

Well-Being: An Outcome of Mentoring

by

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Abstract

Research regarding stress and burnout suggests the pressures of life as a principal are becoming more intense each year. School principals are leaving their jobs. The purpose of this study was to explore mentoring as a way to combat the stress of the principalship. This phenomenological study focused on mentoring principals for well-being using Seligman's (2011) positive psychology framework, PERMA, and the Mertz (2004) mentoring framework. It explored principal well-being as reflected in mentoring practices. Nine school principals from different communities in Alabama were interviewed. Twelve themes emerged, and aligned with the five PERMA domains: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. The findings of this study showed principals had improved hard and soft skills. They had improved confidence along with personal and professional growth. They progressed toward independence. The deep connections with the mentors improved their well-being and decreased their stress.

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Mentor – an experienced and trusted advisor

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Family- a group of one or more parents and their children living together as a unit.

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Parents- a father or mother

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Colleagues- the people with whom one works in a profession

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Role Model- a person whose behavior in a certain role is imitated by others

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Chapter 1: Introduction

What are schools meant to do? This simple question shaped the foundational work by John Goodlad in 1979. His book, *What Schools Are For*, continues to help shape today's educators and school policies. He presented the idea that American schools were created in a time when parents were unable to provide the educational foundations of reading, writing, and spelling for their children (Goodlad, 1979). Schools were basic entities created to prepare individuals for a vocation that could be used to fill a need in society. Education was to prepare them to be good citizens in a democratic society. The humble premise of educating the children of the United States was to be a simple act within our society. Years later, schools have become so much more. Goodlad (1979) adds this about schools:

They have served to socialize immigrants; to prepare the young for jobs; to keep young people off the labor market; to foster patriotism; to relieve and free mothers from chores of child rearing and supervision; to develop individual talents; to teach certain facts, concepts and processes; and on and on. (p. 2)

While addressing the purpose of schools, Goodlad (1979) discussed the need for healthy schools as an integral part of school improvement when he noted that "Schools are like living organisms, with characteristics which can be described in varying degrees as healthy and unhealthy. Schools, as cultures, must assume responsibility for their own health and be held accountable" (p. 73). In his research, he posits that principals are strategic and significant in the leadership of schools. He asserts that, in a successful school, the principal is a person with a "strong sense of personal worth and potency" (Goodlad, 1979, p. 85) and is crucial for school success. Forty-four years after Goodlad's research, principals are still considered necessary for school success. They

influence student achievement second only to the classroom teacher (Leithwood et al., 2019).

“Principals are critical to school improvement and play a vital role in creating inclusive and high performing schools” (DeMatthews et al., 2022, p. 76). School principals serve as a major influence on school climate and culture; however, principals are often not staying on the job long enough to see school improvement or influence student success.

The attrition rate of principals is currently 18% - 20% (Levin & Bradley, 2019). Stress and burnout are two of the major influences on the attrition rate of school principals. Principal turnover can negatively impact teachers and students. (DeMatthews et al., 2021a; Mahfouz, 2020) “A significant question for the field of educational leadership is how to address the wellbeing of school leaders and thus improve their work-life balance and possibly decrease attrition” (Mahfouz & Richardson, 2021, p. 362). In recent research about the well-being of school principals Ray et al. (2020) point out some of the issues resulting from stressors of the principalship:

The results of this study revealed that, compared to estimates of general population found in the literature, school administrators are working longer hours, sleeping less, rarely exercising, sacrificing time with loved ones and missing out on engaging activities outside of their job that bring them meaning and joy. (p. 442)

Mentoring for well-being is potentially one avenue of support for these school leaders. Some school districts have recognized the need for mentoring school principals. However, there is scant research in the literature about mentoring principals for well-being. This academic work will use Seligman’s definition of well-being as encapsulated by PERMA. Well-being is the totality of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. The goal of this study was to investigate how principals perceive their well-being as supported by

mentors. The intent of the project was to contribute to the research on mentoring for the well-being of school principals.

Statement of the Problem

Principal attrition is a serious issue when considering its influence on the success of students. “Approximately one in five principals leave their school each year, and turnover is higher in schools that serve low-income students of color” (DeMatthews et al., 2022, p. 76). Given the importance of principal leadership (DeMatthews et al., 2022; Mahfouz & Schussler, 2021; Ray et al., 2020), improving principal retention is an important priority in education. Research by Bartanen et al. (2019) suggest that principal turnover has a negative effect on school performance, which can further damage schools that already have lower achievement in math and reading. “Steady leadership is a requirement in schools because it takes time to learn about a campus, build capacity, cultivate relationships, and foster positive working conditions which contribute to school improvement” (DeMatthews et al., 2021b, p. 1). Thus, it is imperative that principal preparation programs, local school boards, and state officials incorporate strategies to counter the rising attrition rate of school principals.

As educational reform has taken hold in this century, the school principal is at the center of a dynamic shift of duties. Recently, the principalship has pivoted away from building managers and budgeters to instructional coaches and curriculum specialists. Principals are no longer just figureheads of discipline, but school change agents functioning in a much larger capacity. “Within unrealistic time frames and without enough resources and support, school administrators are expected not only to demonstrate significant achievement but also solve critical social and educational issues that have been intensifying for decades” (Pollock et al., 2015, p. 538). Wells and Klocko (2018) propose that much of a principal’s stress today is from

the high accountability expectation of preparing students to have twenty-first century skills. Some stress, such as No Child Left Behind in 2001 and Race to The Top in 2009, increased student expectations which exacerbated principal stress (Klocko & Wells, 2015).

The increase in principal responsibilities over the years has infused the school principals' job with a new dynamic which results in added personal stress. "Principals work long hours and many are subject to legal threats, public scrutiny, and lack of time for personal life" (Wells & Klocko, 2018, p. 165). Mahfouz (2020) found stress to be at epidemic levels among school leaders. She also found that among the more common stressors is the pressure they have from the community. Elomaa et al. (2023) found the main causes of stress for elementary principals were workload, lack of resources, internal pressures and interpersonal conflict. The stress eventually takes its toll on the school principal's health. The emotional turmoil from the stress levels in schools can manifest in physical or medical conditions, including anxiety, low productivity, increased absenteeism, high blood pressure, depression, or other problems (Sorenson, 2007).

Principal burnout is a result of working a high stress job. "Burnout is often used to describe job-related stress and can be considered an occupational hazard that may impact an individual's personal and professional well-being" (DeMatthews et al., 2019, p.161). The job demands of school principals are draining. When the demands exceed the strengths, principals can become emotionally exhausted (Mahfouz & Gordon, 2021). Many principals carry the burdens of their daily work to the point of exhaustion and often do not realize they have slipped into a state of burnout. Maslach and Leiter (2016) clarify some burnout descriptors in their work:

Burnout is a psychological syndrome emerging as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job. The key dimensions of this response are an

overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment. (p. 103)

Administrator burnout is the enemy of school and student success. Burnout can influence a principal's leadership capabilities and emotions (DeMatthews et al., 2019). "In fact, among all professionals in 'helping' fields, school administrators may have the highest burnout rates thanks to unprecedented pressure to meet aggressive student achievement standards" (Mahfouz & Gordon, 2021, p. 189). School administrators are expected to handle multiple issues simultaneously while all the time increasing test scores. They deal with constant change within their organizations and with the world outside of the school walls. It is important to note that the impact of things outside of the school, Covid-19, for example, can be just as stressful as issues in the building.

School principals work in a human service institution where they deal with the problems of the people in the building such as staff, teachers, and students. Typically, principals handle the emotional and psychological problems of staff and students on a daily basis. This type of work is very demanding and takes a toll on the emotions of the school leaders. They are also exposed to the trauma which many children are experiencing at home. "Any individual working to help students and families dealing with trauma over a continued period can become stressed or desensitized to people's feelings, lose a sense of hope and purpose, and be at risk of burnout" (DeMatthews et al., 2019, p. 682). Principals are charged with safeguarding students. When they discover abusive situations, their own social and emotional health becomes challenged (DeMatthews et al., 2019; Mahfouz, 2020; Ray et al., 2020). This secondary trauma has also been found to contribute to principal burnout (DeMatthews et al., 2019). "While many researchers attribute principal burnout and the shortening of principal tenure to the negative

effects of high-stakes accountability, it may also be likely that exposure to secondary trauma is a contributing factor” (DeMatthews et al., 2019, p. 696). Working in an environment where child abuse is often discovered can be taxing. School principals often work with teachers, families, and agencies to make situations better for children; however, there are times when there is nothing they can do to help a situation. Those are some of the stressful events that can lead to burnout. There is limited research on practices to negate the effects of burnout for school administrators. To date, little attention has been paid to creating practices that will help influence the well-being of principals and decrease burnout.

