at BWMS her letter of resignation. The department was in the same position just four weeks later. A day before school started, BWMS searched for an ELA teacher. There were no applications in the database; however, teaching and learning had to
continue. The administrative team replaced the content area teacher with the TA. This individual worked well with the ELA team teacher. After the two created a system of instructional delivery that worked for them, the LS teacher was drafted into a minor professional basketball league and resigned. The department was in the same position just four weeks later. The exact recourse was taken to replace the LS teacher. Another TA was hired as a Learning Strategies ELA teacher with no content area background.

In combination with this challenge was the vacancy of three TAs. All three TA vacancies made it difficult for various processes to continue. Simple procedures for covering classes, aiding teachers in classrooms, and conducting pull-out interventions were challenging. This made teachers’ work more difficult. As a result, staff absenteeism increased, and additional procedures were postponed or ceased. The underlying issue was teacher turnover. Fewer experienced teachers remained in the ELA department. The opposite was true for the other departments in the school. At the time of implementation, the ELA team consisted of six ELA teachers, three Social Studies teachers, and one inclusion teacher. The Social Studies teachers and an inclusion teacher were included in the study because they support ELA instruction.

Additionally, after discussing student performance data from the data tracker and impact chart, the principal and the AP noted the percentage change in ELA data from 2018-2019 to the 2021-2022 school year. Proficiency in ELA changed from 23.1% in 2018-2019 to 22.2% in 2021-2022. The student growth changed from 54.4% in 2018-2019 to 56.9% in 2021-2022. The development of the lowest-performing students changed from 65.9% in 2018-2019 to 60.5% in 2021-2022, as displayed in Table 5 (see Appendix A) (Mississippi Department of Education, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021). Furthermore, notes from teacher classroom observations, the consultants’ observation notes, and ratings from the teachers’ Professional Growth System (PGS)
over incremental meetings all from 2021-2022, the SAT recognized the need to build teacher capacity to improve teaching practices collaboratively because many of the ELA teachers were new.

**Table 5**

*Trend Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA Proficiency</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of All</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of LPS</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: ELA = English Language Arts, LPS = Low Performing Students*

Additionally, the principal and I reviewed the federal program's attestation documents from 2021 and 2022 and discussed the changes in teacher experience from one year to the next. The document revealed a 37.6% increase in inexperienced and new teachers added to the new staff roster. Over half of the staff (51%) were new teachers or new to the school. The department of teachers in ELA became the central participants of the research study. At least two or more of the six ELA teachers would leave the school each year. This represents nearly half of the department; therefore, the goal of retaining 60% of ELA teachers was determined based on the prior turnover trend. The teachers' focus was on the development of their craft and increasing student learning outcomes.

Teachers would participate in school, district, and self-selected professional development to do this. The self-selected professional development hub materials were organized according to the objectives outlined in the PGS. The teachers also participate in cycles of instructional rounds and develop department norms for instruction (City et al., 2009). As a result, the central focus of
this research study explored retention strategies to develop teachers by increasing teacher engagement in leadership and the professional growth of a group of teachers at BWMS.

**The Research**

Several teachers were novice teachers or taught outside of their content area; therefore, addressing their students' diverse needs was challenging (Humphrey et al., 2006). For this purpose, novice means teachers with less than five years of experience. In 2021, one ELA teacher had a physical education teaching license and struggled throughout the year with providing ELA instruction. She did the best she could with what she had, but the information was overwhelming. This meant she did not have adequate training to deliver ELA instruction. She was in a challenging position as she needed on-the-job subject-specific training to effectively meet the needs of the students in her class. Hobbs and Porsch (2021) expressed the growing trend of teachers teaching out of content in the United States. The researchers propose the need for “initial teacher education as well as the time after entering the teaching profession that provides opportunities for ongoing professional learning and formal professional development (PD) of teachers” (Hobbs & Porsch, 2021, p. 601).

As teachers exhibit competencies in other areas which impact teaching, for instance, building relationships, classroom management, collaborative learning environments of social interactions, and focused learning, teachers can be supported through coaching, mentoring, and content-specific PD on PLC engagement. A professional development program designed to engage teachers in professional opportunities which use trial-and-error approaches to learning allows reflection and alterations that build efficacy and capacity. Otherwise, the lack of support for out-of-content area teachers can cause higher teacher attrition and turnover (Hobbs & Porsch, 2021). Continuous transitions make it difficult for teachers to build relational trust and be
vulnerable with each other, and the absence of trust causes teachers to work in isolation (Lencioni, 2002). Moreover, experienced teachers feel the burden of taking on more responsibilities and often leave, while alternative and emergency-certified teachers remain as teachers.

Alternative teacher certification refers to individuals who received a license to teach, have a bachelor's degree, and completed an education program for graduate students as opposed to a traditional education program that serves undergraduate students. There have been conflicting viewpoints regarding the impact of alternative teacher preparation in comparison to the traditional pathways to teacher preparation on student achievement. A research study was conducted presenting a meta-analysis to examine the relationship between alternative teacher preparation (ATP) and traditional teacher preparation on student achievement (Whitford et al., 2018). The findings revealed a statistical difference in student outcomes between the two preparation programs. Specifically, on average, students with teachers from an ATP performed slightly higher than students from TTP (Whitford et al., 2018). This finding supports ATP programs' added value and growth as a major pathway for teacher candidates to gain certification. Mungal (2019) depicted the impact of ATP programs on schools of education because the expansion of these programs caused traditional education programs to make educational reforms in preparing high-quality teachers in the 21st century.

Addressing the concerns described above requires a systematic learning process for the teachers who remained at BWMS. This systematic process includes individualized professional learning based on theory and practice for non-traditional or emergency-certified teachers. Teachers are able to research content knowledge and teaching practices in conjunction with “supervised clinical practice” and access to direct modeling (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 301).
As out-of-content area teachers are completing certification requirements through traditional coursework, they can also take part in apprenticeship training to reflect and analyze the theoretical constructs in practical application for increased student outcomes. Darling-Hammond (2006) referred to this process as one of the most powerful processes for effective teacher training.

Due to the issue’s complexities, I reviewed relevant research found in Chapter II and collaborated with the team in administrative and debriefing meetings to identify the critical elements to address teacher needs. The results of these meetings became the action plan. Research from Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) and Ingersoll et al. (2019) highlights teacher turnover’s growing challenges and effects, specifically in southern minority schools. The results indicate a threat to the quality of education students can experience. Minority teachers have a higher turnover rate due to poor working conditions in their schools (Ingersoll et al., 2019). These characteristics are similar to BWMS.

To circumvent the possible effects, initially, I attempted to implement change by selecting teacher leaders to lead their departments in improvement processes. However, I was met with resistance and did not correctly gauge the readiness of the staff to implement change. This is also an indication of how novice I was. Additionally, researchers have found a negative correlation between the principal’s selection of teacher leaders and teacher leadership (Derrington & Angelle, 2013; Kouzes & Posner, 2002). As a result, I went to the principal to discuss different approaches to accomplish the same goal of building teachers’ instructional and leadership capacity to influence their desire to remain at the school as a teacher.

Furthermore, I spoke with the principal regarding how she gets the buy-in from the staff, involves them in the school’s work, and distributes leadership to teachers. I took those topics as
research themes. One emerging theme took precedence from the research on teacher turnover: a collaborative leadership culture (Schmoker, 2006) and continuous learning (Guskey, 2002) to change teachers’ beliefs in their ability to increase student learning (Donohoo, 2018). This collective learning increases collective teacher efficacy (Hattie & Clarke, 2018) as teachers play a part in the decision-making process for school improvement (Chi Keung, 2008). A professional learning community catalyzes positive change in instructional practice, classrooms, and student learning (Schmoker, 2006). Normalizing a professional change process of learning and applying new knowledge for teachers is a model for students to replicate (OECD, 2018). Teacher behaviors and characteristics demonstrated in PLCs are parallel (Lumpkin, 2016) to the salient behaviors of leaders (Chen, 2020) and can be used as a pathway to leadership succession (Duyar et al., 2013).

**Description of the Action Plan**

Creating a culture of collaboration focused on learning and outcomes can increase collective teacher efficacy leading to higher job satisfaction and teacher retention. This study examines how collaborative teacher participation builds teacher capacity and influences collective teacher efficacy to improve teacher retention. Additionally, determining the impact of professional development and the TLC to enhance teacher efficacy and job satisfaction could propel teacher leadership to retain teachers and help them aspire to future school leadership (Duyar et al., 2013). As a result of the research analyzed in Chapter II, two improvement strategies were selected to leverage each teacher’s skills to benefit the collective group. They also encompassed the other strategies found to reduce teacher turnover -positive school culture, available needed resources, good working conditions, teacher support, active and visible leadership, and teacher recognition (Hanover Research, 2019). For teachers to develop, the
schools must create systems that encourage and facilitate teacher dialogue centered on the schools’ improvement goals to implement a change process (Fullan, 2015). The applied research aimed to develop empowering working conditions to retain 60% of ELA teachers at BWMS. This research is a normal part of the job expectation as an ELA instructional administrator at the school. The action plan comprised self-selected professional development and a teacher-leader collaborative to answer the research questions.

**Component One: Self-Selected Professional Development Hub**

The first component addressed building and enhancing ELA teachers’ capacity through an empowerment initiative of using a self-selected professional development hub to provide teachers with autonomy and high-quality instructional materials. As a result of this enhancement, teachers change their instructional practices to increase student learning. This component was ongoing as teachers had the autonomy to upload professional development resources in the hub and the administrative team. It encompassed five subcomponents. In the first sub-component, teachers completed a needs survey and developed a Federal Programs Comprehensive Needs Assessment during the 2021-2022 school year. The goal of this subcomponent was to identify the cultural and academic needs of teachers. In the second sub-component, teachers completed two perception surveys using the Teacher Leadership Inventory and the Collective Efficacy SCALE (see Appendix C) (Goddard et al., 2000). The goal of this subcomponent was to identify salient teacher-leader behaviors of ELA teachers and their belief in being able to increase student learning.

The third subcomponent was teacher training on the Mississippi Teacher Professional Growth System (PGS). The PGS was broken into five sessions, addressing one domain per session. Additionally, an overall PGS review session was provided as a follow-up. Each domain
session was designated as the focus for departmental meetings held each Thursday for every two to three weeks, beginning in August, at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year. The overall PGS staff training was provided in November of 2022 before informal teacher evaluation observations were conducted. The goal of the PGS training was for teachers to become knowledgeable of teacher expectations in MS.

Additionally, after analyzing descriptive and objective scripting, teachers reflected on their strengths and enhanced their skills in other areas. The fourth subcomponent was creating a self-selected professional development hub where teachers utilized Google Classroom© to access aligned academic and professional development resources at the state, district, and school levels. Moreover, individual web-based professional development course postings were listed for teachers interested in completing courses. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) quick reference guides were listed as a resource of instructional strategies arranged according to the PGS domains (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, n.d.). This component was ongoing as teachers continued to utilize it. The goal of this subcomponent entailed disseminating evidence-based instructional practices to enhance teachers’ use of them in the classroom. The fifth subcomponent evaluated the teachers’ perception of the self-selected professional development hub and its impact on their instructional practice and student learning.

**Component Two: Teacher Leader Collaborative**

Component two entailed developing a network of teachers who participated in a TLC of four cycles of instructional rounds beginning in October 2022 and ending at the beginning of January 2023. This component aimed to develop a standard departmental protocol for identifying problems of practice and engage in collaboration cycles to identify the following steps (City,
2011). The other goal of this component was for teachers to clearly understand what takes place in ELA classrooms and hold each other accountable to the collectively established department norms. After the outsourced ELA coach had observed teachers in their classrooms, an overall departmental problem of practice was identified. The consultant communicated this problem of practice to the administrative team in daily debriefing meetings. The consultant was in the school at least two to three days per week for the entire school year beginning in October.

In preparation for the TLC work, the AP informed teachers of the targeted focus and recorded teachers in their classrooms. Teachers then reviewed their instructional videos together to gather objective evidence through scripting. Before scripting, the AP conducted professional development, demonstrating how objective scripting is captured. Teachers categorized their scripting notes into themes. From the sorted and analyzing the evidence, teachers collectively reflected on the practice problem, discussed their current practice, used the professional development hub for enhanced instructional strategies that address the practice problem, and determined the group’s next steps. During this time, administrators and consultants were removed from the process until the next instructional round cycle. These steps were repeated for each cycle.

Through this cycle, ELA teachers established instructional norms for the entire department. They were also catalysts for team accountability and department goal-setting. The focus topics included questioning techniques, wait time, and student engagement for the improvement cycles and were used to analyze teacher practice before and after instructional rounds. The instructional rounds were conducted over two 45-minute departmental meetings each month. The administrative team and outsourced ELA consultant noted teacher changes in perception and instruction through formal observations. The AP conducted teacher interviews at
the end of four instructional rounds (January). The action plan and evaluation methods were outlined in Table 6 – Table 9 and located in Appendix D.

**Table 6**

*Action Plan and Evaluation Method 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Component 1</th>
<th>Goal (s)</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1A Teacher Needs</strong></td>
<td>• Identify the cultural and academic needs of the ELA department.</td>
<td>Analyze Federal Programs Summary of Committee work of teachers</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>• Identify the cultural and academic needs of teachers.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1B Teacher Perception Surveys and</strong></td>
<td>• Identify the strengths, preferences, and interests of ELA and ELA</td>
<td>Teacher Leadership Inventory Survey</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflection: administer surveys via</strong></td>
<td>support teachers.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Google® Forms</strong></td>
<td>• Identify teachers’ perceptions, behaviors, and beliefs.</td>
<td>CE-SCALE survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1C Teacher PGS Training</strong></td>
<td>• Teachers become knowledgeable of teacher expectations.</td>
<td>Professional development Evaluation survey</td>
<td>School Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training</strong></td>
<td>• Highlight teachers’ strengths and areas of improvement.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**                                    **</td>
<td>• Teachers reflect and enhance their practices.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1D Self-Selected Professional Development</strong></td>
<td>• Teachers understand descriptive and objective scripting.</td>
<td>Classroom Observation</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hub which includes resources and</strong></td>
<td>• Disseminate evidence-based instructional information.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>materials aligned to the Mississippi</strong></td>
<td>• Build teacher capacity to enhance teachers’ use and evaluation of**</td>
<td></td>
<td>ELA Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department of Education Teacher Professional Growth Rubric posted in Google® Classroom.</strong></td>
<td>research-based practices.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

Action Plan and Evaluation Method 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Component 1</th>
<th>Collective Stakeholder Feedback</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A Teacher Needs Survey</td>
<td>• Staff Debriefing Meetings Teachers’ response to the Federal Programs needs survey Summary form</td>
<td>March 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B Teacher Perception Surveys and Reflection: administer surveys via Google© Forms</td>
<td>• Teacher departmental meeting notes • Teacher responses from surveys</td>
<td>November 2022 pre-survey March 2023 post-surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1C Teacher PGS Training</td>
<td>• Weekly Departmental meetings</td>
<td>August 2022 until November 2023 September 2022 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1D Self-Selected Professional Development Hub, which includes resources and materials aligned to the Mississippi Department of Education Teacher Professional Growth Rubric posted in Google© Classroom.</td>
<td>• Post Teacher Interview • Classroom Observation • Consultant Observation Feedback and debriefing notes</td>
<td>December 2022 – April 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1E Reflection and evaluation on the usefulness of the professional development hub on teachers’ progress.</td>
<td>• Post Teacher Interview • PD Training Evaluation • PGS post-conference meetings with teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: PD = Professional Development; PGS = Professional Growth System
### Table 8

**Action Plan and Evaluation Method 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TLC Component 2</th>
<th>Goal (s)</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2A TLCs Instructional Rounds        | • Establish and maintain ELA department norms by building a network of teachers who work together to solve instructional issues.  
                                         • To develop a clear understanding of what takes place in ELA classrooms.  
                                         • Teachers hold each other accountable to the goals established by the collective data digs.  
                                         • Teachers change/  
                                         • enhance instructional practices. | Classroom Observation Recordings/Videos  
                                         Instructional Rounds Meeting Notes  
                                         Teacher Interviews | Assistant Principal  
                                         Teachers |
| (ELA department focuses on topics such as student engagement garnered from ongoing data) |                                                                 |                                  |                      |
| 2B Data Analysis Meetings           | • Identify a problem of practice (Identify gaps in the instructional curriculum).  
                                         • Determine student growth. | Update Data Tracker and Impact Charts from Data Digs  
                                         Compare the results of Benchmark 1 in October to Benchmark 3 in March | Assistant Principal  
                                         Teachers |
| 2C Evaluating the Teacher Leader Collaborative | • To evaluate the effectiveness of the Teacher Leader Collaborative to improve on its implementation.  
                                         • Identify to what extent teachers learned as a result of the instructional rounds process.  
                                         • Observe teachers using their new knowledge and skills. | Teacher Interview  
                                         Classroom Observation  
                                         Comparative data on writing instruction, questioning, student engagement, | School Principal  
                                         Assistant Principal |
• Determine how much students learned.
• Determine if collective efficacy increased as a result of participating in the Teacher Leader Collaborative.
• Retain 60% of ELA teachers at BWMS by the end of the year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TLC Component 2</th>
<th>Collective Stakeholder Feedback</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2A TLCs Instructional Rounds (ELA department focuses on topics such as student engagement garnered from ongoing data)</td>
<td>• Bi-Weekly TLC Meetings • Post Interviews</td>
<td>September 2022 until March 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B Data Analysis Meetings</td>
<td>• Bi-Weekly TLC Meeting • SAT Debriefing Meetings</td>
<td>August 2022 Until March 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C Evaluating the Teacher Leader Collaborative</td>
<td>• Teacher Interviews • PGS post conference meetings with teachers</td>
<td>April 2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 9**

*Action Plan and Evaluation Method 4*

**Explanation of Program Evaluation Design**

The program evaluation method for this applied research study collected and used qualitative and quantitative data to answer the research questions provided. Both components assessed the central goal of the action plan – to what extent, if any, does participation in personalized professional development and the TLC contribute to teachers’ professional growth and increased collective efficacy?