There is evidence that mentoring may be a valuable means of supporting well-being and alleviating principal stress, burnout, and attrition (Mahfouz & Gordon, 2021). Mentoring is a supportive relationship that assists protégés in their personal and professional development. “Mentoring is a cure for a thousand ills, the sine-qua-non of personal development, professional development, and career advancement” (Mertz, 2004, p. 541). Mentoring with the goal of increasing the well-being of school principals has potential to promote positive outcomes for the leader and the whole school culture. Dr. Martin Seligman (2011) created a model for measuring well-being. The model is often referred to as PERMA, which signify the five domains: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. To date, no studies have been conducted using the PERMA model as a framework to explore the mentoring of principal protégés and few studies that link mentoring to the well-being of school principals. There is a need to explore how the mentoring of principals can enhance their well-being using the PERMA model and its domains as indicators.

This study will seek to understand the influence mentors may have on the well-being of principals. This will be a phenomenological investigation using interviews to explore the

mentoring relationships of principals. Understanding the lived experience of school administrators who worked under the guidance of a mentor provided deep insight into the phenomenon of mentoring for well-being.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological qualitative study was to explore the lived experience of principals who had mentors and the influence those mentors may have had on the principals' well-being. Remarkably, few studies in the field of education have sought to examine the influence of mentoring on well-being. This goal of research was to explore the lived experiences of the principals who have been mentored and to see if the mentoring relationship influenced their well-being as viewed through the lens of Seligman's PERMA model. PERMA measures well-being through the domains of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. The importance of the study rests in understanding the influence that mentoring principals may have on their well-being which, in turn, could influence the attrition rate of school principals. "Retention is important because principal turnover can disrupt school progress, often leading to increased turnover among teachers and, ultimately, encumbering student achievement." (Mahfouz & Richardson, 2021, p. 363). If mentors do support principal well-being, perhaps mentoring programs will become a priority for school districts as a retention strategy.

Philosophical Framework

The philosophy chosen for this study is a hybrid-hermeneutic phenomenology framework. It is termed hybrid because Heidegger also allows the use of other frameworks. "There are two main philosophies to study for choosing a fitting phenomenological method Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology"

(Bloomberg, 2023, p. 90). Heidegger's framework is called the hermeneutic circle. "As you are analyzing data, you break down the parts and then synthesize, and you look at the whole again [the entire transcript]" (Peoples, 2021, p. 33). Each time you analyze and synthesize a new understanding will develop.

Heidegger believed that interpretations were constantly revised. He thought a researcher would go back and forth between the part and the whole and each time a new understanding might arise. "Analysis is not a linear process; it is circular, or a better explanation is that it is spiral since circular would mean that one's understanding does not really change since a circle gets back to the same point" (Peoples, 2021, p. 33). Heidegger believed an individual could not truly bracket oneself, so a researcher would make personal biases known by writing them down before analyzing any data. He believed researchers could use their pre-understanding in an appropriate manner (Peoples, 2021).

Conceptual Framework

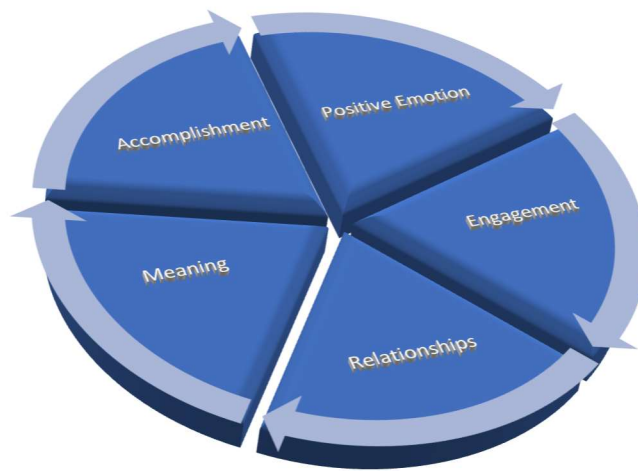
The conceptual framework for this study was drawn from two bodies of existing scholarship. Seligman's (2011) PERMA model is often used to measure well-being. Considered a positive psychology model, PERMA consists of the following five domains: positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning and accomplishment. Seligman (2011) notes that each domain contributes to well-being, but none of the domains by themselves can measure well-being. The state of well-being includes:

- *Positive emotion*—the state of joy or happiness;
- *Engagement*—the state of being absorbed in an activity;
- *Relationship*—the state of having human connections;
- *Meaning*—the state of having purpose and being involved in things that matter;

- *Accomplishment*—the state of having achieved (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2022; Seligman, 2011).

Figure 1

Seligman's PERMA Model (2011)

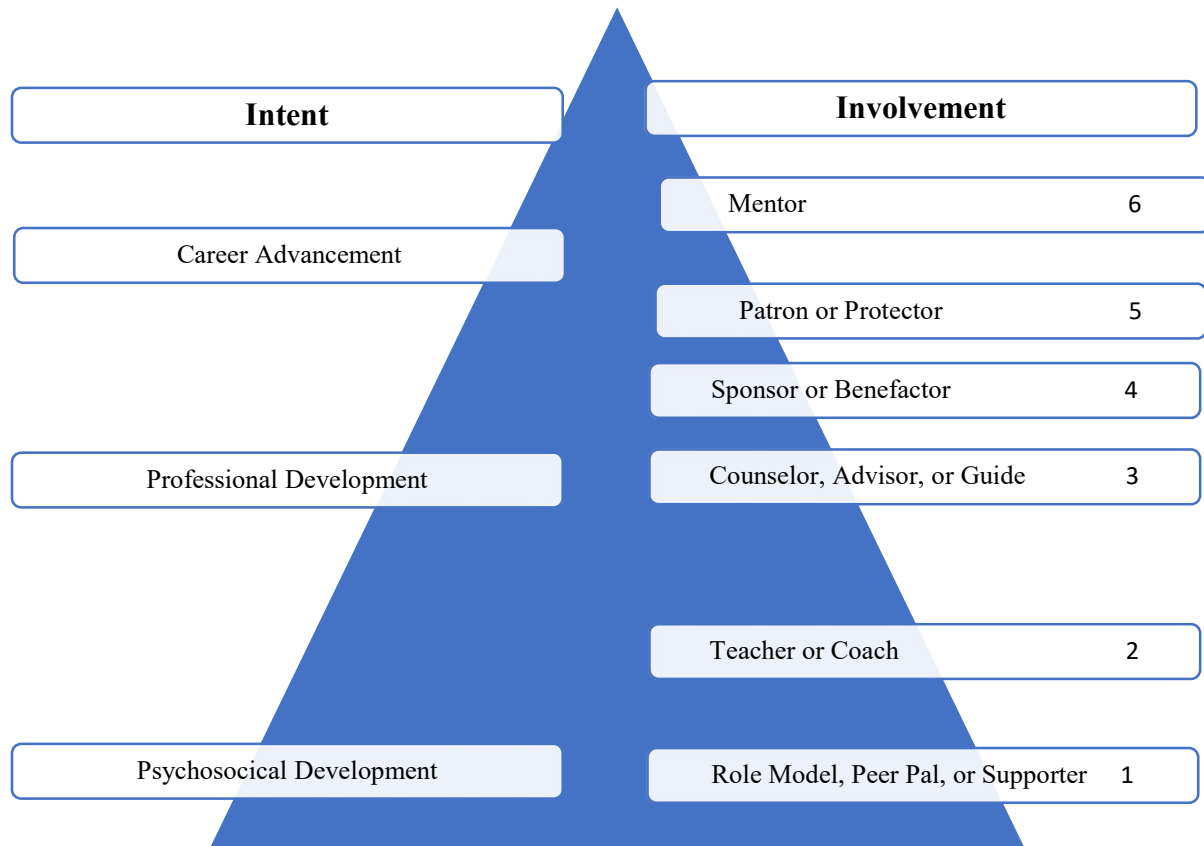


The second body of scholarship was the conceptual framework of Mertz (2004), which differentiates mentoring from other supportive roles. These roles are arranged in a triangle to explain the increasing intensity based on the intent of the relationship. The model illustrates how the amount of involvement differs between a mentor and other supportive relationships.

“Mentoring requires more of the mentor than is required of the advisor, and puts the mentor into a more intense, intimate involvement with the protégé” (Mertz, 2004, p. 554). This high level of involvement links the mentor to the protégé in the common purpose of promoting the protégé to success. This model helps to clarify the confusing definitions of many relationships that are often considered to be mentoring.

Figure 2

Mertz's Hierarchy of Intent and Involvement Framework (2004)



The terms *mentoring* and *well-being* have multiple meanings in the literature. Combining Seligman's (2011) PERMA model and Mertz's (2004) framework that establishes mentoring as separate from other supervisory roles serves not only as a lens for the research but also to establish an explanation of the terms *mentoring* and *well-being* as used in this study.

Research Questions

1. How do principals' lived experiences reflect the influence of their mentors on their overall well-being, as assessed through the PERMA model?
2. Regarding well-being, how do school principals' experience their mentors' intent and involvement?

Philosophical and Conceptual Frameworks

The philosophical and conceptual frameworks meshed as the researcher used the lens of Seligman (2011) and Mertz's (2004) work to view mentoring for well-being. The phenomenological process allowed the PERMA framework to be broken down by analyzing each domain alone then synthesizing it back to the whole of well-being. The Mertz lens allowed the researcher to view the mentoring intent as a specific action then relate it back to the whole of the mentoring process. The same was used to view the involvement of the mentors. The researcher went back and forth between general and specific as new understanding emerged as codes and themes. This hybrid hermeneutical phenomenological study helped identify in detail the lived experiences of the participants.

Research Design

The research design was a hermeneutical phenomenological study. These types of studies are used when a researcher seeks to study a phenomenon through the lived experiences of the participants. (Bloomberg, 2023). A purposeful sampling strategy was used to study current school administrators who had a mentoring relationship (Tracy, 2020). The mentors of the participants in this study were a combination of formal and informal mentors. This form of inquiry employed in-depth interaction with the mentoring protégés using one-on-one interviews. This method allowed each interview to be a part of the total contribution of the whole phenomenon of the mentoring relationship (Bloomberg, 2023). Detailed research design information is presented in Chapter 3.

Assumptions

The researcher has over twenty years of experience as a K-12 school administrator and has several assumptions about mentoring for well-being. The researcher assumed the participants

would be reflective and honest about their mentoring relationship. The researcher assumed the informal relationships would support well-being since they were organic in nature.

Limitations

1. This study focused only on school administrators in the state of Alabama.
2. The overall sample size might be considered small.
3. The sample was not as diverse as the researcher would have liked but only consenting participants could be interviewed .
4. The researcher was a former Alabama school principal.
5. The researcher is a mentor of Alabama principals.

Significance of the Study

The research is unmistakable that school principals impact school improvement and student achievement (DeMatthews et al., 2021a; Mahfouz & Gordon, 2021). The importance of understanding well-being is crucial to making sure our school administrators stay well and deal with the stress of the principalship in order to continue to positively impact student success. The well-being of the principal is no longer about one person's health but how the health of one person can impact many people and, namely, a large number of teachers and students. Principal well-being is very important because of the influence it has on school climate, school culture, teacher well-being, student well-being, and ultimately student achievement.

Definitions of Terms

Well-being—Well-being is a construct of five domains, including positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (Seligman, 2011).

Mentoring—Mentoring is a voluntary developmental relationship in which a mentor empowers a protégé in an intentional manner (Searby & Searby, 2022).

Mentor—The individual nurturing, guiding, and teaching the protégé (Zachary, 2012).

Protégé—"The learner" (Zachary, 2012, p. 3).

Informal Mentoring—"Informal mentoring involves a voluntary and naturally-occurring learning relationship in which the protégé typically selects the mentor and receives career development advice through an autonomous process aimed advancing the protégé's career (Sosik, 2005. p. 95).

Formal Mentoring—Formal mentoring involves an organizationally sanctioned and established learning relationship in which mentors and protégés are matched through a standardized process with the goal of providing career development guidance to the protégé (Sosik, 2005. p. 95).

Organization of Study

Alabama school principals who had mentors were interviewed about their lived experiences involving those relationships. The principals who consented to be interviewed were asked questions based on the theoretical frameworks of Seligman (2011) and Mertz (2004).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of Alabama school principals and the influence they perceived that mentoring may have had on their well-being. This chapter provides a survey of the literature and lays the groundwork for the conceptual framework that served as the study's foundation. It also provides the background knowledge necessary to understand the theoretical underpinnings of the study and its goals. The chapter begins with an explanation of a significant educational policy change in the 1980s. These policy changes strongly influenced the stress and burnout of current school administrators. The next section describes the many definitions of well-being as documented by a number of researchers. A substantial amount of the review is given to the positive psychology work of Martin Seligman (2011) as he added clarity on the domains for measuring well-being in his PERMA model. This is followed by a discussion of well-being as it relates to school leaders, the influence a principal can have on the well-being of teachers and students, and mentoring as a way to increase the well-being of school principals. The many definitions of mentoring and its relationship to adult learning are also explored. Formal and informal mentoring are considered, followed by a subsequent section regarding how mentoring can influence the health and well-being of school principal careers.

Educational Change in the 1980s

On April 26, 1983, President Ronald Reagan was handed a copy of "A Nation at Risk" from then secretary of education, Terrell Bell (Johanningmeier, 2010, p. 353). The report was written by The National Commission of Excellence in Education and depicted a very gloomy picture of education in the United States. Declining academic performance by students, low standards on the part of teachers, and lack of rigor in the curriculum were among some of the

main concerns. The report chronicled how American schools were falling behind globally in the areas of math, reading, and language arts. Losing the ability to compete internationally with other students was a weighty message in 1983. The report then called for a renewed commitment to education (Johanningmeier, 2010).

In the twenty years after the release of “A Nation at Risk,” educational policies placed a tremendous amount of emphasis on high stakes testing. “Test scores, examination results and international comparison of educational performance have all exalted literacy, mathematics and science scores as the be-all and end-all of education” (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2022, p. xi). In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act again increased the accountability stakes in American schools. The focus of education was creating students who could obtain high test scores.

Fourteen years after No Child Left Behind, a shift occurred in the re-writing of the standards for school administrators. The Professional Standards of Educational Leaders (PSEL, 2015) were developed by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration. These were formerly known as the ISLLC (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium) standards. The new standards targeted two facets of student success. These areas were achievement and well-being. “The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders are organized around the domains, qualities, and the values of leadership work that research and practice indicate contribute to the students’ academic success and well-being” (p. 8). These research-based standards guide principal leadership and are also used to evaluate a principal’s ability to increase student learning and well-being. As the standards note (2015) , “In all realms of their work, educational leaders must focus on how they are promoting the learning, achievement, development and well-being of each student” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 3). In the standards, the goal of student success is coupled with well-being. All ten of the Professional Standards of Educational Leaders address students’

academic success and well-being. Although important, well-being did not get the attention it needed in our schools until March 2020 when the CoVID-19 pandemic sent American students' home. "Covid-19 turned our assumptions about what matters in schools and society upside down" (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2022, p. xi). For the first time, the well-being of the people in the school buildings became as important as the results of a high stakes test scores. If school administrators were to care about the well-being of the people entrusted to them on a daily basis, they must first understand what well-being is, how it influences school success, and how to maintain their own well-being.

What is Well-Being?

Even before the CoVID-19 pandemic, well-being was already moving closer to the forefront of policy priorities in education (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2022). "Then the pandemic cruelly reminded us that health and well-being must come before everything—in society as well as in our schools" (Hollweck, 2019, p. 5) The health of school children, faculty, and staff became more important than many other things in the school community, including school test scores.

Well-being as a concept is hard to define, and researchers have a variety of opinions on what it means. Most of the literature on well-being does not agree on the definition. It is a very broad subject yet very individualistic. "Well-being is notoriously difficult to define and there is no consensus on what the construct of the concept should be" (Ortan et al., 2021, p. 4). Peter Warr (2012) concludes that well-being takes many forms and has no single index. Hine et al. (2022) state that "well-being is conceptualized differently in different social and cultural context" (p. 2). Again, the definition of well-being is varied, depending on the context and the individual defining it.