Note: ELA = English Language Arts; TLC = Teacher Leader Collaborative; PGS = Professional Growth System; SAT = School Administrative Team
The tools and methods used to evaluate the implementation of a new program initiative included three levels of reflection. The first reflection included surveys used for self-discovery insights and needs assessment. This reflection level guided the work of the collective participants. The second reflection process included six informative PD training sessions (PGS, instructional rounds, instructional approaches, peer observations, peer facilitation of PDs, collaborative sessions, and evaluations). The third reflection phase included interviews to measure participants’ perceptions toward the TLC and the professional development hub to determine how effectively the participants use the program (American Institutes for Research, 2010). This aspect, Level of Use, of the conceptual framework helped the research team identify any salient issues the participants had and used feedback to make the needed changes to improve the program’s implementation.

**Evaluation of Professional Development**

The first component, the professional development hub, was evaluated using various tools to determine if the element met the long-term goal of addressing the cultural and academic needs of the ELA department and teachers to enhance their practice. The short-term goals of the component were to build teachers’ ELA content knowledge and collective teacher efficacy. Starting in March of 2021, teachers met in collaborative groups where they analyzed student data to create a summary of needs and budgetary costs of those needs. This process took place over three one-hour sessions. From the data, a summary sheet was submitted to the district’s Federal Programs department in preparation for the new year. ELA teachers developed their list of needs. Moreover, teachers completed a teacher needs assessment survey (see Appendix D) containing open-ended constructed responses and closed-ended range responses in 2021. This summary
sheet and the result of the teacher needs assessment led to the development of the professional development hub.

Since the school is a Google Suites school, the AP created a Google Classroom Professional Development Hub in September 2022. Teachers were invited to use the hub via face-to-face conversations during a weekly departmental meeting in September. The PGS domains were used to organize the professional development resources in a user-friendly way. Teachers and administrators could add additional professional development resources, content, videos, webinars, and instructional guides to the hub as they discover them.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the hub, I analyzed teachers’ classroom observation notes using the instructional rounds protocol and PD session evaluations. As a reflective measure, the Mississippi Department of Education Teacher Observation PGS tool (see Appendix A) was used to compare the effectiveness of the instructional strategies teachers have selected to use and teach to peers which derived from the PD hub. Teacher semi-structured interviews with open-ended and closed-ended questions were conducted from December 2022 through March 2023. They were used to evaluate the benefits and usefulness of meeting teachers’ needs, changing their instructional practice, and collecting participant input regarding ways to improve the process and outcome of the professional development hub.

A pre-perception survey was given to teachers utilizing a pre-test/post-test design (Popham, 2009) to gauge their beliefs in their ability to help students achieve using the CE-SCALE survey (Goddard et al., 2000) (see Appendix C). Although Guskey’s (2002) findings suggested teachers’ perceptions change once they have had success with an innovation, a CE-SCALE is used to document the change in teachers’ perceptions before and after teachers participate in the TLC. This scale was disseminated to teachers in November of 2022 as a pre-
perception survey during a district middle school PD Day which is hosted for staff on the first Monday of each month throughout the school year. Finally, I compared student assessment scores from Benchmark one, taken by the students in October 2022, and Benchmark three, taken in March 2022, to measure the impact on students’ growth after teachers accessed the resources located in the hub in September 2022. This process helped to identify the differences in students’ performance. Notes from daily informal teacher conversations regarding how the academic resources and academic needs were met as a result of using the PD hub were reviewed at the conclusion of the program to enhance interview questions from the insights gathered.

**Evaluation of Teacher Leader Collaborative**

The second component of the action plan was the TLC. It was evaluated using multiple evaluation tools of qualitative and quantitative data. They determined whether the component’s long-term goal of increasing teachers’ professional growth enhanced teachers’ instructional practice to retain 60% of the ELA staff. A short-term goal of the TLC was to develop a network of teachers who worked together to solve instructional concerns, understand what happens in ELA classrooms, and hold each other accountable for the established norms set by the group (City, 2011). An additional short-term goal was to determine the program’s impact on increasing teachers’ collective efficacy. In essence, the administration wanted to know the benefits of the TLC process for teachers.

The assistant principal modeled the instructional rounds process during a professional development in-service meeting on the second Monday in November 2022. Teachers participated in instructional round activities focused on a particular problem of practice (student engagement, effective questioning to increase rigor, technology integration) identified from data sources such as peer observations, student performance scores, and teacher insights. During this process,
teachers learned to take descriptive and objective notes from classroom observations. Teachers watched peer observation videos of each other using newly acquired instructional strategies from PD sessions and wrote their objective descriptions on paper or Post-it notes. Teachers were then grouped to analyze their notes and sort the descriptive evidence into categories or themes. Once the problem of practice was categorized, teachers provided feedback to each other. This information was synthesized into one collective data set. Teachers then analyzed the collective issues and discussed the steps to improve the identified problem. The instructional rounds process focused on placing teachers at the center of school improvement. Teachers participated in three cycles of instructional rounds from February until April 2023.

During September, teachers were given a copy of an exemplary lesson plan and identified each component that addressed the lesson’s necessary aspects. Teachers sought to find sections of the lesson addressing what students should learn, how they would learn it, how teachers would know they understood it, and how the teacher would assist those who did not learn it. Teachers brought copies of their lesson plans, exchanged them with their colleagues, and highlighted the sections of the text addressing the questions posed. Due to some reluctance, improvements to this process were made to facilitate instructional rounds using objective descriptions based strictly on empirical evidence.

To evaluate the goals of the second component, semi-structured interviews with open-ended and closed-ended questions were conducted from February 2023 through April 2023 to gain insight into the extent to which participating in the TLC helped teachers decide to remain at BWMS in the ELA department. The interviews also addressed whether teachers benefited from the process. Analyzing the schools’ teacher intent forms provided insight into teachers’ decisions to remain or leave BWMS’s ELA department. The teacher TLC work notes, analysis, peer
observation recordings, and next-step plans from the instructional rounds were analyzed to allow teacher leaders to lead brainstorming sessions to implement solution-oriented action plans. The TLC built a teacher network that fostered an environment where teachers could further develop their capacity by demonstrating their learning with other faculty and staff members.

At the conclusion of the program, teachers were asked to provide feedback using the post-CE-SCALE (Goddard et al., 2000) perception survey (See Appendix B) to identify any change in the extent to which teachers’ collective efficacy increased after participating in the TLC. This study provided ongoing actionable feedback to administrators for teacher development which can lead to a grow-your-own leadership succession plan. Teachers were familiar with the school’s day-to-day concerns and curricular needs. This knowledge prepared teachers to transition into leadership roles with the knowledge and aptitude to continue leading school change.

Data Collection Plan

During the Spring of 2022, teachers completed a teacher needs survey with open-ended and closed-ended questions to provide input on the type of support, communication, and materials they would need to teach students effectively. This survey was created in Google Forms®, and emails were sent to the teachers for them to complete. The teacher responses were summarized in Google Forms®. This data was downloaded to the AP’s school Google Drive© and shared with the principal and other assistant principals.

Additional preliminary data was collected and analyzed when teachers collaborated in five Federal Programs committee groups during March and April 2022 to analyze a variety of student data to identify the school’s needs, resources, and materials to meet the student’s academic and behavioral needs. Each committee addressed academic areas of need for each
major tested subject area (math, ELA, and Science). The other two additional committees addressed behavioral and teacher development needs. The group submitted a summary of their findings and recommendations via Google Docs© to the AP. This data was then uploaded to the district’s Title I Crate© database, which purchased the needed resources for the next school year. Teachers’ demographic data (certification, years of experience, educational preparation, and years of experience) was collected via face-to-face conversations and inputted into a Google Excel© document. This data was correlated with the teachers’ responses from the pre-and post-CE-SCALE survey data.

Prior to the instructional rounds cycle (City et al., 2009), I recorded teachers in their classrooms each week. Each teacher received their recordings via email for reflection purposes. During the following department meetings, on Thursdays, the teachers gathered objective data and pinpointed areas of enhancement through the evidentiary process outlined in the instructional rounds (City et al., 2009). Once teachers completed an instructional round, the notes and next steps were displayed in the teacher data room. Teachers then completed an evaluation survey after the TLC meeting to provide input on the process and how it can be improved. Once teachers completed three rounds of observations, they were asked to participate in a semi-structured interview.

The interviews with the AP or primary researcher were recorded using Otter©, a transcription service. The administrative team used this tool to identify common themes among the participants’ responses. The collected data was kept in the AP’s private Otter© account. The findings were shared with the participants and administrative team to reflect on the program’s content and implementation process. Observation recordings were collected each week using a recording device. At the end of the program, teachers completed an additional PGS rubric to self-
scores. The rubrics were then compared to gauge the changes in teachers’ self-efficacy and collective efficacy. Finally, teachers’ intent letters were collected to measure whether 60% of the ELA teaching staff chose to remain at BWMS.

**Data Protection**

After the participants agreed to participate in the study through an informed consent letter, the AP planned to secure the collected data to maintain privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. The administrator or primary researcher protected the collected data by converting it to digital format and securing it within the school district’s protected and restricted Google Drive©. This folder was shared with the administrative team and teacher as a means of transparency. A Google Sheet© log was created to document the individuals who accessed the data by tracking the last edited feature in Google Suites©. This system developed a chain of evidentiary custody and circumvented opportunities to falsify, modify, or fabricate data. Any identifiable information was retracted to maintain anonymity. This was also the purpose of using pseudonyms throughout the applied research study.

**Data Analysis**

To triangulate data for the professional development element of the action plan, the researcher used methodological triangulation to conduct a needs assessment to garner the school’s needs through teacher perceptions. Data analysis of benchmark and summative assessments were conducted to identify areas of instructional strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, interest and skill self-reporting surveys were given to teachers to gain thoughtful insight into their capabilities or lack thereof. In addition to the self-reporting survey, teachers participated in focus groups while they experienced targeted professional development. In these groups, teachers defined problems and suggested solutions because of the newfound training.
Peer observations also conveyed instructional gaps and the individual teachers’ ability to address them inside and outside the classroom. All qualitative and quantitative data were used to obtain the most helpful information and strengthen the validity and reliability of the findings by proving to be both valuable and credible information.

**Limitations**

The data from this survey provided an in-depth understanding of what teachers could do in various situations when allowed to drive improvement efforts through a specific protocol. Because of the applied nature of the study, it was privy to have some level of bias. The survey results changed due to teachers’ varying responses, limiting the use of the data specific to this population. Therefore, the survey and interview data were conversation starters for developing a network of teachers who collaborated to learn more about themselves and their craft. As an organization, having teachers conducting the work of improvement helps the school build traction and gain momentum for utilizing sustainable evidence-based practices and increases the level of voice, agency, and action among teachers.

**Summation**

The action plan provided teachers with self-directed professional development opportunities via a staff professional development hub. Additionally, ELA teachers were trained on the PGS to establish norms and expectations of practical teacher actions aligned with the Mississippi Department of Education state requirements. Teachers used the PD hub to learn about various instructional strategies and utilized them in their classrooms. Then teachers facilitated PD demonstrating the instructional strategies with their peers. Teachers also experienced training opportunities for instructional rounds. Afterward, teachers participated in
and gave improvement insight on three cycles of instructional rounds centered on specific problems of practice identified through multiple data points and peer observations.

Teachers provided input to improve the process after each interval of rounds using a Likert scale evaluation survey for formative assessment purposes for component two. Semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of the fourth instructional round to gain insight into the program’s impact on teachers’ capacity and collective efficacy for components one and two. After the implementation, modifications, and analysis of the two components throughout the process, the results from the study will be presented in Chapter IV.
Chapter IV: Results

Introduction

The action research aimed to determine how teacher-led professional development and empowerment initiatives such as the Teacher Leader Collaborative (TLC) contributed to a group of teachers’ efficacy and professional growth to reduce teacher turnover of English Language Arts (ELA) teachers at Bernard Williams Middle School (BWMS). The study began when the school’s administrative team met to discuss how teachers could help with the day-to-day needs of the school since there were instructional vacancies. The principal used her practical wisdom to develop strategic plans to engage all teachers in the school’s work through distributive leadership. As a result of analyzing the school’s needs, research topics emerged, and the program evaluation study began by examining similar research topics. The literature review divulged approaches to teacher retention practices, professional development, collective efficacy building, professional learning communities, collaborative leadership, and teacher-leader behaviors. As a result, the literature review uncovered strategies to promote working and learning through a supportive environment. These strategies include encouraging teacher autonomy through trust, creating opportunities for professional growth, providing time for team building and collaboration through participatory engagement, and celebrating the strengths of staff and students.

The literature review led to the development of the action in Chapter III, which included a professional development hub to support self-selected teacher professional development and
observations and evaluations of teacher-led collaboratives. These two key components addressed changes in teacher practice, collective efficacy building, and ELA teacher retention. Chapter III also addressed a program evaluation to measure the extent to which the program’s goals were met. The methods used included observations, interviews, and surveys to assess the value of the critical components. The data collected was analyzed and synthesized to answer each research question. The results of those syntheses are presented here in Chapter IV.

The results are communicated as answers to the research questions introduced in Chapter I and reiterated in Chapter III. The questions were as follows:

1. How did self-selected professional development achieve the program goals of changing teacher practice?
   a. How did self-selected professional development build teacher capacity?
   b. How did self-selected professional development improve collective teacher efficacy?

2. How did the development of a Teacher Leadership Collaborative achieve the program goals of changing teacher practice?
   a. How did the Teacher Leadership Collaborative build teacher capacity?
   b. How did the Teacher Leadership Collaborative improve collective teacher efficacy?

3. How did teachers’ participation in self-directed professional development and the Teacher Leader Collaborative influence teachers to remain at the school?

4. In what ways can self-selected professional development and teacher-leader collaboration programs be improved?
School Context

After reviewing the data, the middle school modified the instructional schedule several times to address the deficit areas. A remediation schedule was implemented during the second and third nine weeks of school. This schedule included block scheduling for organized A/B days. On Mondays, the students attended eight 45-minute class periods and were released at 2:30 PM earlier than the regular 3:20 PM dismissal time. Teachers met for professional development after students were dismissed early. Students went to odd period (1,3,5,7) classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and students attended even period (2,4,6,8) classes on Wednesdays and Fridays for two hours per tested subject area. The schedule changes addressed teachers’ concerns and students’ needs. After spring break in March 2023, the schedule was revised again for boot camp or the TLC, encompassing a school-adapted instructional rounds model. According to this schedule, students received 100 minutes of ELA instruction, 100 minutes of math instruction, and 100 minutes of science instruction for eighth graders each day in preparation for state assessments.

Teachers performed peer observations independently in the earlier part of the school year. However, once the TLC began, teachers peer-observed each other daily. Initially, teachers were asked to complete an observation protocol. After the first observational rounds, teachers provided feedback on improving the process. Teachers communicated how the observational protocol took up an extensive amount of time. The teachers suggested taking notes during the TLC grade-level planning meetings instead. For each round of instructional observation, all content area teachers were assigned a designated time to teach all grade-level students their subject-specific lessons. Teachers hand-selected students for each class based on leading and lagging data points. For example, while both ELA sixth-grade teachers taught all sixth-grade
students ELA from 7:50 am to 9:50 am, all other teachers on the sixth-grade team helped facilitate the ELA lesson in their classroom via Zoom© or Google Meets© using a Clear Touch© smartboard. The idea originated from the school administrator and was based on her observations gathered during the COVID-19 virtual learning setup in the 2019-2020 school year.

The school administrator noticed the benefits of observing one TLC in practice to hold each other accountable. As a result, she organized the TLC, where teachers could participate in an intervention model using technology integration as a tool for peer observation. Once teachers observed each other, they met the same day, debriefed, took notes, and provided each other with immediate feedback. The school schedule allotted two hours of TLC grade-level planning for all grade-level teachers to reflect and debrief on each subject area lesson taught the same day or the previous day. During TLC meetings, the teachers focused on four core questions: what worked, what did not work, what improvement steps are needed, and what materials or resources are needed for the next steps.

The collaboration notes from TLC grade-level planning meetings replaced the observational protocol. The feedback also encouraged the teachers and administrators to add material to the professional development hub, which addressed what teachers identified as barriers to teaching and learning. The TLC process took place during the fourth nine-week school term. At the end of the intervention (TLC), teachers were interviewed and asked to complete a post-collective-efficacy scale survey. The observational notes, interview responses, and teacher survey results were synthesized from teachers, an external partner, and a school leader. Each component’s utility was assessed and categorized according to the four research questions. The data collection for this study included quantitative and qualitative methods: interview responses, two surveys, a 21-item Collective Efficacy Scale and a 25-item Teacher
Leader Inventory, and professional development evaluation insights. The data were analyzed and triangulated. The results of the analysis are presented next.