Every researcher who concentrates on well-being seems to have their own idea of what it means to them. Greek philosophers were some of the first to write about health and happiness. Warr (2012) expressed that Aristotle was interested in a form of happiness that reflected a good life. Happiness is considered a form of hedonic well-being while doing something worthwhile is usually associated with eudaemonic wellbeing (Jones et al., 2019). Price and McCallum (2015) acknowledge the complex notion of well-being and offer a very individualized definition. Their definition challenges everyone to be mindful of well-being habits spread across a lifetime:

Well-being is diverse and fluid respecting individual, family and community beliefs, values, experiences, culture, opportunities and contexts across time and change. It encompasses intertwined individual, collective individual, collective and environmental elements which continually interact across the lifespan. Wellbeing is something we all aim for, underpinned by positive notions, yet is unique to each of us and provides us with a sense of who we are which needs to be respected. Our role with well-being education is to provide the opportunity, access, choices, resources, and capacities for individuals and communities to aspire to their unique sense of well-being, whilst contributing to sense of community wellbeing. (p. 135)

Price and McCallum (2016) emphasize a community responsibility for well-being within the realm of education. They posit that it is the obligation of everyone to ensure children and the whole school community “stay well” (p. 139). It is of utmost importance to have an understanding of well-being when considering the individuals which make up the school family. Well-being becomes the responsibility of all; therefore, it also becomes the responsibility of all to understand what comprises a positive sense of well-being in order to first establish awareness, so each individual understands their individual areas of growth.

Positive Psychology

After World War II, psychology became a science largely devoted to curing suffering from the trauma people had experienced. These were good goals, but this work happened after people were already in distress. Near the turn of the century, a new type of psychology was developed. This type of psychology focuses on a life well-lived. The positive behavioral sciences in the last twenty-five years have taken the well-lived life as a primary subject. This type of thinking gave birth to positive psychology. Positive psychology overturns the medical mode of addressing a remedial illness. It is more than curing what is wrong but also nurturing what is right in people. Conversely, its goal is to prevent illness in the first place (Kellerman & Seligman, 2023).

Positive psychology is the work of Martin Seligman, who led the charge for positive psychology in the 1990s and whose research has spanned three decades. “Seligman is often seen as the seminal animator and progenitor of the movement towards positive psychology” (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018, p. 73). He is a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and a former president of the American Psychology Association (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2022). Seligman’s (2002) work is not about just addressing illness or disease, the focus previously for psychologists. His work is about constructing what is right and finding out what those who are living a good life have in common. “The aim of positive psychology is to catalyze a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life” (Seligman, 2002, p. 3). Seligman’s ideas were about strengthening people to be resilient in the face of troubles they would have in life. Seligman has completed work on happiness and optimism and his more recent work has focused on measuring well-being using

the PERMA model that he developed (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018). Well-being is part of the positive subjective aspect of positive psychology.

PERMA

Turner and Thielking (2019) indicated that they preferred a popular definition of well-being by Martin Seligman. “Leading researcher in positive psychology, Seligman (2011), states that wellbeing can be defined as a construct which includes the domains of positive emotion, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment which he has collapsed into the term PERMA” (Turner & Thielking, 2019, p. 939). Cherkowski and Walker (2018) cite PERMA as the most widely used measure of well-being in Canadian research literature.

Martin Seligman (2011) summarizes well-being theory in this fashion. Well-being theory is the focal topic of positive psychology. The gold-standard for measuring well-being is flourishing. The goal of positive psychology is to increase well-being until flourishing is achieved. It is important to note that Seligman believes well-being can be increased. “If well-being could not be lastingly increased, then the aim of positive psychology would have to be abandoned, but I believe that well-being can be robustly raised” (Seligman, 2011, p. 32). It is vital to understand that well-being can be improved. The ability to improve well-being is a cornerstone concept in this research.

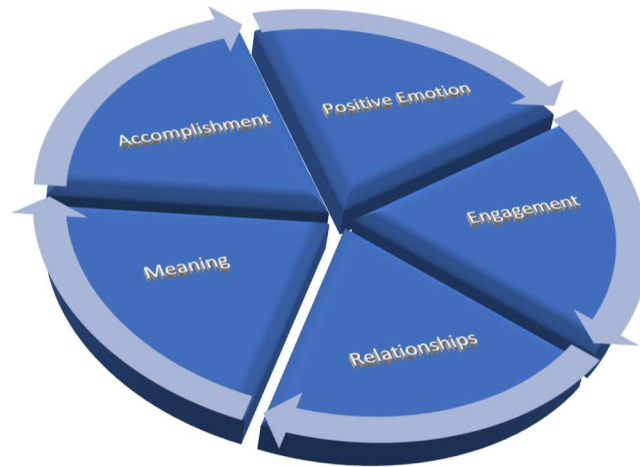
Seligman defines well-being as having several measurable domains. Each domain is an actual entity but none of the elements fully measures well-being. Seligman (2011) postulates each of these elements must have three properties. These properties are:

1. The domain must contribute to well-being
2. The domain can be pursued for its own sake and not just to get to any of the other elements.

3. It has individuality, so it is defined and measured independently of the others.

Figure 3

Seligman's PERMA Model (2011)



Each letter in PERMA represents one of five domains of well-being. The first domain is positive emotion. It is the foundation for the well-being theory. This is a hedonic or pleasurable element. “Positive emotion encompasses all the usual subjective well-being variables: pleasure, ecstasy, comfort, warmth and the like” (Seligman, 2011, p. 17). Positive emotion is considered a measure of happiness and life satisfaction.

The second domain is engagement. Engagement is a domain that is measured subjectively. It indicates that you are completely absorbed in a task. The process of being fully devoted to an undertaking keeps the mind and the hands busy. This is a domain that keeps one so captivated by a process that it is easy to lose track of time.

Relationships is the third domain. “There is no denying the profound influences that positive relationships or their absences have on well-being” (Seligman, 2011, p. 21). Seligman

speaks at length about the social aspect of relationships on humans. “Other people are the best antidote to the downs of life and single most reliable up” (Seligman, 2011, p. 22). Good relationships are a key component in supporting well-being.

Meaning is the next domain. Seligman (2011) explains meaning as “belonging to and serving something you believe is bigger than yourself” (p. 17). It is the area in life that provides a sense of purpose. It is in this domain that people generally feel their work in life is valuable. What makes life meaningful is unique for each person. While some people find meaning in their religious practices or faith, others find meaning in their careers, or family lives. In later work by Kellerman and Seligman (2023), they note that meaningful work is very good for health and overall well-being, and that those who find meaning in their work tend to work longer hours and miss fewer days. Meaningful work helps people navigate changes, build resilience, and persevere.

Accomplishment is the last domain and is sometimes referred to as achievement. “The addition of the achieving life also emphasizes that the task of positive psychology is to describe, rather than prescribe, what people actually do to get well-being” (Seligman, 2011, p. 20). This domain is more likely to occur when free from coercion, making intrinsic motivation an important aspect of accomplishment. Many like to look back on the day to see what they have accomplished while others set yearly goals to work toward. The feeling of accomplishment is a motivator for many people.

Seligman hypothesizes this list of five domains is not exhaustive at all and encourages other researchers to explore other building blocks of well-being (Donaldson et al., 2020). Seligman notes that each element of PERMA can be defined independently of the others and make up the measurable area of well-being (Seligman, 2018). Dreer (2021) makes the case that

the PERMA model implies that well-being is when one functions optimally in all five domains. Donaldson et al. (2020) provide evidence that the PERMA domains do predict subjective well-being.

Seligman's (2011) research into well-being also includes a segment of the 1946 World Health Organization's preamble which states that health is not merely the absence of disease but a state of physical, mental, and social well-being. "The take-away lesson from positive psychology is that positive mental health is not just the absence of mental illness" (Seligman, 2011, p. 183). Another way to conceptualize this definition of health is that good health is not what is missing but what is present. Seligman's posits that a person who is filled with the domains of the PERMA model is very different than someone who is avoiding depression, anxiety, and not becoming angry. It is two different states of being. "Positive mental health is a presence: the presence of positive emotion, the presence of engagement, the presence of good relationships, the presence of meaning and the presence of accomplishment" (Seligman, 2011, p. 183). The World Health Organization's data supports the idea of PERMA by supporting the idea that the presence of the right components can indicate one is well.

When referencing the framework of PERMA as a way to understand and develop well-being, Hargreaves and Shirley (2022) note:

The PERMA framework is, in this respect, describing not just a state of mind but a way of life that is purposeful, meaningful, ethical, and relational. It validates the importance of human worth and the creation of a better life in which human beings are able to thrive and flourish. (p. 25)

If a greater emphasis is placed on principals' well-being, principal retention will likely improve. "In sum, healthy principals that prioritize their well-being can sustain efforts to improve schools,

and support teachers, interrogate inequitable policies and practices that marginalize students, and build trusting relationships with families” (DeMatthews et al., 2021a, p. 165). Although well-being is hard to define, it is necessary to understand the impact it has on the school community as a whole and on its individual members. If school leaders are going to positively influence others, they must begin by caring for themselves. School principal often lean into caring for others more than they realize the need to care for themselves. School leader self-care is a serious component which needs attention in the policies of school districts.

The Importance of Self-Care

Self-care is one of the strategies to improve the overall well-being of school principals (Ray et al, 2020). The influence that principals have on all those within their communities makes self-care very important. It involves an intentional plan to focus on wellness. Wells and Klocko (2018) submit that self-care is not a term typically found in the literature about educational leaders. The current stress and burnout of today’s school leaders, however, is pushing this term to the attention of many within the educational field (Beausaert et al., 2021). DeMatthews et al. (2020) also find that self-care should be a priority among principals. “We believe a focus on principal burnout and self-care is timely, especially amid and proceeding a global pandemic that has drastically impacted schools” (p. 160). The need to keep principals in place has many advantages. This is why principal self-care is so important. Klocko and Wells (2018) explain it in this way: “When educational leaders decide to leave the profession because of stress the skills, expertise, and experiences they bring to the job exits with them” (p. 169). They encourage self-care as a way to combat the stress and burnout of the principalship, which will bolster their effectiveness and extend their time in their positions (Klocko & Wells, 2018).

Mahfouz and Gordon (2021) found self-care to be critical for future school administrators. This research suggested principal self-care should be required and formalized due to the role self-care plays in effective leadership. The busy state of a school principal's job makes it hard for these leaders to develop and sustain a program for taking care of themselves. Burnout is inevitable if self-care is not a priority for school leaders. School boards and school districts must recognize the cycle of stress and burnout among principals. They should create a foundational standard of self-care for school administrators in their districts to boost the productivity and effectiveness of their school leaders (Mahfouz & Gordon, 2021).

Self-care plays a crucial role in overall well-being. Ray et al. (2020) used the work of Maslow to inform their study exploring the well-being of school principals:

For the purposes of our study, we used the foundational tiers of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to inform our definition of self-care, which includes sleep, hydration, nutrition, exercise, stress relief, meditation and mindfulness, work-life balance, volunteerism and philanthropy, and relational belonging. (Ray et al., 2020, p. 435)

In their mixed method study of 473 practicing administrators, Ray et al. (2020) found that practicing school administrators must improve their self-care.

Consistent with the literature, the data gathered in this study demonstrate that school leaders tend to be intrinsically motivated by the notion that their personal sacrifice is important for the success of the students, staff, and the schools they serve. Unfortunately, self-identification as a sacrificial leader is inherently at odds with many self-care behaviors. (Ray et al., 2020, p. 447)

The study found that, compared to the general population, school leaders work longer hours, exercise less, have poorer diets, and are more sleep deprived. "The findings from the study

reflect an Arkansas principal workforce that is tired, overworked, and generally unhealthy” (Ray et al., 2020, p. 447). In this research, 40% were sleep deprived, 62% overweight, 80% often go without lunch during the day, 80% are not getting enough water and 80% spend less than three hours a day with family. These findings have serious implications for leaders.

Consistent with the literature, the data gathered in this study demonstrate that school leaders tend to be intrinsically motivated by the notion that their personal sacrifice is important for the success of their students, staff and the schools they serve. (Ray et al., 2020, p. 447)

This study suggests additional research is needed to help understand the challenge of self-serving sacrifice at the expense of one’s health in an attempt to have a successful career.

Most often principals are left on their own to care for themselves. “Burnout and self-care have not been topics historically prioritized or even discussed in principal preparation programs, leadership standards, or in-service professional development” (DeMatthews et al., 2021a, p. 164). Teaching self-care to principals is just one of the ways to mitigate the daily stress of their jobs.

The Impact of Stress

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, school leader stress has increased and the attrition rate has accelerated (Su-Keene & DeMatthews, 2022). School administrators are impacted by stress more than ever before (Hancock et al., 2019; Mahfouz, 2020). “Fifty percent of school leaders quit in their third year (School Leaders Network, 2014), raising questions regarding how to support the retention of principals” (Swaminathan & Reed, 2020, p. 220). Principals’ jobs have become more demanding and complex over the years. Much of this stress is from an ever-increasing work load (Mahfouz & Richardson, 2021). Because principals have transitioned from

people who cared for the buildings and maintained discipline to people who are now responsible for high stakes accountability, finances, federal mandates, and central office demands, stress has become a daily challenge of a school leaders' life (Mahfouz, 2020). "On a daily basis school leaders have to determine what is best for students, how to allocate resources, how to improve practice among other professionals, and how to navigate challenging situations" (Ray et al., 2020). Other causes of stress include excessive administrative tasks, the diverse needs of students, parent issues, ESL barriers, insufficient resources, and the need to communicate everything to a vast number of stakeholders. Furthermore, there is a strong desire to ensure that each decision is in the best interest of students. Cascading stress is ever present in schools today. This cascade of stress requires a principal to maintain composure as one problem often occurs before another is resolved. Yirci and Kocabas (2010) emphasize the stress of a first year in any profession. That year is always challenging and leaves many people nervous. This is especially true for school principals because they are at the top of the hierarchical order in schools. "They may feel themselves isolated, lonely, desperate and sometimes unsuccessful about school management" (Yirci & Kocabas, 2010, p. 6). School days are often filled with stressful situations and many issues extend past regular working hours. By the end of the day, many issues can often spill into the community, which may require a school leader to not only be a good communicator but also a decent conflict manager after hours, as well (Hancock et al., 2019).

Principals are critical to school improvement, and job-related stressors often lead to burnout and turnover (DeMatthews et al., 2021a). The CoVID-19 pandemic increased burnout as principals navigated the unknown waters of a health crisis. The constant pressure of school closures, school reopening's, and serious health issues were an unprecedented burden for school

administrators as they made life and death decisions concerning school safety protocols. These high demands and heavy burdens exacerbated burnout among many principals.

School administrators are no doubt the first thing that comes to mind when talking about achievement rate of schools. Because success or failure of schools is generally associated with whether the schools are managed well or not. In other words, school success or failure is directly related to principal's achievement or failure. (Yirci & Kocabas, 2010, p. 2)

The struggles and stresses of the school principalship are not going away. There is no shortage of issues which cause stress. “Pressures to complete tasks, to avoid errors, work overloads, high stakes testing, a demanding supervisor, a disgruntled colleague or an irate parent are just a few examples of factors that are causing stress in our schools” (Sorenson, 2007, p. 11). Hancock et al. (2019) suggest that, to combat stress, it may benefit principals to receive guidance from a mentor principal or centralized leader. This cooperation would allow principals to share their stress and learn from veterans. Mahfouz and Richardson (2021) also note the use of mentors can disrupt principal attrition. “Better prepared principals especially those who have had internships and/or mentors, are less stressed and stay in their positions longer in high even in high-need schools” (p. 364). These findings are representative of the benefit of professional development in the form of a mentor to combat stress and burnout.

School Administrator Influence

The research is unmistakable that school principals impact school improvement and student achievement (DeMatthews et al., 2021a; Mahfouz & Gordon, 2021). As one of the most influential people on each school campus, the health and well-being of the school principal is of great importance to the school organization. The stress of high stakes accountability paired with

the many other roles now required of the school principal have made them vulnerable to stress and burnout. “Stress is a widely recognized factor affecting school leaders’ overall wellness” (Ray et al., 2020, p. 436). The importance of understanding well-being is crucial to making sure our school administrators stay well and deal with the stress of the principalship in order to continue to positively impact student success. As the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) state, “The profession of educational leadership has developed significantly. Educators have a better understanding of how and in what ways effective leadership contributes to student achievement” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 1). The well-being of the principal is no longer about one person’s health but how the health of one person can impact many people and, namely, a large number of teachers and students.