**Research Question One**

Research question one sought to determine whether professional development (self-selected, teacher-led, school, and district) helped change teachers’ practice. A combination of different categories of professional development helped teachers enhance their practice. School and district PD’s helped teachers use data to analyze student learning and implement additional instructional strategies, give and receive feedback, participate in hand-on learning experiences, and stay abreast to instructional trends which have had the most impact on student learning as characterized by effective PD models (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Teacher-led PD’s had influenced teacher practice as teachers had opportunities to practice with each other prior to sharing lessons, strategies, and resources with their students. The professional development hub influenced some of the teachers’ practice, but not all. Some teachers did not engage in the personalized, curated PD resources because it was not a requirement. Others utilized some of the resources after they were referred to in an in-person PD session. As a result, the hub marginally changed teacher practice, but was also beneficial in giving teachers on-demand to access to the PD concepts and materials to revisit at a later time. Self-selected professional development helped change teacher practice as teachers were observed using newly obtained knowledge of integrated technology to increase student engagement after modeling in each other’s classroom. Teachers were also able to fulfill personal professional development needs when selecting PD workshops to obtain Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) to upgrade and renew their teacher licenses.
Initially, teachers completed a district staff survey in conjunction with the Federal Programs Comprehensive Needs Assessment to determine what tools would aid in developing and enhancing ELA teachers’ capacity. The goal of this instrument was to identify teacher needs. In the survey, 32 teachers were asked open and closed-ended questions. One question examined what would help the school improve academically. Teachers noted the following improvement needs: teamwork, parental support and engagement, block scheduling, teachers’ voice in decision-making, student engagement, student attendance, effective professional development training for veteran and new teachers, establishing goals for accountability, external consultants, internal interventionists, tutoring, increased grade level planning, incentives and paid resources for additional features, and external professional development opportunities. The survey indicated the previous self-reported teacher needs. Another area of need was geared toward identifying the professional development desired by the teaching staff. This survey revealed the following themes from the highest frequency to the lowest: instructional strategies, classroom management and student behavior, differentiation, Co-teaching, integrated technology, teacher-led professional development, student and teacher accountability, software curriculum training, and accountability model. The survey noted the first three as school-wide needs due to the repetitive responses, while the other responses were singular and reiterated the need for personalized professional development since teachers had a different array of needs. As a result, the first component of the action plan emerged.

The first component of the action plan was teachers’ access to a combination of district, school, and self-selected professional development. At the district level, third through tenth-grade teachers were asked to attend professional development workshops facilitated by district instructional leaders and external consultants on June 26-28, 2022. The district PD was entitled
Teaching, Instructing, and Planning for Success (T.I.P.S). The workshop consisted of teachers reviewing the process of deconstructing ELA priority standards, discussing ELA instructional shifts to build coherence, connecting similarities between grade-level standards, lesson planning design, instructional strategies, an Explicit Direct Instruction model lesson, cooperative learning strategies, and learning stations. Teachers responded positively to the summer professional development workshop based on feedback from the session evaluation forms.

One teacher shared how useful and informative the resources were. Another teacher exclaimed, being empowered by the hands-on activities, modeled lessons, instructional resources, and cooperative learning activities across district ELA teachers. Many of the teachers utilized the concepts presented in the sessions. For example, an eighth-grade teacher set up learning stations in her room. The routines and procedures she set in place facilitated a conducive learning environment. This teacher moved from one student group to the next on some days; then she worked with one single student group on other days. The process impacted her students, so other teachers asked for opportunities to observe her classroom. At least three other teachers observed her classroom, and two also implemented learning stations in their classrooms.

At the school level, teachers participated in a professional development session geared towards utilizing instructional practices to improve ELA performance through pre-reading and vocabulary strategies. Teachers reviewed student data from the first benchmark and the first i-Ready diagnostic assessment in the session. Each grade had a different strength. For instance, sixth graders performed strongly on reading informational (RI) standard 6.4. On the other hand, seventh graders performed well on RI 7.3, and eighth graders performed well on RI 8.1 and 8.2. Therefore, teachers worked on a model lesson that addressed a spiral review of the first five standards. Teachers continued this process on the school level during weekly PLC department
meetings throughout the year. One week, teachers conducted a deep dive into the data. The next week, teachers focused on planning to address student misconceptions. Finally, teachers modeled a lesson or strategy relating to the standard where their students performed the strongest. As a result, teachers were asked to utilize the lessons or strategies from the teacher-led professional development sessions in their classrooms.

As an implementation of self-selected professional development, a professional development hub was established using Google Classroom©. The hub allowed teachers to access high-quality instructional materials based on individual needs. ELA teachers and ELA support teachers were added to the designated Google Classroom©, which was aligned with the Mississippi Department of Education’s (MDE) teacher Professional Growth Rubric. The material was categorized by the domains listed in the rubric. Once teachers were given access to the materials, they could also upload professional development content. In the hub, instructional material, research material, and teaching and learning strategies were provided on various topics identified during the teachers’ collaborative planning sessions as a result of an instructional round of teaching and observing. It was initiated to curate a PD training which sustained practices promoting school improvement for the purpose of supporting teachers’ capacity.

**Professional Development Hub**

When problems were identified as issues, materials were added to the professional development hub in addition to the feedback received from the collaborative planning session. Several research articles, such as “Evidence-Based Strategies to Boost Student Engagement and Success, The Four Secrets to Motivating Students,” and integrating technology articles, such as “The Tech Tools That Are Here to Stay, and How Expanded Tech Use is Changing Teaching and Learning” were added to the professional development platform. Moreover, a research report
on “Student Motivations [from] Student and Educator Perspectives” was uploaded to the hub on April 7, 2023. Several of the articles came from Education Week© and other educational newsletter websites related to student engagement through instructional delivery. The MDE monthly newsletters were also included. The newsletter entailed teaching tips, MAAP testing resources, education policy updates, and state-level professional development on-demand sessions. Teachers, school leaders, and an external ELA consultant shared their perceptions of the PD hub’s impact on their teaching practices (see Table 10) below.

Table 10

Perceptions of the Professional Development Hub

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Development Hub</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learn additional strategies</td>
<td>Low usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individually paced</td>
<td>Not mandatory or required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fewer distractions</td>
<td>Repetitive material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>differentiated</td>
<td>Lacked deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On-Demand access</td>
<td>Lacked timeframe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tangible resources readily available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follow trends in education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The professional development hub had mixed reviews from teachers, school leaders, and the ELA external consultant. The feedback from participant interviews indicated a problematic implementation process. Initially, the hub was shared with ELA and social studies teachers, and other content area teachers who were a part of the teacher collaborative did not have access. This became an issue during the teacher-leader collaborative due to not efficiently communicating the hub’s purpose and functionality. The other content area teachers were later given access after the first instructional rounds. Additionally, there were no parameters in place for the usage of the hub because it was not mandatory; ELA teachers did not utilize the hub often. Therefore, the
professional development hub did not play a vital role in independently increasing teachers’ collective efficacy. As one teacher stated, “I haven't had time to sit down and look at it because it is not mandatory.” Another stated, “I haven't gone all the way through it yet.” Yet another teacher indicated how she had “not spent extensive time in it.” On the contrary, other teachers expressed the benefit of the hub as one teacher recalled:

> It was just nice, having the written or tangible resources. Having it there and not having to come and say, hey, can I get this? [With the hub,] you can just go in and pull it yourself. It was a benefit just having it readily available.

**Professional Development Combination**

The information in the hub was more beneficial in changing teacher practice when it was used in conjunction with in-person professional development. For instance, 12 teachers (ELA, Social Studies, and Special Education) attended an in-person PD on November 7, 2022, regarding descriptive observational training. Through observation of classroom videos, teachers took note of the types of questions teachers and students utilized throughout the lessons to determine students’ understanding and application of the lesson. Therefore, teachers focused on the types of check for understanding (CFU) and clarification questions, which aided in students' ability to apply and synthesize the content of the lessons. Teachers provided feedback for the process on a PD evaluation form. The evaluation instrument was a universal tool used by the school district to collect feedback from teachers on the effectiveness of the PD session. The tool used a five-point Likert scale, with one being poor to five being excellent. Additionally, two open-ended questions were included to determine the benefits of the session and ways to improve. The benefits and improvements are displayed in Table 11. All survey questions are included in Appendix H.
Table 11

*Professional Development Evaluation: Open-ended Questioning*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher collaboration</td>
<td>More time for the session after school limits the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Questioning Techniques to build classroom rigor</td>
<td>Hands-on learning activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The passion of the facilitator/ positive feedback</td>
<td>More examples of judgmental and non-judgmental observation feedback statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement/ Interaction</td>
<td>Chunk and summarize the information due to time limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check for understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering what everyone took from the lesson observed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing teacher observations/ Pair-Share</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the purpose and use of instructional rounds instead of supervisor evaluations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the session, the documents used in the PD were added to the professional development hub along with the model teaching videos used for teachers to access independently. When interviewed, one teacher stated, “…using some of those strategies, [and] those questioning techniques which were posted, has helped me in the classroom. It helped me with my lesson planning.” The teacher explained how the PD and follow-up materials on questioning techniques in the hub helped to change her practice related to scaffolding, making connections, and checking for understanding at a higher level of rigor.

The same teacher had an increase in her students’ benchmark scores. The teacher’s students’ proficiency grew from 30.8% in November to 38% in December. Although their overall growth increased from 64.7% to 77.8%, the data is limited because it represents a change
over a short period of time, has a small sample size, and may be the result of other contributing factors. Therefore, improvements in student performance cannot be directly attributed to the teachers’ professional development or the TLC. The growth of the lowest-performing students increased from 75.8% to 85.7% (see Table 12). The teacher shared her next step with questioning techniques: to have students generate questions from the lesson. She used the PD Hub article “What Makes a Question Valuable? Teaching Students to Pose Their Own Questions” to investigate lesson topics and engage in helping students with formulating open and closed-ended questions.

Table 12

*Benchmark Impact Data for Seventh-grade Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single Teacher Data</th>
<th>November Benchmark</th>
<th>December Benchmark</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>30.8% (n=33)</td>
<td>38% (n=38)</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>+23.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of all</td>
<td>64.7% (n=66)</td>
<td>77.8% (n=74)</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>+20.25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of Lowest Performing Students</td>
<td>75.8% (n=22)</td>
<td>85.7% (n=24)</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>+13.06%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Professional Development on Efficacy*

Teachers, external partners, and a school leader expressed the value of PD in perfecting one’s craft, increasing efficacy, and improving teaching and learning. Teachers expressed the need for intentional, self-paced, and individualized PD. To ensure staff members felt heard and supported, surveys were sent out to teachers throughout the year to get input on their needs and what they would like to see within their grade level and department community. One area teachers reported was the need for integrated technology training to increase student engagement. Some teachers were engaged in a Digital Teacher Academy (DTA) hosted by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) where teachers would receive training, support, and
resources to integrate technology into the classroom. One participant in the academy was a seventh-grade social studies teacher. Her classes were engaging and student-centered when administrators conducted informal observations. Therefore, in addition to the PD hub, teachers took it upon themselves to perform peer observations throughout the year. Mentor teachers also modeled for teachers with specific areas of concern. After the peer observation and modeling sessions, teachers participated in post-conferences with each other to reflect on the results of observations and identify how the observed strategies were to be implemented in other classroom environments. Administrators then went back to the classrooms to see if teachers were implementing identified strategies for growth. Since all ELA teachers shared a common planning period, peer observation was difficult to schedule due to the school's organizational structure. Therefore, ELA teachers were asked to observe teachers from other content areas, such as social studies, and to focus on the areas of concern discussed in the data meeting. Such was the case when a seventh-grade ELA teacher observed the seventh-grade social studies teacher who was in the DTA.

The ELA teacher took note of the integration of technology to check for student understanding periodically throughout the class. She observed the class during a spiral review and found a daily standard focus visible to students displayed on the board and high student engagement due to the gamifying delivery of the instructional materials. The teacher used programs entitled Blooket© and Kahoot©. Blooket© and Kahoot© are student engagement software that allow students to use their content knowledge to advance through a trivia game. EdPuzzle© was another tool introduced to other teachers by word of mouth and observations, which teachers adapted. EdPuzzle© provides interactive video lessons in which students actively engage in lessons through multiple learning styles (visual, audio, and kinesthetic). Students
watch and respond to a video lesson on a specific standard, answer posed questions throughout the video, and students discuss their ideas relating to the subject matter. Therefore, the ELA teacher observed peer collaboration, multiple formative assessments, and activation of student prior knowledge in a student-centered learning environment. As a result, this same ELA teacher began using the technology in her classroom.

The ELA teacher noticed the exchange of power dynamics, which switched back and forth between the teacher and students throughout the lesson. More impactful was the relationship the social studies teacher had with her students. There was a sense of structured freedom students experienced in her room. One could tell she knew her students. Additionally, the ELA teacher found the observation comfortable to conduct because both teachers engaged in conversations to incorporate what the other was doing in the classroom each week. The fairly new seventh-grade ELA teacher established a professional working relationship with the veteran social studies teacher and, as a result, indicated feeling more capable of moving her students to their goals. She specified having a predetermined focus on what to look for during peer observations. Expressing the benefit of teacher-led modeling, the teacher expressed the impact this process has had on her as it was a way to learn a lot from other teachers. A support teacher also conducted pull-out sessions with students on the same seventh-grade ELA lessons provided by the teacher but at a slower pace. The support teacher worked one-on-one with targeted students identified by the teacher either in another location or one-on-one in the classroom.

Another ELA teacher suggested having teachers lead a PD at least once per term. Initially, teachers and administrators discussed areas of strength to determine the PD they would choose to lead. Teachers were asked to prepare their PD session which would be facilitated during the third nine weeks in December 2022. After analyzing student benchmark data, the
teachers were more willing to model and share content they were comfortable with teaching. The PLC data meetings helped teachers identify student deficits and misconceptions while analyzing benchmark data. An eighth-grade ELA teacher’s students performed well with writing tasks. Therefore, the teacher was asked to facilitate a PD session during ELA PLC meetings. This same teacher was also asked by two ELA colleagues to model the writing process to a standardized prompt with their students. The teachers reported enhancing their ability to explain and utilize the writing software with students prior to writing. Moreover, the teachers observing the lesson learned how to use the tutoring software, Paper© to solicit feedback on their writing. The first teacher-led session for writing took place on January 5, 2023. The same eighth-grade teacher who modeled writing discussed how some of her students struggled with poetry. The seventh-grade ELA teacher’s students performed well on poetry questions on the benchmark assessments and classroom formative assessments. This teacher was asked to model how she taught her students to analyze poetry. Session two, on poetry analysis, took place on January 12, 2023. The teacher facilitated a PD on poetry analysis using the Title, Paraphrase, Connotation, Attitude, Shift, Title, and Theme (TPCASTT) strategy to assist students in improving their understanding of poetry. After this session, I observed both sixth-grade teachers utilizing the same strategy in their classrooms.

Struggling learners in another teacher’s class showed growth. The teacher had been previously trained to model reciprocal reading in another school district. The teacher was asked to model reciprocal reading to her colleagues in the third teacher-facilitated session, which took place on January 19, 2023. The other seventh-grade teacher had students who performed well on vocabulary analysis as she explicitly taught using various student engagement strategies. She was asked to share her vocabulary activities on January 26, 2023. On January 30, 2023, the
school district coordinator conducted an ELA PD training session on mental mapping, a reading strategy used to assist teachers in identifying missing links in reading comprehension and exploring teaching methods to help students accelerate their development as strong readers. This PD was facilitated as a result of students struggling to make connections and identify the development of central ideas in a text. On February 2, 2023, a sixth-grade ELA teacher modeled a central idea strategy referred to as “The Incredible Shrinking Notecard” with her colleagues. This was the final teacher-led session prior to the revised boot camp school day schedule. All meetings took place each Thursday of the week during the first through third nine weeks of the school year. The teacher-led PD sessions calendar included the following: The Writing Process: Using Say, Mean, Matter with Paper, TPCASTT: Analyzing Poetry, Explicit Direct Vocabulary, Mental Mapping, and The Incredible Shrinking Notecard.

The teachers provided colleagues with successful resources and strategies from their classrooms. As a result, the teacher’s colleagues asked colleagues to model the process in their classrooms. The modeling turned into co-teaching and collaboration among the ELA classroom teachers and support teachers on several occasions to demonstrate increased efficacy while learning from each other. In addition to the increased frequency of co-teaching and modeling among the ELA team, this concept extended to other subject area teachers. As stated, social studies teachers planned with ELA teachers and modeled at least three times in ELA classrooms across two grade levels to increase student engagement with technology integration. As her Digital Learning Coach recommended, the social studies teacher has been promoted to a district technology leadership role in conjunction with teaching. The teacher’s digital coach stated:

Since we have seen so much growth in some of the teachers at the school…apply for the tech innovator skills to begin developing a mentoring support system of cohort teachers.
This selection will help build the teachers who are interested in implementing digital learning into digital learning innovators and leaders. (personal correspondence, April 18, 2023)

From the various PD experiences throughout the year, teachers shared the benefits and concerns of PD sessions through interviews. Ultimately, teachers thrived with hands-on live PD to address school needs while seeking personalized PD to address their needs and concerns, such as continuing education units and the ability to revisit the curated PDs at any time to take or revise notes. For example, one teacher stated, “Some of the (PDs) I have done have helped me solidify what my goal is to further my career.” Others spoke about the need to actually do the work in PD sessions so they are prepared to “make it better before” using it with students. The teacher’s interactions and shared work empowered some teachers to increase their spheres of influence and their role in leading others in their areas of strength.