School leaders influence student learning. Leithwood et al. (2010) provide research about four paths in which a school leader influences the learning of students. Their work clearly shows administrators do not influence learning in one way, but in a myriad of ways. They conceptualize administrators shaping students along the rational path, the emotional path, the organizational path and the family path. The rational path is rooted in the skills and knowledge of staff members about curriculum, teaching, and learning. There are so many variables in schooling in this area. The principal should maintain a clear focus on schoolwide academics, provide a sound and fair way to maintain discipline, and work to create a positive school culture. The emotional path includes the feelings and dispositions of staff members about school related matters. Creating high teacher efficacy also lends itself to improved student learning. The organizational path includes the policies and operating procedures. Other areas under this umbrella would include teacher working conditions, instructional time, and teacher PLC’s. The authors make it clear that this area is easily influenced by school leaders and can be influenced positively. The family path

includes alterable and unalterable family related factors. According to the research, the school cannot change the parent education or income, but they can help change the family educational culture. Many parents are open to the influence of school leadership. Teaching parents to support their students at home can be greatly influenced by school leadership (Leithwood et al., 2010).

Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) suggest that school leader efficacy can also influence student learning. The confidence and feelings leaders have about themselves do impact those around them, including the health of the organization. Although to a small degree, this does play significantly into factors which control student learning. A leader's confidence ultimately matters to that organization.

Principal well-being is very important because of the influence it has on school climate, school culture, teacher well-being, student well-being, and ultimately student achievement. Weber et al. (2004) noted the impact of principal well-being on school climate in a study about the health-related retirement of school principals in Germany. They attested to the impact principals have on their colleagues in the areas of job satisfaction, performance, and well-being. They called the necessity for disease prevention and health intervention for principals an "urgent need" (Weber et al., 2004, p. 330).

Mahfouz and Gordon (2021) also noted the importance of school leaders and their impact on the well-being of those in their building. "Effective leaders play a critical role in school culture and student achievement. Effective leaders play a critical role in school performance, and evidence shows that leadership effectiveness is tied to social and emotional well-being " (Mahfouz & Gordon, 2021, p. 189). In a quantitative study of 5,951 principals, Collie et al. (2020) found a good work climate was positively associated with well-being. Their research supports the belief that principal well-being can affect the others in the school. "Moreover, poor

principal well-being may have serious ramifications for broader school functioning” (Collie et al., 2020, p. 428). “If principals do not attend to their own well-being to counteract the negative mental, social, emotional and physical health effects of stress and burnout, their coworkers might be at risk for the same negative effects” (Mahfouz & Gordon, 2021, p. 191). In other research, support was also found for importance and influence of the school leaders on student well-being: “Principals’ well-being and SEL must therefore be a priority in any program aimed at promoting a healthy school climate and student well-being” (Mahfouz & Gordon, 2021, p. 192). Clearly, principal well-being should be of paramount importance in the school community due to its important impact on students and ultimately student well-being.

The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) written by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA, 2015) are “student centric” foundational principles that were designed to guide school leadership to better contribute to student achievement. “An expanding base of knowledge from research and practice shows that educational leaders exert influence on student achievement by creating challenging but also caring and supporting conditions conducive to each student’s learning” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 1) The writers of the standards acknowledged that student learning is impacted by the decisions that principals make.

In a meta-analysis of fifty-one studies of principal behaviors on student, teacher, and school outcomes, Liebowitz and Porter (2019) found school principals play a central role in creating a positive environment for teaching and learning. “We find direct evidence of the relationship between principal behaviors and student achievement, teacher well-being, teacher instructional practices, and school organizational health” (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). Their

research, like many others of its kind, supports the relationship between principal behaviors and educational outcomes.

As the health and well-being of principals are important for their own effectiveness, they also greatly influence the well-being of teachers (Collie et al., 2020). Teacher well-being is important because it impacts student well-being. “Despite these limitations, the results of the present study suggest that teachers' own skills and wellbeing are manifested in the classroom and do have meaningful effects on students' self-reported and peer-reported experiences at school” (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). The trickle-down impact continues as teachers’ well-being impacts the well-being of their students. The influence of teacher well-being on student well-being is well-documented in the literature. Braun et al. (2020) noted that “Existing theoretical perspectives suggested that teacher characteristics, such as their emotion regulation skills, occupational health, and personal well-being, affect the well-being of their students” (p. 11). Price and McCallum (2016) suggested that teachers who use a well-being approach can increase the academic achievement of students. “Nurturing a sense of well-being as early as possible in a young person’s life is central in promoting a lifelong, life-wide and life-deep well-being perspective” (Price & McCallum, 2016, p. 140). The focus of this research by Price and McCallum (2016) is on the importance of learner wellbeing, teacher well-being, and leader well-being, which leads to community well-being.

There seems to be no true solid formula for increasing school administrators’ well-being as of this writing. School leaders should have an enormous amount of on-the-job training when they take on the principalship. They need daily support in the hard to handle situations that accompany leading all the people within a school. Daily support and guidance can be provided through individual mentoring.

Mentoring to Increase Well-Being

There is a trend to improve the professional development for school administrators across the nation. The use of mentors is increasing in popularity (Kutsyuruba & Godden, 2019).

Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2006) suggest mentoring as a way to develop new principals and to grow them in their practice. Their research reflects how complicated it is to begin a principalship and to maintain that job. "...we often have described becoming a principal as an intricate process of learning and reflection that requires socialization into a new community of practice and assumption of new role identity" (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004, p. 488). Mentoring is a very important support strategy for principals. To increase the health and well-being of school principals is one of many reasons to use mentoring with these leaders. Mentoring principals is a process of providing them with constant professional development to improve their function and effectiveness in their leadership roles.

Connery and Frick (2021) note that being in a new position as an educator is an experience that can cause "other feelings, including not only excitement about reaching a new goal but also apprehension, self-doubt, and uncertainty about impending and unknown responsibilities in their future" (p. 11). Many new principals find themselves plagued with anxiety about the many decisions they will be expected to make. "Particularly for newer administrators, having a trusted mentor is an important means of gaining professional confidence and competence, and thus mitigating some of the inherent stress in the profession" (Beisser et al., 2014, p. 15). It is imperative to find a way to increase the confidence of new administrators and at the same time decrease their anxious feelings.

Definitions of Mentoring

Mentoring is used in all types of professional settings. Traditionally, mentoring has been a relationship between a more experienced person who helps a younger, less experienced individual find their way through their career (Kram, 1988; Levinson et al., 1978). “Mentoring is a collaborative form of professional development rooted in a learning-focused relationship” (Connery & Frick 2020, p. 6). One of the most complete overall definitions of mentoring is by Searby and Searby (2022). They state that “mentoring is a voluntary, developmental relationship in which a mentor empowers a mentee in an intentional manner” (Searby & Searby, 2022, slide 8). These advisory relationships have existed for years and are rooted in the development and skills of apprentices hundreds of years ago. Although mentoring has been studied often in recent years, its history stretches back five millennia to Greek mythology when Odysseus left his family in the care of Mentor, an elderly man, to fight against Troy; Mentor became the advisor of his son, Telemachus, while Odysseus was at war (Stammers, 1992). We still refer to those who advise and care for others as mentors because of this Greek myth (Zachary & Fischler, 2009). Although mentoring dates back to Greek history, most of the research about mentoring has occurred in the last forty years (Chao, 1992). While this example finds its roots in ancient times, there are many today who credit their successes to their mentors.

Levinson et al. (1978) published *The Seasons of a Man's Life*. In this work, they investigated the mentoring of young adult men and the influence it had on their careers. They cited mentoring as the most important relationship in young adulthood. This work became the foundation for many other researchers who studied mentoring.

Kathy Kram continued the foundational work of Levinson in much of her work. It was her work that seemed to move mentoring toward a concept that was easy to understand.

Shortly thereafter, Kathy Kram (1988) published *Mentoring at Work*, which offered a theoretical foundation for understanding the developmental relationships at work for both men and women. This book captured and defined the construct of mentoring, planted a theoretical foundation for the field, and ignited a program of research that moved the concept of mentoring from an abstract academic construct to a household word.

(Ragins & Kram, 2007)

Over the next twenty years, mentoring was researched by scholars trying to understand the depth of this type of connection. They attempted to unlock the “how and why” behind the success of this life-altering relationship. Mentoring has been used in many professions around the world to improve organizations (Ragins & Kram, 2007). According to Brondyk and Searby (2013), “Mentoring programs are offered to individuals of all ages and to meet a wide variety of purposes in and across many professions” (p. 190). Almost all individuals need to experience support and growth to be successful in their jobs. Mentoring is the practice which enables this type of growth.

The American Heritage Dictionary (1987) defines a mentor as a wise and trusted counselor or teacher, but mentors mean different things to different people (Kram, 1988). An experienced person helping a less experienced person along the way in their career has long been the most basic and foundational definition of mentoring (Mertz, 2004). In another definition, Roberts (2000) defines mentoring as a “formalized process whereby a more knowledgeable and experienced person actuates a supportive role of overseeing and encouraging reflection and learning within a less experienced and knowledgeable person so as to facilitate that persons’ career and personal development” (p. 162). Brondyk and Searby (2013) note that there are challenges associated with defining mentoring. Some definitions describe the people while others

describe the behaviors of the people or the processes of mentoring. Crisp and Cruz (2009) found over fifty definitions of mentoring and noted that research has made little progress in identifying a consistent definition for mentoring. These definitions vary greatly in scope and depth. Mertz (2004) added that discussions about mentoring are difficult due to the absence of a shared definition of mentoring.

Recent research has found that protégés are not the only ones that gain from a mentoring relationship. When it is used in the educational area, especially to train new school principals, mentoring is a significant method, and it provides infinite benefits to all participants in the process (Yirci & Kocabas, 2010, p. 2). According to Zachary and Fain (2022), “Today, mentoring has become collaborative; it is now a mutual discovery process in which both the mentor and the mentee have something to bring to the relationship (‘the give’) and something to gain that broadens each of their perspectives (‘the get’)” (p. 3). For the purposes of this review, “mentor” will refer to individuals which invest and seek to improve the development of school principals. “Protégés” will refer to school principals who are actively engaged in leading a school. Mentoring is being connected and engaged in a relationship which is grounded in learning. It involves collaboration between the mentor and protégé as they go through a process of exploration and discovery (Zachary & Fain, 2022).

In 1988, Kathy Kram identified two functions offered to protégés by their mentors. These are career functions and psychosocial functions. Assisting protégés in career functions involves helping them advance in their chosen field of work. Career functions include a variety of actions mentors use to teach their protégés the necessary skills to move them through the ranks of an organization (Ragins & Kram, 2007). Psychosocial functions involve increasing a protégé’s trust, self-worth, and self-efficacy. As school administrators begin the large job of running schools,

they often have feelings of doubt and uncertainty about their new roles (Connery & Frick, 2020). “Psychosocial functions are those aspects of a relationship that enhance an individual’s sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in a professional role” (Kram, 1988, p. 3). The mentoring relationship builds as the protégés begin to gain confidence and understand more about their roles as leaders.

Mentoring Adult Learners

“Mentoring, as a form of professional learning for novice school administrators, calls on the social-constructivist theory of adult learning” (Connery & Frick, p. 2). Malcom Knowles (Zachary & Fain, 2022) lays out several foundational concepts that undergird the learning process of adults. These are important when considering mentoring is the process of teaching to adult learners. Knowles notes six foundational principles that support adult learning: (1) adults must understand their purpose for learning, (2) adults must be active participants in their own learning, (3) adults bring valuable experiences to the table, (4) adults must understand the relevance of the material they learn, (5), adults need more engagement in problem solving than content, and (6) adults are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. These adult learning principles support the elements of mentoring that are used when working with school administrators. Because knowledge about adult learning has expanded over the last four decades, many ideas have been formed to help with the complexities that come along when teaching adult learners (Zachary & Fain, 2022).

Searby (2014) describes a new paradigm of mentoring where the protégé is the initiator of the learning goals in the mentor- protégé relationship. In an effective mentoring relationship the protégé shares with the mentor the needs they have or the knowledge they desire. This gives the mentor the direction needed to guide the relationship. This aligns with Knowles concepts of adult

learning and the need to be an active participant in ones own learning. Zachary and Fain (2022) best describe the process this way:

As the learning process has shifted from mentor directed to self-directed, the focus of mentoring partnership has shifted from knowledge transfer and acquisition to critical reflection and application. The mentee is no longer a passive receiver but an active learner; the mentor is no longer an authority figure but a facilitator of learning. (p. xviii)

In a qualitative study by Stanulis et al. (2019), mentoring practices were evaluated through the protégé's eyes. This study highlighted how adult learning took place in the teacher and student teacher relationship. The concepts in the study aligned very closely with the adult learning process for school principals. The researchers asserted that this viewpoint is very advantageous when considering mentoring educated school leaders. Stanulis et al. discussed Feiman-Nemser's use of the new term "educative mentoring." This is the practice of a mentor taking the position of a co-learner alongside the protégé while creating growth-producing experiences for the less experienced learner. This type of mentoring requires the mentor to have critical conversations with the protégé involving inquiry and introspection. Feiman-Nemser (2001) states that during this process, the mentor would speak often about the background behind the decisions that are to be made. They make their thinking visible by thinking it out loud, modeling the "why" behind decisions as the mentor talks through their own decision-making processes. This helps the protégé to see the line of thinking and the processes needed to make good decisions. The following three common practices of mentoring were discussed at length in the study: planning, observing and debriefing, and analyzing the protégé's work. The same three phases are an integral part of planning alongside a school principal. The mentor assists in planning upcoming events then takes the time to debrief and analyze the situation much like a

teacher and student teacher would do while planning a lesson. More importantly a principal mentor would also help the protégé to analyze student success in the school (Stanulis et al., 2019).

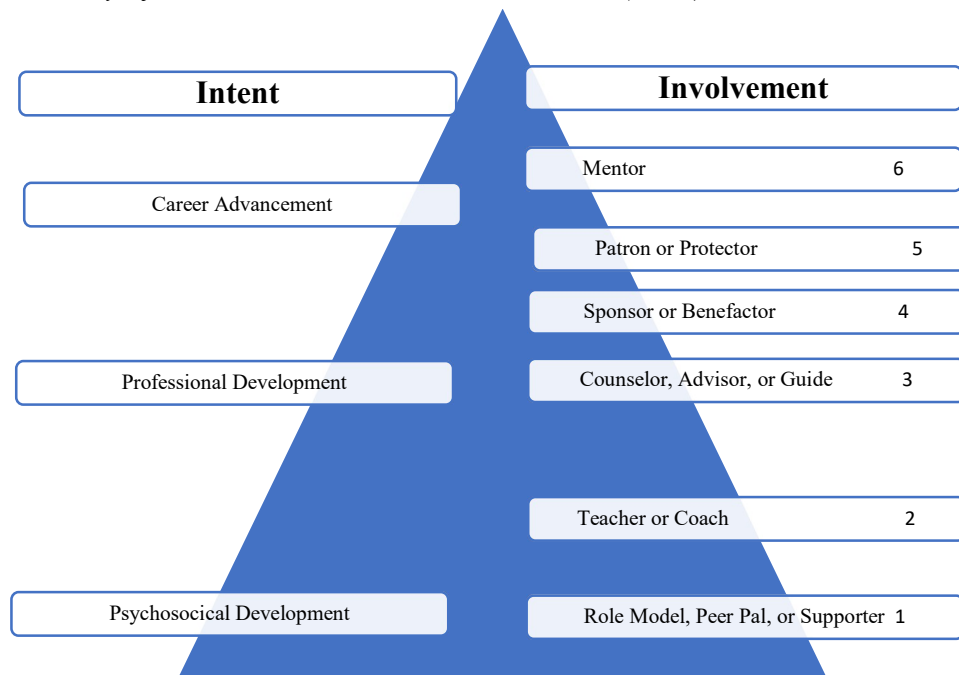
Levinson et al. (1978) assert that poor mentoring in early adulthood is the equivalent of poor parenting in childhood. He adds without adequate mentoring a young man's entry into the adult world is greatly hampered. Some degree of emotional support, guidance, and sponsorship are needed to smooth the way and make the journey worthwhile. This example holds true with a young school principal. They need the same type of emotional support, guidance and sponsorship as a young adult.

How Mentoring Differs from Coaching

Mertz (2004) states it is important to know that all supportive relationships are not mentoring. Mentoring has a two-fold purpose. The first purpose is to develop skills that will enhance a protégé's career development. The second purpose is to enhance the emotional development of a protégé through affirmation and encouragement as the mentor focuses on the psychosocial functions of the protégé (Johnson & Ridley, 2018). Due to the broad definition of mentoring and its close relation to coaching, advising, and supervising, there is a great deal of confusion about what mentoring is and what it is not. In a 2004 work by Mertz, the differences are clarified. Mentoring is different than coaching, advising, and supervising due to the intent and involvement. Coaches, advisors, and supervisors focus on the present and have a low-level of involvement with the protégé. Mentors are very involved with the protégé and they plan and think often of the future (Mertz, 2004).