**Pre and Post Collective Efficacy Scale**

At the beginning and end of the 2022-2023 school year, teachers completed a Collective Efficacy Scale (CE Scale) survey (Goodard, 2001). The instrument included 21 item Likert scale (see Appendix C) statements ranging from one to six, with one as strongly disagree, two as somewhat disagree, three as disagree, four as agree, five as somewhat agree, and six as strongly agree. Six participants responded to the Pre-CE Scale survey, and seven responded to the post-survey. The teacher responses are indicated in Table 13.
### Table 13

**Collective Efficacy Scale Survey Percentages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CE-Scale Survey Statements</th>
<th>Pre-Rating n=6</th>
<th>Post Rating n=7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teachers in the school are able to get through to the most difficult students.</td>
<td>Agreed 3</td>
<td>Agreed 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students.</td>
<td>Disagreed 3</td>
<td>Disagreed 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If a child doesn’t want to learn teachers here give up.</td>
<td>Agreed 0</td>
<td>Agreed 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teachers here don’t have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning</td>
<td>Disagreed 6</td>
<td>Disagreed 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If a child doesn’t learn something the first time, teachers will try another way.</td>
<td>Agreed 5</td>
<td>Agreed 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Teachers in this school are skilled in various methods of teaching.</td>
<td>Disagreed 0</td>
<td>Disagreed 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Teachers here are well-prepared to teach the subjects they are assigned to teach.</td>
<td>Agreed 6</td>
<td>Agreed 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Teachers here fail to reach some students because of poor teaching methods.</td>
<td>Disagreed 0</td>
<td>Disagreed 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Teachers in this school have what it takes to get the children to learn.</td>
<td>Agreed 2</td>
<td>Agreed 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The lack of instructional materials and supplies makes teaching very difficult.</td>
<td>Disagreed 4</td>
<td>Disagreed 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Teachers in this school do not have the skills to deal with student disciplinary problems.</td>
<td>Agreed 2</td>
<td>Agreed 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Teachers in this school think there are some students that no one can reach.</td>
<td>Disagreed 4</td>
<td>Disagreed 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The quality of school facilities here really facilitates the teaching and learning process.</td>
<td>Agreed 5</td>
<td>Agreed 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The students here come in with so many advantages they are bound to learn.</td>
<td>Disagreed 5</td>
<td>Disagreed 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. These students come to school ready to learn.</td>
<td>Agreed 2</td>
<td>Agreed 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Drugs and alcohol abuse in the community make learning difficult.</td>
<td>Disagreed 4</td>
<td>Disagreed 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The opportunities in this community help ensure that these students will learn.</td>
<td>Agreed 2</td>
<td>Agreed 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Students here just aren’t motivated to learn.</td>
<td>Disagreed 4</td>
<td>Disagreed 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Learning is more difficult at this school because students are worried about their safety.</td>
<td>Agreed 0</td>
<td>Agreed 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Teachers here need more training to know how to deal with these students</td>
<td>Disagreed 1</td>
<td>Disagreed 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Teachers in this school truly believe every child can learn.</td>
<td>Agreed 5</td>
<td>Agreed 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: n= Number of participants*
Table 14

Pre and Post Collective Efficacy Scale Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collective Efficacy</th>
<th>Pre-CE-Scale Score</th>
<th>Post CE-Scale Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 5</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 6</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 7</td>
<td>No Score</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>93.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent Change +6.2%

Note: M= Mean, CE= Collective Efficacy,

To calculate the score of the CE Scale, I added each participant’s individual ratings for all 21 items after reversing the scores for statements three, four, eight, 10, 11, 12, 16, 18, 19, and 20. The higher scale score represented a higher collective teacher efficacy. The findings found in Table 14 convey an 87.7 point mean for the pre-CE-Scale scores and a 93.1 point mean for the post-CE-Scale scores. This indicates an increase in collective teacher efficacy after participating in the TLC. Although there was a 6.2% increase in collective teacher efficacy, the difference was not significant. However, the results did indicate some areas of strength and concern. For instance, at the beginning of the year, 50% of teachers believed they could positively impact the most difficult children. By the end of the year, 100% of teachers believed in their impact on these students. Student motivation was another area of strength that increased by the year’s end.
Research Question Two

Research question two sought to determine whether the teacher-leader collaboratives helped change teachers’ practice and increase teacher collective efficacy. The TLC provided opportunities of shared accountability which required team efforts to implement change. The process was instrumental in enhancing teacher practice as teachers made structural, communicative, and distributive adaptations to their practice basis on a reflection cycle. Teachers’ efficacy also increased demonstrated by their trusting discussions, interactions, and willing support of each other to prepare for student learning after participating in the TLC. This system created a culture of teamwork with embedded opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles. They felt emotionally supported by each other, strengthened their voice, and gained a greater understanding of content. The TLC helped teachers work towards the same shared goals with an “all hands-on deck approach” where everyone mattered.

The relationships among some teachers deepened during the four-term TLC, and some teachers bought into the school's shared vision and enhanced their practice throughout the TLC. As mentioned earlier, the school schedule changed in order to implement the TLC. Content area teachers were assigned a designated time to teach all grade-level students their subject-specific lessons. Teachers hand-selected students for each class based on leading and lagging data points. For example, teachers worked together and taught one subject to all grade level students at one designated time via Zoom© or Google Meets© using a Clear Touch© smartboard. Once teachers observed each other via Zoom© or Google Meet©, they met the same day, debriefed, took notes, and provided each other with immediate feedback. The school schedule allotted two hours of TLC grade-level planning for all grade-level teachers. They were tasked with addressing four
focus questions: what worked, what did not work, what improvement steps are needed, and what materials or resources are needed for the next steps.

The teachers’ level of camaraderie increased as they worked together and debriefed daily. This process also increased the teacher’s level of respect for each other, as they sought each other out after being aware of each other’s strengths. After teachers analyzed data, identified deficits, and collaborated on what worked, some were more willing to take the lead on certain initiatives. For example, a newly hired sixth-grade science teacher possessed advanced knowledge regarding technology applications and software. Once her colleagues saw her in action and addressed the technology issues the sixth-grade team experienced, they sought her out to assist. She became known as the technology technician for the grade-level teachers who, at first, were reluctant to integrate technology into their classrooms. After a few days, the science teacher had key students in each classroom, facilitating the technological needs of the teachers. This same grade-level team trained a group of young men and equipped them with walkie-talkies to facilitate group hallway and restroom transitions. This was another benefit of the TLC in supporting student learning of content area skills and practical skills from another teacher who may address learning challenges in another format. Additionally, students may have enjoyed seeing their teachers work together on the same subject. Soon, the students began to emulate the same collegial behaviors (Katz & Shahar, 2015). To see this team in action was a sight to behold and equivalent to a well-oiled machine. One of the team’s ELA teachers spoke about how her colleague taught science but as an extension of reading. She explained how great this was because she had students using reading strategies in science class.

Teachers were able to share their ideas with their colleagues in a way in which everyone took on the role of a learner and coach. This helped teachers develop a sense of belonging and
value, positively impacting the teacher’s mental health and limited isolationism. The following is an example of a debriefing session where teachers moved across the reflective continuum from observation to feedback to the next steps and securing the needed materials. On March 23, 2023, during a sixth-grade collaborative planning session, other content area teachers provided feedback to ELA teachers after an observed lesson by describing the students’ lack of engagement during an ELA instructional round. One math teacher shared how unengaged her students were because the ELA consultant did not call on anyone in her class. Another math teacher noticed a positive difference in students’ engagement when their names were called versus calling on a volunteer. A social studies teacher added the need to have paper copies in front of students in addition to the electronic version. The teacher’s unfamiliarity with integrating instructional technology was shared as well. A colleague from the science department responded with additional feedback. This teacher suggested having all materials in the slide presentation to circumvent the need to go back and forth from one set of materials to another. The ELA consultant replied:

I want to figure out how to [complete] the slides… so I will not have to go out [of the presentation to the text] on Zoom©. I am going to figure it out. Usually, when I do not know something about technology, I just Google© it. (Educator, personal communication, March 23, 2023)

During the interviews, teachers shared the benefits of working within the TLC. Those benefits included brainstorming with each other, sharing what works, building on consistent practices, cross-curricular planning, distributing the workload (copying papers, setting up student materials, creating presentations, etc.), hearing multiple perspectives, or addressing similar issues to make instructional changes. One teacher shared her love for collaborating with other teachers.
She preferred this method of co-teaching because it makes teachers feel safe. She expressed that no teacher wants to look like they are struggling in class when the administrator comes in because it would appear as if the teacher could not do the job. So, it created a safe place among peers. Another teacher shared how everybody pulled together, and different subject area teachers were helping out others. Teachers viewed the TLC as a growth opportunity to learn from their peers.

A sixth-grade teacher observed and assisted in facilitating a math lesson. She was inspired to plan and organize her lessons in a similar way to support her efforts with time management. She shared,

I was amazed with math and how their lessons flowed. I took notes and made sure everything was in my presentation, every little detail, and it did help my lessons flow better.

Therefore, teachers gained structural support with time management, lesson flow, and student engagement. Some teachers watched the methods used by others to increase participation and the positive relationships seen between teachers and students. Others were more willing to voice their perspectives. For example, a sixth-grade teacher shared a personal area of growth from the TLC:

I used to be pretty quiet in the meetings, but if something is asking questions about something I know, and I have the knowledge of it, then I'm sharing it. Whereas before, I would not. Before, if they were looking for answers, and I had the answer, I just would not say anything.

The external consultant provided feedback on the TLCs as well. She included that the mental health aspect of teachers is aided when their emotional and instructional needs are met.
She also expressed that administrators and colleagues who show teachers they believe in them and speak and act on that belief will have teachers motivated to continue teaching at their schools. It also motivates their performance. Active listening is one concept continuously used in TLC planning meetings because other teachers look for everyone’s input and contribution. The process puts teachers on the spot but provides a lifeline of support to get the job done well. She explained how prepared teachers were and how they responded when they saw a student struggle. The teachers did not hesitate to ask the kids to come into their classroom, and they could make immediate decisions that impacted students learning. Teachers made changes such as moving students from one classroom to another during certain subject area sessions. Instead of students writing responses, teachers had students typing responses, or instead of typing responses, students turned and talked to each other. They were all sharing the workload.

The school leader’s insight on the collaborative mirrored the teachers’ insights when she expressed how good it was in building relationships for the teachers to work together. She reflected on what she observed during the TLC sessions after working with all grade levels. She noticed how the sixth-grade team worked dynamically together. If one person is having an issue, everybody is trying to fix it, and if a person needs a break, they give each other a break. Therefore, she saw community among the sixth-grade team. She shared,

It is not just math. It is not just ELA. It is everybody working together, so teachers are able to see each other’s strengths and weaknesses. It provided an essence of shared responsibility. This type of support should motivate teachers to remain at BWMS because they have help and do not have to carry the pressure and responsibility alone. Everybody is trying to work towards the same goal, this is why transparency with data is so important. Everyone needed to understand the current performance and what it takes
from each person to meet the school’s academic goals. In an effort to build and sustain a collaborative culture of teacher leaders, teachers need working conditions which the TLC provides.

On the other hand, some teachers experienced adverse effects. One teacher became discouraged and worked in isolation. She did not think her colleagues or administrators believed in her value in impacting student achievement. This was magnified when student performance data showed little growth during planning meetings, bringing more dissatisfaction and less engagement with her colleagues. Her dissatisfaction impacted her decision to leave the school at the end of the 2023 school year. She sought out promotional opportunities but did not have access to them at the school; therefore, she shared her letter of resignation with the school leader.

**Teacher Leadership Behaviors**

As a result of engaging in the TLC, teachers self-reflected on their leadership engagement in the TLC using the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) (Chen, 2020). The TLI aimed to examine teachers' leadership behaviors and strengths as a result of their engagement in the TLC. Data were collected from eight teachers, of which six taught ELA. The teachers were asked to respond to a survey composed of 25 items using a Likert-scaled range (from a high of one to four). On the scale, categorized into five subcategories of teacher-leader behaviors: Promoting Professional Learning, Focusing on the Learning Process, Encouraging Collegial Collaboration, Engaging in Decision-Making, and Liaising with External Affiliations.

The TLC results were used as a method of self-reflection to identify areas of teachers’ engagement in the various types of leadership practices. The TLC was used to answer research question two as changes in practice empowered leadership behaviors (Lambert, 2003; Muijs, & Harris, 2006). Displayed in Table 15 are the responses of eight teachers. The most engaging
teacher leader behaviors teacher reported directly participating related to Focusing on the Learning Process. This component included teachers setting formal and informal academic goals for students, monitoring students' progress, building relationships with students, and recognizing superior student achievement. In Promoting Professional Learning and Encouraging Collegial Collaboration, both components reflected higher teacher engagement second to the learning process, which demonstrated teacher-leader behaviors. Overall, teachers had attributes of teacher-leader behaviors which directly impacted curriculum, instruction, and assessment. With lower engagement, fewer teachers felt like they engaged in Decision-Making. The least engaging leadership activity found among the teachers was Liaising with External Affiliations. Therefore, teacher-leader behaviors reflected job-embedded focuses, rarely influencing others outside the school walls (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).
Table 15

**Teacher Leadership Inventory Responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promoting Professional Learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage team colleagues to practice new skills and pedagogies</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I supervise and evaluate team colleagues’ performance for teaching</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improvements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage team colleagues to use classroom data for improvement</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I create professional growth opportunities for team colleagues</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I acknowledge team colleagues exceptional performance and provide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incentives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focusing on the Learning Process</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage team colleagues to monitor students’ progress</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I set academic goals for students through discussions with my team</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recognize superior student achievement or improvement by meeting</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk informally with students during recess and breaks</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Encouraging Collegial Collaboration</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I set team plans and make decisions by referring to the school’s goals</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with my team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am responsible for coordinating the curriculum in my team</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage team colleagues to collaborate in my team and with other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teams in school</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I invite teachers or experts from other organizations to share with my</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage team colleagues to collaborate with peers from other schools</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engaging in Decisions-Making</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I provide suggestions to my supervisors for setting school goals</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I participate in the review of curricula materials</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have sufficient autonomy to do the work</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I act as a coordinating bridge between my supervisors and team colleagues</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am involved in school decision-making</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liaising with External Affiliations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liaise with teacher leaders or other professionals of peer schools</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liaise with parents to communicate student progress and performance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liaise with the community and other organizations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liaise with educational bureau officers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liaise with researchers in educational organizations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question Three

Research question three sought to examine if teachers' participation in self-directed professional development and the TLC influenced teachers to remain at the school. The goal of the program was to retain 60% of ELA teachers at BWMS. The program was not successful in meeting this goal. Three of the six ELA teachers will continue teaching at BWMS. The remaining three made personal decisions to continue teaching in a different school district. This equates to a 50% teacher retention rate which falls 10% short of the program’s goal. Teachers who left ELA, the school, and the district communicated a variety of reasons for their departure. A teacher stated she had been far from home and could not build relationships with her younger siblings because she lived so far away. Therefore, she moved closer to home to focus on her personal family connections. Another teacher expressed her desire to stay under certain conditions. She communicated a desire for a promotion from a teacher to an ELA interventionist which had not been developed and approved by the district. She felt limited to remain teaching in the district; therefore, she chose to leave the district in hopes of securing a teacher leadership position in the next school district to employ her. The third ELA teacher who left expressed her departure for personal reasons. However, the departing teachers suggested school communities and leaders help teachers see their worth, know they are valued, model expectations, reduce additional extraneous tasks, offer insight whether it is asked or not, focus on the dynamics of the group, and provide more time for team building to develop trusting collegial relationships to retain teachers.

Research Question Four

Research question four sought to solicit input from teachers, an external consultant, and a school leader on improving professional development and teacher-leader collaboratives, which
would continue to enhance teacher practice and empower teacher leadership in a coherent instructional system. Teachers, the external partner, and the school leader were all asked for their input on improving professional development for ELA teachers and the TLC boot camp sessions and planning meetings. Although teachers expressed the benefits, they also shared some concerns, specifically in communicating precise explanations of the program’s goals and an assessment of the team's readiness to participate in the intervention. Teachers suggested making them more aware of the resources available in the PD hub when they are uploaded. An alert link could be added to notify teachers of newly uploaded materials. Also, teachers expressed the need to establish guidelines and timeframes to view the PD items in the hub. Teachers suggested additional types of materials to include in the hub, such as training on the various software programs used by the school. As one teacher exclaimed, “Well, with Moby Max©, there are some good lessons… I think it would be beneficial for the student, but I will need more training on the proper way to use Moby Max and analyze the data” (Educator, personal communication, March 2023).

Another teacher suggested having leadership path training included in the PD hub in addition to teacher resources to enhance teacher practice. She believes doing so would be an investment in teachers who aspire to become future school leaders.

When referring to the TLC, multiple teachers felt the intervention was too long, compacted, and provided aid a little too late in the school year. It was suggested to break the eight-week intervention program up throughout the year in an effort to know each other’s strengths and areas of improvement early on. As a seventh-grade teacher shared,
The TLC would be beneficial throughout the year because teachers can obtain other people’s ideas throughout the year, which benefit the work of the school instead of just waiting until the end of the year.

In further detail, two teachers and an external consultant suggested having a TLC-style boot camp two weeks before the benchmark exam for the first through third nine weeks to reduce the number of TLC boot camp weeks teachers have to facilitate prior to testing in the fourth nine weeks. With this schedule, students are familiar with the process and expectations prior to entering the testing review. Furthermore, student engagement was higher during the TLC process; therefore, it would be beneficial to capture their engagement earlier in the year.

Teachers also provided relational advice, which would increase their efficacy from this process. It is specifically related to instructional leaders. Leaders must demonstrate a positive yet accountable attitude to motivate teachers. What leaders believe, say, and do has a large impact on how teachers view themselves and their abilities to move students forward. It reiterates the concept of modeling what you expect and how words can play an integral part in teachers’ emotional identity and physical performance.

Furthermore, the external consultant and school leader had additional improvement strategies. The consultant suggested assessing student perspectives on the TLC boot camp process to gauge advantages and improvement efforts, as students could also contribute their ideas to promote student achievement based on their experiences. She also noted the opportunity to see which teachers were prepared and those who may have struggled with the process. This observation contributed to the ability to see who could contribute to ELA for the upcoming year. The school leader suggested taking the observational practice beyond the limitations of the school building to observe ELA teachers at the elementary and high school level to further
solidify cohesion across the school district. Specifically, feedback on the process was shared on technology, targeted standards, rigorous student tasks, and student groupings.

**Student Achievement**

In sixth through eighth grade, students were given a standard-aligned benchmark assessment in September 2022. The initial assessment was taken by students prior to teachers participating in the TLC. Students performing at a level of proficiency equated to 49 of 320 students (15.3%). Students showing growth equated to 82 of 312 students (28.5%). The lowest-performing students’ growth equated to 31 of 75 students (41.3%). The last benchmark assessment was given in April of 2023. Students performing at a level of proficiency equated to 124 of 325 students (38.1%). Students showing growth equated to 173 of 310 students (55.8%). The lowest-performing students’ growth equated to 43 of 84 (51.1%). As reflected in Table 16, student achievement in ELA increased after teachers and students increased engagement in the TLC boot camp. Additionally, teacher engagement in the TLC planning sessions also helped to improve student achievement. However, the data indicates that boot camp sessions had a smaller impact on the lowest-performing students. Moreover, teachers and school leaders need to consider an alternate operational structure for this group of students.

**Table 16**

*Comparison of Benchmark Impact Data for ELA*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>September BOY Benchmark</th>
<th>April EOY Benchmark</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>15.3% (n=49/320)</td>
<td>38.1% (n=124/325)</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>+149%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of all</td>
<td>28.5% (n=82/312)</td>
<td>55.8% (n=173/310)</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>+95.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of LPS</td>
<td>41.3% (n=31/75)</td>
<td>51.1% (n=43/84)</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>+23.73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: LPS = Lowest Performing Students, ELA = English Language Arts*
In a data set of 298 students, their BOY performance scores and EOY performance scores were compared. The students included in the data set had a BOY and EOY performance score. Those who did not complete both assessments were removed from the data set. The mean score of the BOY (M=44.39) is less than the mean score of the EOY (M=52.26). There is an eight-point difference in the mean scores. To determine if the difference is statistically significant, a paired sample $t$-test was conducted. I compared the two data sets using a $t$-test to determine if there was a significant difference in the means scores of students’ BOY assessment and the EOY assessment at the 05 alpha level. The results indicates a highly statistically significant difference with a p value of $p < .001$. However, the difference is not directly attributed to the PD and TLC program teachers engaged in to enhance their performance, but the students’ growth can be noted as an additional benefit.
Table 17

**t-Test of ELA Benchmark Assessments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BOY</th>
<th>EOY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>44.38926174</td>
<td>52.25838926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>224.709918</td>
<td>344.9599462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.72548285</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Stat</td>
<td>-10.55304745</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(T&lt;=t) one-tail</td>
<td>1.27604E-22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Critical one-tail</td>
<td>1.650000301</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(T&lt;=t) two-tail</td>
<td>2.55208E-22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Critical two-tail</td>
<td>1.967983525</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

As teacher motivations in cultures of support are further studied to retain teachers, schools and school leaders will need to understand the structural components and beneficial elements needed to comprise a system of sustainability. This endeavor entails clarifying the team dynamics of collective and individual roles, operational and organizational structure, and defined reflective practices. This study explored an empowerment retention strategy and its impact on the professional growth and collective efficacy of ELA teachers to retain them as teacher leaders at BWMS. The findings of this study confirm the benefits of such an initiative, as it assisted educators in making instructional decisions, created a positive work community, and increased student achievement. Teachers were adamant about providing suggestions and improving the program. However, increased collective efficacy did not result in meeting the program’s goal.

Overall, teachers were motivated to take the input of each other, review previously taught lessons based on the insight from the team's planning session and make the necessary changes that impact student achievement. Teachers displayed leadership behaviors relating to teaching, learning, and peer collaboration. In this setting, the change percent score of the CE-Scale indicated how teachers’ collective efficacy increased as teachers learned from each other and led
school improvement initiatives. As a result, teachers demonstrated teacher-leader behaviors. However, the teacher leadership influence was limited to the building site and did not expand into the larger educational community, as denoted in the TLI and interview responses of the school leader. Teachers demonstrated their growth and made practical changes as they worked together to solve teaching and learning-based dilemmas. The structure of the TLC, as a distributive leadership model, provided opportunities for the continued engagement of teachers facilitating the embedded work of the school. Chapter V suggests additional recommendations for creating positive cultures of committed teacher leaders to sustain school improvement.
Chapter V: Discussion

Introduction

Schools are reporting challenges in retaining and recruiting teachers. Several districts in states across the United States, such as Texas, California, and Mississippi, have focused on retention strategies to fill teacher vacancies with quality teachers. The challenge of retaining teachers has come to be an even greater challenge post-pandemic. However, districts are becoming innovative with “grow your own” retention strategies to empower teachers in cultures of collaboration to equip them with knowledge, reflection, and connection. Bernard Williams Middle School (BWMS) has taken a similar approach.

This applied action research study aimed to retain English Language Arts (ELA) teachers at BWMS. This research focused on enhancing teachers’ practice and collective teacher efficacy to retain teachers and sustain school improvement efforts through teacher leadership. The retention strategies included creating supportive working conditions for professional learning and developing a structure of distributive leadership, referred to as a Teacher Leader Collaborative (TLC). Four research questions directed the study. The first two research questions consisted of two subpart questions, and the last two were related to evaluating the implemented intervention. The research questions sought to determine how teacher-led development and empowerment initiatives such as the TLC contribute to a group of teachers’ efficacy and professional growth, leading to a teacher retention rate of 60% or more in ELA.

Chapter V includes a discussion of the findings presented in Chapter IV, the study's implications and limitations, and recommendations for future studies. Conclusions are
drawn from an analysis of data from each action plan component. The analysis reflects the
perceptions of teachers, their work, and how the elements of the study evolved as a result of their
input.

**Discussion**

Teachers often participate in multifaceted professional development and bring their
expertise with them as they engage in reflective collaboratives to improve and influence their
colleagues using shared best practices to solve job-embedded problems. Donohoo and Katz
referred to this increasingly used strategy as adaptive challenges (Dewitt, 2023). Adaptive
challenges are conducive conditions of collaborative cultures that increase collective teacher
efficacy based on reflective cycles of improvements. These cycles prepare teachers with
opportunities to hone their craft, build collective efficacy, demonstrate leadership behaviors, and
lead to expanded spheres of influence and leadership succession.

**Professional Learning in the TLC**

BWMS is transparent with data as it is a method of accountability. Transparency is
important in creating shared goals based on knowing where students are in reference to their
academic performance, but it also brings a level of additional stress as teachers’ performances
are tied to students’ performance. In addition to this stress, teachers have multiple jobs and find it
hard to balance their work life and mental health. They are experiencing burnout and need
support. The first level of support derives from the school leaders’ beliefs and perceptions of
teachers and plays an integral role in modeling respect for instructional leadership among
students and teachers. In essence, leaders must be first partakers of learning. In this endeavor,
leaders must know what his/her teachers need. The needs of teachers are vastly different as
teachers come into the profession from traditional and non-traditional routes in education.
Increasingly teachers are coming into the profession from alternative certification routes. They bring added value from transferrable skills but also require vastly different professional learning to meet their needs. Meeting various teacher needs cannot be addressed in a one size fits all series of professional development workshops. Consequently, leaders must promote self-directed professional development to meet the vast needs of teachers.

In the study, teachers asked for mandatory professional development as opposed to the professional development hub offering a more self-directed type of curated learning without timelines or deadlines. I infer teachers were accustomed to deadlines and wanted to meet the expectations established, and as a result, the ability to direct their own learning as professional educators have taken the back seat to educators’ efforts to adhere to the mandates. To understand teachers’ needs, surveys are utilized. Surveys provide insight; however, a deeper understanding becomes prevalent when leaders know the added value each teacher brings to the school community. Upon receiving varied professional development, leaders also need to provide opportunities for teachers to demonstrate learning to others as contributing school team members. According to Anderson et al. (2023), “Strong instructional leaders are more likely to promote formalized collaborative structures that focus on instructional improvement” (p. 3). Leaders can create an environment that acknowledges and cultivates teachers’ added value and leverages teachers’ contributions for the betterment of the teacher and the school (Akert & Martin, 2012).

Knowing teachers requires an open ear and open-door policy, but most of all, trust. Being trusted to be the professional educator, they are increasing collective teacher efficacy. Knowing teachers are trusted to do their jobs once a mission is materialized and goals are solidified is empowering. Leaving the how component of educating students to teachers demonstrates trust
and the perception that leaders are confident in the teachers’ ability to move students forward. Teachers also need champions in today’s educational arena.

A foundation of learning is rooted in developing trusting relationships whereby teachers have the voice, agency, and action to share their needs. Teachers in the current study expressed the benefit of learning from each other because they did not want their administrators to come in and see ineffective teaching. They do not want their leader to think they cannot do their job. Therefore, they preferred to share their areas of development with colleagues. This sentiment reinforces the “I got you” concept, in which leaders are continuously trying to change the narrative to a focus on growth and development. Similar to students, teachers learn best from each other. Leaders must monopolize opportunities for shared learning to take place throughout the workday.

The TLC provide an environment for teachers to become vulnerable with each other, accept feedback from immediate interaction, as well as make necessary changes to instruction without feeling incompetent and lacking in confidence. Teachers who were reluctant to use technology felt at ease when a grade-level selected technology teacher helped, modeled, and trained her colleagues and even students in their classrooms. During these cycles, leaders supported teacher growth through organizational structures of on-the-job problem-solving. This provides a level of equitable access to education for all students.

One observation noted from the study was the camaraderie developed amongst the staff. When one was in need and another knew how to meet that need, teachers stepped up and provided answers and assistance. No teacher was left behind. The beauty in the built professional relationships and camaraderie led teachers to strengthen their commitment, reflect on their practice, and develop their voices. However, this network of teachers must be focused on the
school’s improvement needs detailed by the lead learner, the principal (Fullan, 2015). Teachers who usually kept quiet began speaking up when they had an answer to a question posed by another teacher. They were more confident in the group’s ability to move students. The greatest organizational structures can be implemented, but without relational trust amongst colleagues, the structure becomes nothing more than the shell of an egg missing the yoke.

Recognizing teachers for their effective teaching methods increased their willingness to showcase their knowledge and model for others. Teachers knew whom to go to for what as they heard and saw how effective another teacher was with a particular skill related to teaching, learning, and connecting with students. They began requesting each other to model in their rooms and presented their strengths in teacher-facilitated professional development. Presented, collected, categorized, and materials determined to be the most valuable instructional materials went through the curation process. Teachers determined which strategies of differentiation, engagement, and questioning techniques would be most suitable for addressing the challenges students faced. Once determined, these materials or processes were distributed and curated for future endeavors in the professional development hub (Sharma & Deschaine, 2022). When the material or improvement processes were evaluated in the TLC, teachers were more familiar with the curated resources and implemented them in their classrooms. However, teachers were less likely to utilize the resources if they were simply digitized and uploaded into the hub. One social studies teacher who modeled in at least three classrooms looked forward to continuing to help her colleagues with student engagement through technological features. She took the steps to move into a leadership role. She completed her Master of Science degree in Leadership and was in the process of studying for the School Leader Licensure Assessment (SLLA).
One theme from the study was reiterated in the teacher interviews, external consultant’s interview, and teacher leader inventory: teachers feeling appreciated and valued contributed to their willingness to commit to the work required to achieve the outlined goals. Teachers’ value and credibility grew due to their collective learning in multi-adaptive methods—personalized, collective, and curated development. This new learning was not only used but shared with whole grade-level teams. Teachers expressed the need for hands-on professional development guided by a targeted focus. Leaders provide what needs to occur and leave the how-to teachers—the professionals. The same tone of high regard for teachers established by leaders leads to teachers developing high expectations for student learning, which results in a highly collectively efficacious school.

**Collective Efficacy**

As the focus of efficacy shifted from individual teacher efficacy to group efficacy, this collective efficacy increasingly predicted increases in student growth (Bandura, 1993; Hattie & Clarke, 2018). Research has focused on the structural elements which develop highly efficacious schools. The elements in this environment include establishing shared goals, teacher capacity building, hands-on, job-embedded problem solving, reflective cycles of improvement, and leadership support and empowerment (Donohoo et al., 2020). The ability for groups to commit to getting the job done is rooted simply in the interdependence of colleagues, which impacts the behavior of teachers and students. Fullan (2015) referred to the roots of collective efficacy as a culture of collaboration demonstrated through systemic processes. These structures are specific and targeted at instructional improvement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). More importantly, how leaders create cultures of collaboration for strong collective teacher efficacy leads to
establishing teacher-leader behaviors, which expand teachers’ influence and establish high academic goals for students.

While actively participating in the TLC, teachers made valuable contributions which in-turn increased their collective efficacy. Having a two-hour designated time to plan and debrief each day helped teachers set expectations and prepare for teaching and learning. Confidence was dependent on this preparation as teachers felt more comfortable with frequent observations after discussing lessons with colleagues. As a result, teachers sought the input of their colleagues. Some began to share answers that colleagues needed in contrast to their usual timid approach to collaborating. Others willingly took feedback from colleagues and implemented new practices. Moreover, teachers were more knowledgeable in cross curricular content due to their engagement of facilitating for multiple subject areas. They were able to leverage what students understood in one subject and helped students apply similar concepts in another subject. This teamwork provided teachers with the shared capital to move students academically. This academic progress was attainable because teachers planned together, provided each other with breaks, gathered and distributed materials for one another, and celebrated success stories. The success stories showcased teachers’ abilities, but more importantly, it developed closer professional relationships among the educators in an adaptive environment rooted embedded in joint responsibility.

**Leadership Behaviors**

As teachers are empowered to lead the charge in addressing adaptive instructional challenges, such as analyzing data, creating action plans, and evaluating outcomes, their leadership behaviors signify their investment and ownership in the work. Teachers who work together to engage in this type of distributive work are more likely to believe in the power of the
groups’ ability to make a difference in students. According to Anderson et al. (2023), “The cause-effect relationship between teaching behaviors and student achievement helps facilitate a self-correcting mentality toward the teaching task,” establishing a growth mindset towards making mistakes and taking risks (p. 3). Establishing a culture focused on instruction, time-on-task, and continuous reflection, leaders set the stage for teachers to expand their impact on student achievement and demonstrate behaviors encouraging scholastic achievement leading to pathways to leadership succession.

**Researcher Reflections**

The study was centered on developing supportive, autonomous working conditions within the structure of ELA teachers’ daily work. However, from the results, an unexpected turn of events took place. The teachers requested more timelines and parameters instead of less defined parameters. The need for more autonomy would resonate with a more established network of teachers.

In retrospect, I realized there were more similarities among new and experienced teachers. In contrast to my own experience as a new teacher needing buffer support, teachers today come from various backgrounds with their own set of capital and needs. Therefore, professional development requires personalization, and professional learning communities require job embedded practical experiences, which drive teachers to grow professionally and pursue individual professional capital.

School leaders would benefit from the outcomes from this study. In conducting research on building capacity and increasing the efficacy of teachers, I reflected and noted the need for leaders to be first part takers of the study. I needed professional development to change my practice as a new administrator. As I replicated the learned behaviors and actions of my
principal, my capacity increased. The hands-on learning experiences helped me to address complex issues within the school and in professional relationship building to enhance my practice. Additionally, I needed to increase my self-efficacy before establishing parameters to increase collective teacher efficacy. This type of intervention took place over a long period of time, more specifically, three years. As a result, this current research had a personal impact on me as I engaged in various PD and participated in PLCs which involved the support and professional capital of my entire support system.

Furthermore, due to the findings, my central focus is to improve my practice and the working conditions of teachers, including communicating the goals of the school, modeling the expectations which align with the school’s vision, mission, core values, and goals, providing elements of care and respect for all, and celebrating what works to maintain institutional memory.

To continue the work, I will modify the length of the collaborative. Instead of an eight-week collaborative at the end of the year, it will be distributed over the course of the entire school year. During each nine-week term the TLC will take place during the seventh and eighth week. Most of all, I will focus on the needs of the staff, providing a balance between the tasks of the organization and the relational support of the individuals who serve our student body. The underpinnings of cultivating relational trust among colleagues is a paramount condition of sustainability which a leader must establish (Fullan, 2016). As the lead learner, I will engage with teachers in promoting student learning.

Implications

To empower teachers as leaders, school leaders need to provide continuous opportunities for teachers to work with each other to improve instruction in the form of a formal organizational
structure. This work must be focused as well as clearly defined and communicated with all stakeholders. Within these structures, leaders can build cohesive teams of improvement and provide teachers with the necessary support, human and social capital, and instructional resources used in connection with using evidence-based practices. Moreover, leaders who provide teachers with supportive leadership in which leaders outline the directives driven by shared goals and leave the path to improvement at the behest of the teaching professionals. This supportive leadership protects instructional time, limits distractions, and relates everything back to the established goals of the school.

In addition to the formal structure of collaboratives, attention to the personal care of teachers is necessary. Teachers are empowered by care and respect. When teachers are respected, they are propelled to help others using their strengths. This entails leaders recognizing the good, the valuable, and the quality teachers bring to the group's collective work. Curtailing feelings of teacher incompetency, inadequacy, and isolation will promote teachers' engagement and participation in reflective cycles of improvement. This study’s findings suggest natural motivations to succeed emerge when leadership aligns with the needs of teachers in two-way open communications of trust. What cultivates such communication, respect, appreciation, adaptability, a listening ear, a positive attitude, and a willingness to learn from others. If teacher collaboration includes the aforementioned characteristics of teachers and leaders in a collaborative centered on teaching and learning, high collective efficacy does promote the high scholastic achievement of teachers and students. This process entails leaders listening to the views and ideas of their teachers and allowing change to take place first at the top. The change begins with the leader modeling expectations first and giving teachers space to proclaim and exercise their voice.
Study Limitations

The sample size of the participants presented the first limitation. The number of participants was small (5 ELA teachers and 2 support teachers), and the findings could not be generalized to other settings. Additionally, the great attention on high stakes test scores at BWMS could have been counterintuitive, causing teachers’ efficacy to decrease. More research is needed to explore the relationship between the combination approach of providing professional development in professional learning communities, which are facilitated by teachers, and its connection to collective teacher efficacy.

Recommendations

Although structural and relational aspects of the retention strategy were beneficial, the school site could clarify the utility of the professional development hub by establishing timelines for teachers to complete self-selected PDs. Educators suggested completing one self-selected PD per term. The hub can also include leadership coursework with continuing education credits (CEUs). Furthermore, school leaders can create a tool encouraging teachers to register to conduct teacher-led PDs showcasing their expertise multiple times throughout the entire school year.

Should other schools seek to implement combination PDs, school leadership teams will need to gauge the readiness of the staff, know their teachers’ various professional needs, relate PD to the work of the PLC. Should other schools seek to implement the TLC, it would be imperative to have a technology meeting with all staff prior to the implementation stage. Teachers could conduct a practice run of a TLC lesson and a focused debriefing meeting with a finished product for next steps. Using student data and teacher references student groups can be created after the initial benchmark exam; however, students’ grouping may change based on
academic and social factors as they arise, but it may be beneficial to school leaders and teachers to keep the team abreast to changes as soon as possible.

Additionally, from teachers’ feedback, the initiative should be conducted throughout the year in increments. It was suggested to host a collaborative session for two weeks at a time at the end of each term (nine weeks). With this format, support can be provided early on in the year, and teachers and students will be accustomed to the process. This time frame could also benefit more growth for the lowest performing students (LPS) due to the previous nine-week TLC timeframe being exhaustive for LPS students’ progress and teachers’ work-life balance. Most of all, hunt for the good, address needed changes, clarify and model expectations, and include teachers in evaluating the perspective data from teachers and students on the impact of the process. School leaders can create joint systems of responsibility with embedded teambuilding as opposed to competitive opposition.

Future research on the organizational framework for teacher collaboratives would assist leaders in establishing formal cultures of collaboration. Additional research can be conducted on the impact the TLC or any formal culture of collaboration has on students in relation to teaching others through collaborative engagement, as students’ behaviors and attitudes began to replicate that of their teachers’.

However, formulaic, one size fits all structures or solutions rarely meets the various demand of teachers and students. Therefore, building relationships is at the core of developing a highly collective efficacious school and is a priority for a supportive school leader. Improvement efforts are sustainable and consistent when the leader prioritizes teaching and learning through formal reflective cycles of collaboration. The consistency of the teachers’ collaborative work ensures the process is carried out with fidelity and develops competent and confident teacher
leaders. As teachers demonstrate leadership behaviors, multiple pathways to leadership succession could lead to retention policies for teachers. District and state leaders could develop formal pathways to various aspects of school leadership.

**Conclusion**

This research captures teachers' human capital in collaborative sessions and leadership roles to describe the influence of high collective efficacy among teachers to increase student achievement. Teachers, through their anecdotal experiences, related high collective efficacy to five core themes: being a part of the instructional decision-making process, facilitating and engaging in reflective practices, maximizing the shared knowledge of the entire team to address instructional dilemmas, creating shared goals and having supportive leadership (Donohoo et al., 2020).

Instead of predicting perceptions of future collective efficacy, the current study captured both the prediction of collective efficacy through the Collective Efficacy Scale and the impact of collective efficacy through contextual antecedents of teachers engaging in the TLC. As participants, teachers could modify the study's process and design according to their needs, as they did with revamping the observational protocol. During the TLC, teachers discussed decisions they could make, evaluated how these decisions impacted the group dynamics, and how the teachers' interaction built cohesion among the group. Teachers focused on the outcomes of their decisions. Once the outcomes of these decisions were evaluated, the work was preserved through digitation in a professional development hub to maximize what works best for the student body in order to sustain school improvement efforts. The TLC structure addresses the variation of teachers’ needs, as many are coming into the profession through alternate routes and teaching out-of-content areas. Although erroneous initial implementation errors caused some
inconsistencies, teachers expressed the usefulness of the professional development hub and TLC should the suggested modifications be made.
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Appendix
Appendix A: Tables

Table 1

*Population Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pineville County 2019</th>
<th>Pineville County 2020</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Pineville 2019</th>
<th>Pineville 2020</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>9,988</td>
<td>9,810</td>
<td>-1.81%</td>
<td>1155</td>
<td>1180</td>
<td>+2.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Born</td>
<td>97.8%</td>
<td>99.6%</td>
<td>+1.8%</td>
<td>98.4%</td>
<td>98.5%</td>
<td>+.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Income</td>
<td>$39,370</td>
<td>$34,485</td>
<td>-12.4%</td>
<td>$51,607</td>
<td>$39,716</td>
<td>-23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2

*Racial Profiles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pineville County 2019</th>
<th>Pineville County 2020</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Pineville 2019</th>
<th>Pineville 2020</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
<td>80.3%</td>
<td>-1.9%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>24.70%</td>
<td>-10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>-.04%</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
<td>69.50%</td>
<td>+11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>5.51%</td>
<td>+1.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-1.4%</td>
<td>.60%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.25%</td>
<td>.12%</td>
<td>-.13%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>.25%</td>
<td>+.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

*Teacher Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Licensure</th>
<th>Certification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Blue</td>
<td>1.4 years</td>
<td>Secondary ELA</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Harold</td>
<td>4.4 years</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Tramble</td>
<td>1.1 years</td>
<td>Secondary ELA</td>
<td>Alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Flaggerton</td>
<td>0 years</td>
<td>Secondary ELA</td>
<td>Alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Salizar</td>
<td>15.4 years</td>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Tudor</td>
<td>4.4 years</td>
<td>Secondary ELA</td>
<td>Alternative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: ELA = English Language Arts*
Table 4

*MAAP Accountability*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA Proficiency</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* ELA = English Language Arts, MAAP = Mississippi Achievement Assessment Program
Table 5

*Trend Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA Proficiency</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of All</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of LPS</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* ELA = English Language Arts, LPS = Low Performing Students
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Component 1</th>
<th>Goal (s)</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A Teacher Needs Survey</td>
<td>• Identify the cultural and academic needs of the ELA department.</td>
<td>Analyze Federal Programs Summary of Committee work of teachers</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify the cultural and academic needs of teachers.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B Teacher Perception Surveys and</td>
<td>• Identify the strengths, preferences, and interests of ELA and ELA support teachers.</td>
<td>Teacher Leadership Inventory Survey</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection: administer surveys</td>
<td>• Identify teachers’ perceptions, behaviors, and beliefs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>via Google© Forms</td>
<td></td>
<td>CE-Scale Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1C Teacher PGS Training</td>
<td>• Teachers become knowledgeable of teacher expectations.</td>
<td>Professional development Evaluation survey</td>
<td>School Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Highlight teachers’ strengths and areas of improvement.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers reflect and enhance their practices.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers understand descriptive and objective scripting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1D Self-Selected Professional</td>
<td>• Disseminate evidence-based instructional information.</td>
<td>Classroom Observation</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Hub which includes</td>
<td>• Build teacher capacity to enhance teachers’ use and evaluation of research-based practices.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resources and materials aligned to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ELA Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Mississippi Department of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Teacher Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth Rubric posted in Google©</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1E Reflection and evaluation on</td>
<td>• Collect feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of self-selected professional development to improve its implementation.</td>
<td>Teacher Interview</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the usefulness of the professional</td>
<td>• Identify how much teachers and students have learned.</td>
<td>Classroom Observation</td>
<td>ELA teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development hub on teachers’</td>
<td>• Retain 60% of ELA teachers at BWMS by the end of the year</td>
<td>Comparison of ELA Benchmark 1 in October to ELA Benchmark 3 in March</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>progress.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7
*Action Plan and Evaluation Method 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Component 1</th>
<th>Collective Stakeholder Feedback</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A Teacher Needs Survey</td>
<td>• Staff Debriefing Meetings&lt;br&gt;Teachers’ response to the Federal Programs needs survey Summary form</td>
<td>March 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B Teacher Perception Surveys and Reflection: administer surveys via Google© Forms</td>
<td>• Teacher departmental meeting notes&lt;br&gt;Teacher responses from surveys</td>
<td>November 2022&lt;br&gt;pre-survey&lt;br&gt;March 2023&lt;br&gt;post-surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1C Teacher PGS Training</td>
<td>• Weekly Departmental meetings</td>
<td>August 2022&lt;br&gt;until November 2023&lt;br&gt;September 2022 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1D Self-Selected Professional Development Hub, which includes resources and materials aligned to the Mississippi Department of Education Teacher Professional Growth Rubric posted in Google© Classroom.</td>
<td>• Post Teacher Interview&lt;br&gt;Classroom Observation&lt;br&gt;Consultant Observation Feedback&lt;br&gt;and debriefing notes</td>
<td>September 2022 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1E Reflection and evaluation on the usefulness of the professional development hub on teachers’ progress.</td>
<td>• Post Teacher Interview&lt;br&gt;PD Training Evaluation&lt;br&gt;PGS post-conference meetings with teachers</td>
<td>December 2022 – April 2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: PD = Professional Development; PGS = Professional Growth System*
### Table 8

**Action Plan and Evaluation Method 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TLC Component 2</th>
<th>Goal (s)</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2A TLCs Instructional Rounds (ELA department focuses on topics such as student engagement garnered from ongoing data) | • Establish and maintain ELA department norms by building a network of teachers who work together to solve instructional issues.  
• To develop a clear understanding of what takes place in ELA classrooms.  
• Teachers hold each other accountable to the goals established by the collective data digs.  
• Teachers change/ enhance instructional practices. | Classroom Observation Recordings/Videos  
Instructional Rounds Meeting Notes  
Teacher Interviews | Assistant Principal  
Teachers |
| 2B Data Analysis Meetings | • Identify a problem of practice (Identify gaps in the instructional curriculum).  
• Determine student growth. | Update Data Tracker and Impact Charts from Data Digs  
Compare the results of Benchmark 1 in October to Benchmark 3 in March | Assistant Principal  
Teachers |
| 2C Evaluating the Teacher Leader Collaborative | • To evaluate the effectiveness of the Teacher Leader Collaborative to improve on its implementation.  
• Identify to what extent teachers learned as a result of the instructional rounds process.  
• Observe teachers using their new knowledge and skills.  
• Determine how much students learned.  
• Determine if collective efficacy increased as a result of participating in the Teacher Leader Collaborative.  
• Retain 60% of ELA teachers at BWMS by the end of the year | Teacher Interview  
Classroom Observation  
Comparative data on writing instruction, questioning, student engagement, assessments and lesson plans  
Compare results of Benchmark 1 in October to Benchmark 3 in March  
Collective Efficacy-SCALE Post survey  
Attestation form | School Principal  
Assistant Principal |
### Table 9

**Action Plan and Evaluation Method 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TLC Component 2</th>
<th>Collective Stakeholder Feedback</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2A TLCs Instructional Rounds</td>
<td>• Bi-Weekly TLC Meetings • Post Interviews</td>
<td>September 2022 until March 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ELA department focuses on topics such as student engagement garnered from ongoing data)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B Data Analysis Meetings</td>
<td>• Bi-Weekly TLC Meeting • SAT Debriefing Meetings</td>
<td>August 2022 Until March 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C Evaluating the Teacher Leader Collaborative</td>
<td>• Teacher Interviews • PGS post conference meetings with teachers</td>
<td>April 2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: ELA = English Language Arts; TLC = Teacher Leader Collaborative; PGS = Professional Growth System; SAT = School Administrative Team*
### Table 10

**Perceptions of the Professional Development Hub**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Development Hub</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learn additional strategies</td>
<td>Low usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individually paced</td>
<td>Not mandatory or required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fewer distractions</td>
<td>Repetitive material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>differentiated</td>
<td>Lacked deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On-Demand access</td>
<td>Lacked timeframe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tangible resources readily available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follow trends in education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 11

**Professional Development Evaluation: Open-ended Questioning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher collaboration</td>
<td>More time for the session after school limits the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Questioning Techniques to build classroom rigor</td>
<td>Hands-on learning activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The passion of the facilitator/ positive feedback</td>
<td>More examples of judgmental and non-judgmental observation feedback statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement/ Interaction</td>
<td>Chunk and summarize the information due to time limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check for understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering what everyone took from the lesson observed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing teacher observations/ Pair-Share</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the purpose and use of instructional rounds instead of supervisor evaluations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12

*Benchmark Impact Data for Seventh-grade Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single Teacher Data</th>
<th>November Benchmark</th>
<th>December Benchmark</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>30.8% (n=33)</td>
<td>38% (n=38)</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>+23.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of all</td>
<td>64.7% (n=66)</td>
<td>77.8% (n=74)</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>+20.25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of Lowest Performing Students</td>
<td>75.8% (n=22)</td>
<td>85.7% (n=24)</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>+13.06%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13

Collective Efficacy Scale Survey Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CE-Scale Survey Statements</th>
<th>Pre-Rating n=6</th>
<th>Post Rating n=7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teachers in the school are able to get through to the most difficult students.</td>
<td>Agreed 3</td>
<td>Agreed 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students.</td>
<td>Disagreed 3</td>
<td>Disagreed 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If a child doesn’t want to learn teachers here give up.</td>
<td>Agreed 0</td>
<td>Agreed 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teachers here don’t have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning</td>
<td>Disagreed 6</td>
<td>Disagreed 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If a child doesn’t learn something the first time, teachers will try another way.</td>
<td>Agreed 5</td>
<td>Agreed 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Teachers in this school are skilled in various methods of teaching.</td>
<td>Disagreed 1</td>
<td>Disagreed 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Teachers here are well-prepared to teach the subjects they are assigned to teach.</td>
<td>Agreed 6</td>
<td>Agreed 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Teachers here fail to reach some students because of poor teaching methods.</td>
<td>Disagreed 4</td>
<td>Disagreed 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Teachers in this school have what it takes to get the children to learn.</td>
<td>Agreed 6</td>
<td>Agreed 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The lack of instructional materials and supplies makes teaching very difficult.</td>
<td>Disagreed 2</td>
<td>Disagreed 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Teachers in this school do not have the skills to deal with student disciplinary problems.</td>
<td>Agreed 2</td>
<td>Agreed 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Teachers in this school think there are some students that no one can reach.</td>
<td>Disagreed 4</td>
<td>Disagreed 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The quality of school facilities here really facilitates the teaching and learning process.</td>
<td>Agreed 1</td>
<td>Agreed 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The students here come in with so many advantages they are bound to learn.</td>
<td>Disagreed 5</td>
<td>Disagreed 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. These students come to school ready to learn.</td>
<td>Agreed 2</td>
<td>Agreed 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Drugs and alcohol abuse in the community make learning difficult.</td>
<td>Disagreed 4</td>
<td>Disagreed 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The opportunities in this community help ensure that these students will learn.</td>
<td>Agreed 2</td>
<td>Agreed 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Students here just aren’t motivated to learn.</td>
<td>Disagreed 4</td>
<td>Disagreed 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Learning is more difficult at this school because students are worried about their safety.</td>
<td>Agreed 0</td>
<td>Agreed 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Teachers here need more training to know how to deal with these students</td>
<td>Disagreed 6</td>
<td>Disagreed 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Teachers in this school truly believe every child can learn.</td>
<td>Agreed 5</td>
<td>Agreed 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n= Number of participants
Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collective Efficacy</th>
<th>Pre-CE-Scale Score</th>
<th>Post CE-Scale Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 5</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 6</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 7</td>
<td>No Score</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
M = 87.7 \quad 93.1
\]

\[
SD = 11.3 \quad 10.5
\]

Percent Change +6.2%

*Note: M= Mean, CE= Collective Efficacy*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promoting Professional Learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage team colleagues to practice new skills and pedagogies</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I supervise and evaluate team colleagues’ performance for teaching improvements</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage team colleagues to use classroom data for improvement</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I create professional growth opportunities for team colleagues</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I acknowledge team colleagues exceptional performance and provide incentives</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focusing on the Learning Process</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage team colleagues to monitor students’ progress</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I set academic goals for students through discussions with my team</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recognize superior student achievement or improvement by meeting students</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk informally with students during recess and breaks</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Encouraging Collegial Collaboration</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I set team plans and make decisions by referring to the school's goals with my team</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am responsible for coordinating the curriculum in my team</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage team colleagues to collaborate in my team and with other teams in school</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I invite teachers or experts from other organizations to share with my team</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage team colleagues to collaborate with peers from other schools</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engaging in Decisions-Making</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I provide suggestions to my supervisors for setting school goals</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I participate in the review of curricula materials</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have sufficient autonomy to do the work</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I act as a coordinating bridge between my supervisors and team colleagues</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am involved in school decision-making</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liaising with External Affiliations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liaise with teacher leaders or other professionals of peer schools</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liaise with parents to communicate student progress and performance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liaise with the community and other organizations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liaise with educational bureau officers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liaise with researchers in educational organizations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 16

**Comparison of Benchmark Impact Data for ELA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>September BOY Benchmark</th>
<th>April EOY Benchmark</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>15.3% (n=49/320)</td>
<td>38.1% (n=124/325)</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>+149%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of all</td>
<td>28.5% (n=82/312)</td>
<td>55.8% (n=173/310)</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>+95.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of LPS</td>
<td>41.3% (n=31/75)</td>
<td>51.1% (n=43/84)</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>+23.73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: LPS = Lowest Performing Students, ELA = English Language Arts*
### Table 17

**t-Test of ELA Benchmark Assessments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BOY</th>
<th>EOY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>44.38926174</td>
<td>52.25838926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variance</strong></td>
<td>224.709918</td>
<td>344.9599462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observations</strong></td>
<td>298</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>0.72548285</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>t Stat</strong></td>
<td>-10.55304745</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P(T&lt;=t) one-tail</strong></td>
<td>1.27604E-22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>t Critical one-tail</strong></td>
<td>1.650000301</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P(T&lt;=t) two-tail</strong></td>
<td>2.55208E-22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>t Critical two-tail</strong></td>
<td>1.967983525</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Professional Growth System

Teacher Growth Rubric

Examples of Evidence

Domain I: Lesson Design

| 1. Lessons are aligned to standards and represent a coherent sequence of learning |
|---|---|
| **Lessons:** | |
| 4 | Include student learning outcomes and instructional activities that |
| | - are **fully** aligned to current Mississippi College- and Career-Ready Standards or Framework |
| | - are part of a **coherent and focused** sequence of learning with meaningful connections made to |
| | - previous and future learning |
| | - reflect collaboration with other school staff within and across disciplines to enrich learning |
| 3 | Include student learning outcomes and instructional activities that |
| | - are **fully** aligned to current Mississippi College- and Career-Ready Standards or Framework |
| | - are part of a **coherent and focused** sequence of learning with meaningful connections made to |
| | - previous and future learning |
| 2 | Include student learning outcomes and instructional activities that |
| | - are **partially** aligned to current Mississippi College- and Career-Ready Standards or Framework |
| | - are part of an **ineffective** sequence of learning with few connections made to previous and |
| | - future learning |
| 1 | Include student learning outcomes and instructional activities that |
| | - are **not** aligned to current Mississippi College- and Career-Ready Standards or Framework |
| | - are **not** part of a coherent sequence of learning with meaningful connections made to previous |
| | - and future learning |

**Examples of Collected Evidence (not an exhaustive list):**
- Electronic or hard copies of lesson plans are evident
- Documentation of lessons aligned to Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards are evident
- Lesson objectives and/or instructional activities are relative to Mississippi College and Career Readiness |
- Standards
- Students appear to build on learning from previous lessons
- Teacher collaborates across other disciplines to build lessons
- Current lesson(s) builds upon future lesson
- Lesson objectives, outcomes, instructional activities, etc. are sequenced based on student |
- understanding
## 2. Lessons have high levels of learning for all students

### Lessons:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4    | Provide assignments and activities that contain the following components:  
- *appropriate* scaffolding that effectively builds student understanding  
- *ample* evidence that the teacher knows each student’s level and tracks each student’s progress toward mastery  
- differentiation based on students’ abilities and learning styles  
- student-centered learning whenever appropriate  
- *relevant* connections to students’ prior experiences or learning  
- *opportunities for students to choose challenging tasks and instructional materials* |
| 3    | Provide assignments and activities that contain the following components:  
- *appropriate* scaffolding that effectively builds student understanding  
- *ample* evidence that the teacher knows each student’s level and tracks each student’s progress toward mastery  
- differentiation based on students’ abilities and learning styles  
- student-centered learning whenever appropriate  
- *relevant* connections to students’ prior experiences or learning |
| 2    | Provide assignments and activities that contain the following components:  
- *minimal* scaffolding that builds student understanding  
- *limited* evidence that the teacher knows each student’s level and/or tracks each student’s progress toward mastery  
- some differentiation based on students’ abilities and learning styles  
- *limited* student-centered learning  
- *adequate* connections to students’ prior experiences or learning |
| 1    | Provide assignments and activities that contain the following components:  
- *no* scaffolding that builds student understanding  
- *little or no* evidence that the teacher knows each student’s level  
- *little or no* differentiation based on students’ abilities and learning styles  
- *little or no* evidence of student-centered learning  
- *few* connections to students’ prior experiences or learning |

### Examples of Collected Evidence (not an exhaustive list):  
- Scaffolding is evident during classroom instruction  
- Instructional activities are student-centered  
- Teacher includes differentiated learning methods throughout lesson  
- Documentation of students’ progress and/or performance is evident  
- Teacher expands and/or builds on students’ prior learning and knowledge  
- Students’ comprehension is evident based on questioning, understanding, and knowledge  
- Students show responsibility for their own learning experiences  
- Instruction is detailed in an attempt to move all students to mastery
### Domain II: Student Understanding

#### 3. Assists students in taking responsibility for learning and monitors student learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4 | - Communicates the lesson goals and the content in a way that is accessible for every student at his/her level  
- Uses formative assessments to effectively monitor student progress  
- Provides ample and effective opportunities for students to self-assess and correct their own errors  
- Provides students with clear, specific, actionable, and timely feedback  
- Creates opportunities for students to apply teacher and peer feedback to improve performance and accelerate learning  
- Provides opportunities for students to demonstrate connections between what they are learning and how it advances their personal and professional goals/interests |
| 3 | - Communicates the lesson goals and the content in a way that is accessible for every student at his/her level  
- Uses formative assessments to effectively monitor student progress  
- Provides effective opportunities for students to self-assess and correct their own errors  
- Provides students with clear, specific, actionable, and timely feedback  
- Creates opportunities for students to apply teacher and peer feedback to improve performance and accelerate learning |
| 2 | - Communicates the lesson goals and the content in a way that is accessible for most students  
- Uses formative assessments to adequately monitor student progress  
- Provides adequate opportunities for students to self-assess and correct their own errors  
- Provides students with adequate feedback |
| 1 | - Communicates the lesson goals and the content in a way that is not accessible to most students  
- Inadequately monitors student progress  
- Provides inadequate opportunities for students to self-assess and correct their own errors  
- Provides students with little or no feedback |

**Examples of Collected Evidence (not an exhaustive list):**
- Students show understanding of learning goals and objectives, lesson(s) content, instructional activities, etc.
- Teacher includes formative assessments for enhanced/increased student learning
- Teacher allows students to self-correct and make other corrections as necessary
- Teacher provides students with feedback as needed
- Students provide and receive feedback from each other for enhanced understanding
- Teacher monitors students’ understanding and comprehension throughout lesson presentation and instructional activities
- Students make connections between what they are learning and apply it to their personal goals and interests
- Lessons are developed with rigor to allow for students to think critically
### Domain III: Culture and Learning Environment

#### 5. Manages a learning-focused classroom community

**Teacher:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Creates routines and expectations for students to safely voice opinions and answer questions</th>
<th>Proactively monitors student behavior and redirects when necessary to maximize instructional time</th>
<th>Provides collaborative learning opportunities whenever appropriate</th>
<th>Ensures students take ownership of their work and are active participants in their learning</th>
<th>Provides opportunities for students to take on academic leadership roles that promote learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples of Collected Evidence (not an exhaustive list):**

- Teacher engages students to be participatory and active during lessons
- Teacher provides student learning concept activities (i.e. learning maps, learning trees, assessments, etc.) focused on content
- Students are able to voice opinions, ask, and answer questions during lessons
- Teacher monitors and addresses student behavior and redirects to preserve instructional time
- Teacher has routines and expectations visible throughout classroom
- Student work is visible throughout classroom
- Teacher provides a classroom environment for collaborative learning
- Students take on active leadership and ownership [roles] within the classroom that promote learning
- Teacher provides opportunities for students to lead and initiate their own learning and understanding
### Domain II: Culture and Learning Environment

#### 6. Manages classroom space, time, and resources (including technology when appropriate) effectively for student learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **4**    | • Effectively maximizes use of physical space and resources (including technology whenever appropriate) in support of student learning  
• Maximizes time such that students *always* have something meaningful to do  
• Creates an environment where students execute transitions, routines, and procedures in an orderly and efficient manner with *minimal* direction or narration from the teacher  
• Provides opportunities for students to share responsibility for leading classroom routines and/or procedures |
| **3**    | • Effectively maximizes use of physical space and resources (including technology whenever appropriate) in support of student learning  
• Maximizes time such that students *always* have something meaningful to do  
• Creates an environment where students execute transitions, routines, and procedures in an orderly and efficient manner most of the time, though they *may require some* direction from the teacher |
| **2**    | • *Adequately* uses physical space or resources (including technology whenever appropriate) in support of student learning  
• *Allows brief* periods of time when students *do not* have something meaningful to do  
• Creates an environment where students execute transitions, routines, and procedures in an orderly and efficient manner *only some of the time* and *require substantial direction* from the teacher |
| **1**    | • *Inadequately* uses physical space or resources (including technology whenever appropriate) in support of student learning  
• *Allows significant* periods of time when students *do not* have something meaningful to do  
• Creates an environment where students *do not* execute transitions, routines, and procedures in an orderly and efficient manner |

**Examples of Collected Evidence (not an exhaustive list):**

- Classroom environment and desk and/or table arrangements are conducive for student learning  
- Teacher utilizes technology as necessary for instruction and/or presenting lesson content  
- Teacher maximizes instructional time to allow for active student engagement and activities  
- Learning centers (if applicable) are prepared and adequately structured for student learning  
- Teacher provides opportunities for students to lead various routines, procedures, etc.  
- Teacher provides students with the opportunity to accept ownership of the classroom space to support active participation, engagement, and peer-to-peer collaboration  
- Students follow routines and procedures with minimal directives from teacher
# Domain III: Culture and Learning Environment

7. Creates and maintains a classroom of respect for all students

**Teacher:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4     | Communicates respectfully to all students  
Effectively fosters respectful relationships among all students  
Demonstrates a strong positive relationship with all students  
Fosters a classroom culture where students give unsolicited praise or encouragement to their peers |
| 3     | Communicates respectfully to all students  
Effectively fosters respectful relationships among all students  
Demonstrates a strong positive relationship with all students |
| 2     | Communicates respectfully to students with rare exceptions  
Fosters respectful relationships among some students but not others  
Demonstrates a strong positive relationship with some students but not others |
| 1     | Often communicates disrespectfully with students  
Does not foster respectful relationships among students  
Does not demonstrate a strong positive relationship with students |

**Examples of Collected Evidence (not an exhaustive list):**  
- Teacher is respectful in communicating with students  
- Teacher and students’ interactions and communications are strong, positive, and promote learning and engagement  
- Students give unsolicited praise and/or encouragement to their classmates (peers)  
- Teacher provides students with positive learning expectations  
- Teacher maintains a classroom that is nurturing for student learning  
- Teacher constructively corrects students’ misbehaviors
## Domain IV: Professional Responsibilities

### 8. Engages in professional learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proactively seeks out and participates in professional learning activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully integrates knowledge gained in professional learning communities, collaboration with peers and leadership, and focused professional development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthens teaching practice based on observer feedback and other types of performance data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares new information and lessons learned with colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serves as a critical friend for colleagues, both providing and seeking meaningful feedback on instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proactively seeks out and participates in professional learning activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully integrates knowledge gained in professional learning communities, collaboration with peers and leadership, and focused professional development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthens teaching practice based on observer feedback and other types of performance data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares new information and lessons learned with colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participates in required professional learning activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applies knowledge gained from professional learning but does not fully integrate the new information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applies some observer feedback to improve teaching practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participates in required professional learning activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not apply knowledge gained from professional learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applies little or no observer feedback to improve teaching practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Examples of Collected Evidence (not an exhaustive list):

- Documentation of professional development activities are visible or available
- Evidence of mentor—mentee collaborations are available (if applicable)
- Current or prior classroom observation notes/feedback are available
- Attendance log from professional learning communities (PLCs) or departmental meetings/collaborations are available
- Teacher performance data (i.e. presentations to colleagues, honors, awards, etc.) are available (if applicable)
- Evidence of teacher leadership activities or opportunities are available
Domain IV: Professional Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. Establishes and maintains effective communication with families/guardians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4 | • Partners with families/guardians to coordinate learning between home and school  
   • Establishes mutual expectations for student learning with families/guardians  
   • **Includes students and/or families/guardians in the planning of positive reinforcements for progress** |
| 3 | • Partners with families/guardians to coordinate learning between home and school  
   • Establishes mutual expectations for student learning with families/guardians |
| 2 | • Communicates with families/guardians reactively concerning student academic progress and development, and outreach is mostly for intervention or corrective reasons |
| 1 | • **Rarely or never communicates with families/guardians** |

**Examples of Collected Evidence (not an exhaustive list):**
- Logs of parent visits, phone calls or other communication are available
- Parent-teacher conference sign in sheets and/or itineraries are available
- Procedures for communicating with parents are available (if applicable)
- Portfolio of parent or guardian communication (i.e. expectation flyers, letters, newsletters, enrichment activities, etc.) is available
- Progress monitoring evidence for positive reinforcements for students is available and/or visible

*Some of the language in this rubric was adapted from the TNTP Core Teaching Rubric.*
Appendix C: CE-Scale Survey

CE-Scale DIRECTIONS: Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements from STRONGLY DISAGREE (1) to STRONGLY AGREE (6).

Strongly Disagree / Strongly Agree

1. Teachers in the school can get through to the most challenging students .......... 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students .......... 1 2 3 4 5 6
3. If a child does not want to learn, teachers here give up .................................................. 1 2 3 4 5 6 4.

Teachers here do not have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning 1 2 3 4 5 6 5. If a child does not learn something the first time, teachers will try another way .... 1 2 3 4 5 6 6.

Teachers in this school are skilled in various methods of teaching ..................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7.
Teachers here are well-prepared to teach the subjects they are assigned to teach .... 1 2 3 4 5 6 8.
Teachers here fail to reach some students because of poor teaching methods ...... 1 2 3 4 5 6 9.
Teachers in this school have what it takes to get the children to learn ................ 1 2 3 4 5 6 10.

The lack of instructional materials and supplies makes teaching very difficult ...... 1 2 3 4 5 6 11.
Teachers in this school do not have the skills to deal with student disciplinary problems ......................................................................................................................... 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. Teachers in this school think there are some students that no one can reach .... 1 2 3 4 5 6
13. The quality of school facilities here really facilitates the teaching and learning process ......................................................................................................................... 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. The students here come in with so many advantages they are bound to learn .... 1 2 3 4 5 6 15.

These students come to school ready to learn .................................................. 1 2 3 4 5 6 16.

Drugs and alcohol abuse in the community make learning difficult for students here.

........................................................................................................................................ 1 2 3 4 5 6

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17. The opportunities in this community help ensure that these students will learn.

18. Students here just are not motivated to learn.

19. Learning is more difficult at this school because students are worried about their safety.

20. Teachers here need more training to know how to deal with these students.

21. Teachers in this school genuinely believe every child can learn.
### Appendix D: Table 4 Action Plan

**Table 4**

**Action Plan and Evaluation Method 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Component 1</th>
<th>Goal (s)</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1A Teacher Needs Survey | - Identify the cultural and academic needs of the ELA department.  
- Identify the cultural and academic needs of teachers. | Analyze Federal Programs Summary of Committee work of teachers | Assistant Principal |
| 1B Teacher Perception Surveys and Reflection: administer surveys via Google© Forms | - Identify the strengths, preferences, and interests of ELA and ELA support teachers.  
- Identify teachers’ perceptions, behaviors, and beliefs. | Teacher Leadership Inventory Survey  
CE-SCALE survey | Teachers  
Principal |
| 1C Teacher PGS Training | - Teachers become knowledgeable of teacher expectations.  
- Highlight teachers’ strengths and areas of improvement.  
- Teachers reflect and enhance their practices.  
- Teachers understand descriptive and objective scripting  
- Disseminate evidence-based instructional information.  
- Build teacher capacity to enhance teachers’ use and evaluation of research-based practices. | Professional development Evaluation survey | School Principal  
Assistant Principal |
| 1D Self-Selected Professional Development Hub which includes resources and materials aligned to the Mississippi Department of Education Teacher Professional Growth Rubric posted in Google© Classroom. | - Collect feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of self-selected professional development to improve its implementation.  
- Identify how much teachers and students have learned.  
- Retain 60% of ELA teachers at BWMS by the end of the year | Teacher Interview  
Classroom Observation  
Comparison of ELA Benchmark 1 in October to ELA Benchmark 3 in March | Assistant Principal  
ELA Teachers |
### Table 7

**Action Plan and Evaluation Method 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Component 1</th>
<th>Collective Stakeholder Feedback</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A Teacher Needs Survey</td>
<td>• Staff debriefing meetings&lt;br&gt;Teachers’ response to the Federal Programs needs survey Summary form</td>
<td>March 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B Teacher Perception Surveys and Reflection: administer surveys via Google© Forms</td>
<td>• Teacher departmental meeting notes&lt;br&gt;Teacher responses from surveys</td>
<td>November 2022&lt;br&gt;pre-survey&lt;br&gt;March 2023&lt;br&gt;post-surveys&lt;br&gt;August 2022&lt;br&gt;until November 2023&lt;br&gt;September 2022 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1C Teacher PGS Training</td>
<td>• Weekly departmental meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1D Self-Selected Professional Development Hub which includes resources and materials aligned to the Mississippi Department of Education Teacher Professional Growth Rubric posted in Google© Classroom.</td>
<td>• Post teacher interview&lt;br&gt;Classroom observation&lt;br&gt;Consultant Observation Feedback and debriefing notes</td>
<td>December 2022 - April 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1E Reflection and evaluation on the usefulness of the professional development hub on teachers’ progress.</td>
<td>• Post teacher interview&lt;br&gt;PD training evaluation&lt;br&gt;PGS post conference meetings with teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 8

**Action Plan and Evaluation Method 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TLC Component 2</th>
<th>Goal (s)</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2A TLCs         | Establish and maintain ELA department norms by building a network of teachers who work together to solve instructional issues.  
                    | To develop a clear understanding of what takes place in ELA classrooms.  
                    | Teachers hold each other accountable to the goals established by the collective data digs.  
                    | Teachers change/  
                    | enhance instructional practices.                                                                                                                | Classroom Observation Recordings/Videos | Assistant Principal |
| Instructional Rounds | (ELA department focuses on topics such as student engagement garnered from ongoing data)                                                                                                               | Instructional Rounds Meeting Notes   | Teachers             |
|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Teacher Interviews                   |                      |
| 2B Data Analysis | Identify a problem of practice (Identify gaps in the instructional curriculum).  
                    | Determine student growth.                                                                                                                                       | Update Data Tracker and Impact Charts from Data Digs | Assistant Principal |
| Meetings        |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                      | Teachers             |
|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Compare the results of Benchmark 1 in October to Benchmark 3 in March |                      |
| 2C Evaluating the | To evaluate the effectiveness of the Teacher Leader Collaborative to improve on its implementation.  
                    | Identify to what extent teachers learned as a result of the instructional rounds process.  
                    | Observe teachers using their new knowledge and skills.  
                    | Determine how much students learned.  
                    | Determine if collective efficacy increased as a result of participating in the Teacher Leader Collaborative.  
                    | Retain 60% of ELA teachers at BWMS by the end of the year                                                                                     | Teacher Interview                      | School Principal    |
| Teacher Leader  | Classroom Observation                                                                                                       | Comparative data on writing instruction, questioning, student engagement, assessments and lesson plans | Assistant Principal |
| Collaborative   |                                                                                                                                          | Compare results of Benchmark 1 in October to Benchmark 3 in March                     |                      |
|                  |                                                                                                                                          | CE-SCALE Post survey Attestation form                                              |                      |
## Table 9

*Action Plan and Evaluation Method 4*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TLC Component 2</th>
<th>Collective Stakeholder Feedback</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2A TLCs Instructional Rounds</td>
<td>• Bi-Weekly TLC Meetings&lt;br&gt;• Post Interviews</td>
<td>September 2022 until March 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ELA department focuses on topics such as student engagement garnered from ongoing data)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B Data Analysis Meetings</td>
<td>• Bi-Weekly TLC Meeting&lt;br&gt;• SAT Debriefing Meetings</td>
<td>August 2022 Until March 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C Evaluating the Teacher Leader Collaborative</td>
<td>• Teacher Interviews&lt;br&gt;• PGS post conference meetings with teachers</td>
<td>April 2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Teacher Needs Survey

Please anonymously answer the following questions so the administrative team will know the best way to provide you with the needed support during the 2021-2022 school year.

1. How would you like to be supported during the 2021-2022 school year?
2. What area(s) are you in need of support?
3. How do you like to receive feedback: Email, Phone, or Face-to-Face

Please state your level of agreement with the following statements with One being Strongly agreed and Five Strongly disagree.

4. Most of the schooling staff in the institute have a unified vision.
5. The school staff is caring and respects the students.
6. The school staff collectively brainstorms on resolutions to provide effective learning.
7. The school staff treats each other with respect.
8. The school staff has a sense of ownership and responsibility.
9. The staff and students are committed to school values.
10. The staff is equitable in all tasks related to the school.

Please state your level of agreement with the following statements with One being Very Often and Five Strongly being Never.

11. How often do you have the freedom to try innovative methods for improved learning?
12. To what level are the leaders involved in addressing your needs as an individual?

Please state your level of agreement with the following statements with One being Always and Five Strongly being Rarely.

13. Do you think the school leadership treats the teachers fairly?
14. Do you get regular feedback from the leaders of the school?
15. How friendly and respectful are teachers' and students' interactions?
Please respond to the following questions with a yes or no response.

16. Do you think the school needs more teacher leaders or specialists to ensure quality education is imparted to the students?

17. Do professional development activities have a positive impact on your career growth at the school?

18. Do you have to pay for your own professional development activities?

Please provide any suggestions to improve the climate, culture, and academic achievement at BWMS.
Appendix F: Teacher Leadership Inventory

Indicate your agreement with each item of the Teacher Leadership Inventory. The TLI is a 25-item Likert Scale survey and uses a scale of 1 to 4. (1 representing agree, 2 somewhat agree, 3 somewhat disagree, 4 Disagree). The questions from this scale reflect the following factors: Promoting Professional Learning (7), Focusing on Learning Process (7), Encouraging Collegial Collaboration (6), Engaging in Decision-Making (6), and Liaising with External Affiliations (5). This instrument was developed by Chen (2020).

F1. Promoting Professional Learning

1. I encourage team colleagues to practice new skills and pedagogies…………………1234
2. I supervise and evaluate team colleagues’ performance for teaching improvement……1234
3. I encourage team colleagues to use classroom data for improvement…………………1234
4. I create professional growth opportunities for team colleagues………………………1234
5. I acknowledge team colleagues’ exceptional performance and provide incentives……1234

F2. Focusing on Learning Process

6. I encourage team colleagues to monitor student progress…………………………1234
7. I set academic goals for students through discussion with my team…………………1234
8. I recognize superior student achievement or improvement by meeting students……1234
9. I talk informally with students during recess and breaks……………………………1234
10. I attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities……………………………1234

F3. Encouraging Collegial Collaboration

11. I set team plans and make decisions by referring to the school’s goals with my team…1234
12. I am responsible for coordinating the curriculum in my team………………………1234
13. I encourage team colleagues to collaborate in my team and with other teams in school.1234
14. I invite teachers or experts from other organizations to share with my team………..1234
15. I encourage team colleagues to collaborate with peers from other schools………….1 2 3 4

**F4. Engaging in Decision-Making**

16. I provide suggestions to my supervisors for setting school goals……………………1 2 3 4
17. I participate in the review of curricular materials………………………………………1 2 3 4
18. I have sufficient autonomy to do the work………………………………………………1 2 3 4
19. I act as a coordinating bridge between my supervisors and team colleagues……………….1 2 3 4
20. I am involved in school decision-making………………………………………………1 2 3 4

**F5. Liaising with External Affiliations**

21. I liaise with teacher leaders or other professionals of peer schools………………….1 2 3 4
22. I liaise with parents to communicate student progress and performance…………………1 2 3 4
23. I liaise with the community and other organizations……………………………………1 2 3 4
24. I liaise with educational bureau officers………………………………………………..1 2 3 4
25. I liaise with researchers in educational organizations……………………………………1 2 3 4
Appendix G: Interview Protocol

Teaching profession
1. What drew you to the field of education?
2. Why do you think teachers are leaving the profession?
3. Why are they leaving their schools or English Language Arts?

Retention Strategies
1. What changes would impact your decision to remain in the profession or in English Language Arts?
2. What changes would influence your decision to continue teaching at your school?
3. What type of working environment do you need to succeed as a teacher?

Efficacy
4. How can you improve teaching and learning?
5. How do you know if you have been effective in increasing student learning?
6. What can principals do to empower and support you to make an impact on students?
7. How do you learn best?

Professional Development
1. What benefits have you gained through professional development?
2. How has the Professional Development Hub benefited you?
3. What resources were most helpful?
4. How has independent and collaborative support learning influenced your decision to remain in ELA at your school?
5. Has the professional development experience influenced you to take the lead in various aspects of school leadership?

Collaboration
1. What benefits do you receive as a result of engaging in professional collaboratives?

2. What were your key take-aways from the lessons you observed?

3. Which portions of routines were new to you?

4. What additional aspects will need scaffolding?

5. What will the focus of implementation look like after viewing the lesson? Is it different for different grades?

6. How has this collaboration improved your commitment to your student’s success?

7. How does collaboration motivate you to take on instructional leadership roles?

Collective Leadership

1. What are the benefits of teacher-led professional learning communities?

2. How are teachers demonstrating leadership in professional learning communities?

3. Which newly taught and implemented strategies provided the most growth for you and your students?
Appendix H: Professional Development Evaluation

Workshop Title: ______________________________ Date: ______________________

Presenter: ______________________________ Location: __________________________

Position: Middle School Teacher Teacher Assistant Inclusion Self-Contained

Other, please specify ____________________________________________________

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please circle each item from “Poor” to “Excellent.” Please read each statement and respond. Your input will be of great value in planning additional training in this area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Were the objectives of the session made clear?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How effective were the leader’s instructional skills?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How effective was the session in holding your interest?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Were the questions and concerns addressed?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How useful will these ideas and skills be in improving students learning?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How useful were the activities in reinforcing the concepts of the presentation?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The session was well prepared.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The information was of great value.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The presenter demonstrated mastery of the subject matter.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. What were the best aspects of this meeting? ____________________________________

11. How could this session have been improved? ____________________________________
Appendix I: Peer Classroom Observation Protocol

BWMS Peer Observation Checklist

* Required

Check all actions observed in each section.

1. Teacher *
2. Observer *
3. Date *
4. Time *
5. Lesson Plan *
   Posted/ Visible Complete

6. Bell Ringer *
   MŞCCR Aligned
   Intro to Lesson
   Spiral Review

7. White Board *
   Standard/I Can
   Agenda
   Date
   Vocabulary
   Homework

8. Student Engagement *
   Students are Involved
   Lesson Aligned
   White Board Use
   Collaborative Grouping
   Think Pair Share
   Student Leader Roles

9. Class Displays *
   Goals
   Data Wall
   Consequences and Rewards Student Work
Standards
Timer
Class Praise

10. Routines and Procedures *

Attention Grabber
Entering /Leaving Room
Makeup /Homework

11. Professional Growth Rubric *

Evidence
Previous / Future Lessons
Collaboration with Peers
Differentiation/ scaffolding
Student Centered
Student Facilitated
Engagement of All
Deconstructed Standards
Analysis/ Process of Elimination Questioning (Varies DOK levels)
Relevance
Real-World Application
Connections to Students’ Goals and Interest Check for Understanding (CFU)
Routines and Procedures
Integrated Technology
Unsolicited Praise from students
Nurturing Environment
Professionalism
Parental Involvement

12. Artifacts *

Introduction to Course

13. Closure *

I Can Objective
Assessment
Bell to Bell Instruction
Appendix J: Attestation Form

Verification of Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualifications School Year: __2022-2023__

School: _______________________________ Date: __09/30/2022_______

Our school qualifies for Title I federal education funding through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as amended (2015). This Act requires that teachers and paraprofessionals meet state and local certification and licensure. A paraprofessional provides academic or other support for students under the direct supervision of a teacher.

This notice provides information about the professional qualifications requirements for staff at our school as of __9/30/2022__ (date) for the __2022-2023__ (school year).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers and Paraprofessionals</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teachers not meeting State certification and licensure</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Paraprofessionals not meeting State certification or licensure</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Inexperienced teachers</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Inexperienced school leaders (principals, assistant principals,</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>department heads, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Teachers with emergency or temporary certification or licensure</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Teachers not teaching in a subject or field for which they are</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certified or licensed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Submitted by: ________________ Title: ______Principal_________ Signature: ________________

The school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and services. It provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries and complaints regarding non-discrimination policies and to coordinate compliance efforts:

Name: ______________________________ Title: Section 504/ADA/Title IX Coordinator
Address: _______________________________ Telephone /Ext. __________________ Email: __________________

Inquiries or complaints may also be directed to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue S.W., Washington D.C. 20202, or by calling (800) 421-3481 or (877) 521-2172 (TTY).
# VITA

**Nina M. Johnson, Ed.S.**

**CURRICULUM VITA**

662-801-5517  
[Nmass_00@yahoo.com](mailto:Nmass_00@yahoo.com)  
Southaven, MS

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Higher Education Administration  
- Teacher Coaching and Mentoring  
- Alternative Instructional Delivery  
- Teacher Leadership  
- Maintaining Institutional Memory for School Sustainability

## EDUCATION

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ed.D. (Expected Graduation: August 2023)</td>
<td>The University of Mississippi School of Education Oxford, Mississippi</td>
<td>Major: K-12 Education Leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LICENSES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Administrator (486), Mississippi,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class AAA, Social Studies (192), Mississippi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English (7-12) (119), Mississippi</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2021- Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Principal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunica County School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunica, Mississippi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Serve as site level Federal Programs and PBIS Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Promote student achievement through rigorous curriculum development, curriculum alignment, instructional delivery, and effective communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Organize, facilitate, and support professional development, professional learning communities (PLC), school operations, and policies; Analyze school data to set goals based on the accountability model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## TEACHING EXPERIENCES

**Sept. 2017 - June 2021**  
**English/Language Arts Lead Teacher**  
Desoto County Schools  
Hernando, Mississippi

- Facilitated PLC meetings using data analysis to collaborate and create cross-curricula and progressive lessons
- Collaborated with the leadership team aligning the school’s instructional, educational, and social programming with the mission and vision of the school
- Promoted student achievement through rigorous curriculum, student engagement, best practices, and data-driven decisions aligned to Mississippi College and Career-Readiness Standards in traditional and virtual educational settings

**July 2015 - May 2015**  
**English/Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher**  
Grenada School District  
Grenada, Mississippi

**June 2008 - May 2013**  
**English/Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher**  
Coffeeville School District  
Coffeeville, Mississippi

- Modeled lessons utilizing reciprocal reading, multi-sensory activities, simulations, role-play, group discussions, videos, and lectures based on clearly defined and targeted objectives giving students various modalities to demonstrate learning.
- Utilized, monitored, and evaluated teaching strategies for effectiveness as required by law, district policy, and administrative regulations.
- Organized and developed course materials such as teaching guides, visual aids, and Student Standard Focus booklets used with sixth grade English/Language Arts lesson plans aligned with Common Core Standards and adjusted for MSCCRS.
PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS & COMMITTEES

*Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society*, Lifetime Member

*National Educators Association*, 2013-Present

*Mississippi Association of Educators*, 2013-Present

*Olive Branch Middle School Leadership Team*, 2018-Present

*Olive Branch Speech and Debate Coach*, 2017- Present

*Mississippi Teacher Advisory Council*, 2020

*Mississippi Department of Education, High-Quality Instructional Materials*, 2020

*DeSoto County, Teacher Advisory Committee*, 2020

*Olive Branch PBIS Intervention*, 2018-2019

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/CONTINUING EDUCATION

Leadership, Excellent, Academics, Development (L.E.A.D.), 2023

Professional Learning for Assistant Principals of CSI, TSI, and ATSI Schools, 2021

SEL Curriculum Training for Leadership, 2021

English Language Arts High-Quality Instructional Materials Curriculum Review, 2021

MAAP Content Bias Review, 2020, 2021

Completed MIE Teacher Academy: Microsoft Tools for Teachers, 2018

Writing Instruction for Secondary, 2018

Studying ELA Standards Profession, 2018

Differentiated Instruction: OBMS, 2017-2018

Item Writing Training, 2017

Advancing Student Success through Professional Growth, 2016

MAE Emerging Leaders Class, 2016

Professional Teaching Standards: National Board Teacher Certification, 2016

Making Connections Conference, 2014

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PRESENTATIONS

Instructional Rounds: Questioning, 2022

Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, 2021-2023

Accountability Model, 2021-2023
Federal Program, 2021-2023
Teaching, Instructing, & Planning (TIPS), 2022
Professional Growth System, 2021, 2022
The Five Dysfunctions of a Team, 2020
The Standards, 2019
Engaged and Inspired Learners, 2018
Observing Classroom Environments, 2018
Relational Trust as a Foundation for Learning, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AWARDS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Administrator of the Month</em>, Tunica County School District, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Teacher of the Year</em>, Olive Branch Middle School, DeSoto County Schools, 2020-2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Frank Moak Award</em>, The University of Mississippi, 2006-2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>