Figure 4

Mertz's Hierarchy of Intent and Involvement Framework (2004)



Mertz's (2004) framework shows the following different functional categories of intent: career advancement, advising, and modeling. Each of these are then associated with a role. The placement of the role in the pyramid reflects the degree of involvement needed in the relationship. Clearly the mentor has a deeper intent and involvement in the lives of the protégé. The genuine mentor is linked to the protégé and to his/her future success. Kram (1988) suggests the intensity of the involvement was what differentiated mentorship from the other type of relationships.

As noted by Zachary and Fain (2022), "Coaching and mentoring are kindred spirits. Although the terms are sometimes used interchangeably they are not the same thing" (p. 109). Coaching is a very necessary process for young administrators. Principal coaches are valuable resources for new administrators. They give advice on current issues and teach the skills and

processes needed to be an effective administrator. They focus on current situations and give advice on how to handle the daily issues of school life while “Mentoring focuses on facilitating the future growth and development of a mentee” (Zachary & Fain, 2022. p. 109). Mentors are not people who show up for a three-day workshop and then cycle on to the next school system to continue advising. Those are the activities of a principal coach. A mentor develops a long-lasting relationship with the protégé. According to Mertz (2004), “Both mentor and protégé need to share thoughts, understandings, dreams, schemes, and perspectives they might not ordinarily share, and they are likely to be far more exposed before one another, warts and all, than they would be in other professional relationships” (p. 555). It is not simply offering advice or constructive criticism (Zachary & Fain, 2022).

Coaches have positive relationships with the administrators they work with but have little emotional involvement with them. A mentor has a deep emotional involvement with the protégé, and becomes strongly linked to them (Mertz, 2004). Mentors typically prepare themselves for a deep and engaging relationship with the protégé. Zachary and Fain (2022) state that “Mentoring is a process of engagement. No one can mentor without connection” (p. xxi). The bond that develops between the mentor and the protégé is one of the hallmarks of a genuine mentor-protégé relationship. Again, this is not a process of only passing on good advice and past experiences. This is a relationship which endures time and obstacles and develops and engages both parties.

Mentoring Best Practices

Not only is mentoring hard to define, but what determines a best practice in mentoring is also a very complex issue to describe. “Across the disciplines, best practices are described as an amalgamation of practice and research meaning they are both useful and tested in practice yet

firmly rooted in current rigorous research” (Searby & Brondyk, 2016, p. 7). Searby and Brondyk (2016) also state best practices should be effective in their practice, empirically proven, and achieve the stated purpose. There are still many different ways to conceptualize a best practice based on those definitions. It is hard to make a consistent definition of a best practice in mentoring because mentoring is used in so many disciplines. It is important when entering into a mentoring relationship to keep in mind practices that will have the best chance of enhancing the growth and development of the protégé.

Creating mutually defined guiding principles and clear goals for the mentoring relationship is a good first step when mentoring. “During the formation state of a mentorship, outstanding mentors initiate discussions of expectations”(Johnson & Ridley, 2018, p. 111). Establishing clear expectations and goals for the relationship is a solid practice. Zachary and Fain (2022) describe it this way:

There is nothing quite as important as having well-defined learning goals in a mentoring relationship. A clear compelling goal inspires action and is indispensable to the work of mentoring in enabling growth and evaluating the ongoing success of the relationship (p. 138).

If both parties are clear on what is expected of the other and what they are setting out to achieve the relationship has a true starting point. Zachary and Fain (2022) also note it is a best practice to set only a few goals at a time. By clarifying expectations for the relationship, the protégé will have a safe place for potential growth.

Utilizing good communication is an essential best practice for mentoring. The whole mentoring relationship is built on communication. “Discussions are a natural component of mentoring, as mentors and mentees regularly engage in both formal and informal conversations

in the course of their work together” (Searby & Brondyk, 2016, p. 314). Mentors and protégés need open and direct communication. Zachary and Fain (2022) reiterate often that listening and questioning are critical to good mentoring relationships. Direct telling to a protégé is not a best practice, rather questioning guides them to discover their own ideas as adult learners. “Open questions contribute to achieving the ‘holy grail’ of both mentoring and coaching- a non-directive and developmental orientation to the discussions as opposed to the directive and deficit orientations (Garvey, 2021, p. 32). Reflection through questioning is a practice many mentors have found to be effective. By asking questions, the mentor gives the protégé the opportunity to reflect on their actions. As they formulate an answer, they are required to be thoughtful (Zachary & Fain, 2022). Encouraging a protégé to reflect is an important job of the mentor. This idea of probing thinking is also significant in the study of mentoring by Connery and Frick (2020). The authors note the following:

Experience is necessary, but reflection is the true teacher. One of the most powerful strategies mentors can model is how to reflect. Similarly, one of the most important skills administrators can learn is how to reflect on their practice, stepping outside themselves to carefully examine themselves. (Connery & Frick, 2020, p. 10)

Self-reflection with protégé’s is the very essence of learning through mentoring. When principal protégé have a collaborative and experienced mentor to help them flesh out problems and ideas, they gain insight that helps them grow as leaders. Fostering reflection is a good practice and instrumental in the mentoring facilitation process (Zachary & Fain, 2022). Magee and Slater (2016) confirm the reflective process was a strength in the mentoring relationship. Principals in this study reported the built-in time for reflection was indeed a necessary time.

Listening to the protégé is a skill the mentor must use in order to clarify the thinking and understanding of the learner. Listening is a very important part of mentoring. “Silence provides the opportunity for learning” (Zachary & Fain, 2022, p.186). The silence we share with protégés is the opportunity for reflection. When listening reflectively, mentors should strive to be authentic and provide good feedback. Another good practice of mentoring is reformulating their statements. By repeating the words of a protégé, it helps the protégé to hear what they have articulated and to clarify their thoughts.

To enable the growth of the protégé the mentor must be good and giving and receiving feedback (Zachary & Fain, 2022). The feedback in mentoring will be the deep rich conversation that may cover a multitude of subjects and spur reflection for the protégé. The mentor may be clarifying, explaining, or encouraging the mentor in this process. This dialogue develops the growth in the protégé as they discuss their own insights into their learning.

It is important to always keep in the mind the job of a mentor is to help develop a protégé professionally in order to enhance their ability to move up in the world in which they are employed (Mertz, 2004). A best practice of a mentor would also include creating and helping sustain a vision of the future for the protégé. One of the significant differences in coaching and mentoring is relative to time. Coaching has a current orientation but mentoring has a future orientation (Mertz, 2004).

Formal and Informal Mentoring

Protégés connect in a number of ways with their mentors. There are formal mentoring programs which connect a protégé to a mentor. Sosik et al. (2005) note that “Formal mentoring involves an organizationally sanctioned and established learning relationship in which mentors and protégés are matched through a standardized process with the goal of providing career

development guidance to the protégé” (p. 95). The mentor is assigned to the protégé, and there may be no prior connection to the two individuals. In other situations, individuals’ cross paths with someone with whom they immediately connect on several levels. They tend to latch onto these people and develop a relationship based on their respect for the individual. Zachary (2004) clarifies that “we choose our mentors or they choose us” (p. 39).

The basic distinction between formal and informal mentoring lies in the formation of the relationship. Informal mentorships are not managed, structured, nor formally recognized by the organization. Traditionally, they are spontaneous relationships that occur without external involvement from the organization.

Informal mentoring relationships often occur more naturally and organically when protégés seek out a trusted adviser or friend with whom they have an affiliation, or they trust and admire. Informal mentoring relationships are usually built on shared interests and personal characteristics and most likely result in a good match between the mentor and the protégé (Hayes & Mahfouz, 2020, p.737).

In contrast, formal mentorships are programs that are managed and sanctioned by the organization” (Chao et al., 1992, p. 2). “Informal mentoring involves a voluntary and naturally-occurring learning relationship in which the protégé typically selects the mentor and receives career development advice through an autonomous process aimed advancing the protégé’s career” (Sosik et al., 2005, p. 95). Typically, the informal relationship is based on the desires of the protégé who wants to become a person much like the mentor (Levinson et al., 1978).

Formal and informal relationships are managed differently. Formal mentoring relationships require many conversations to establish the parameters for the association. General expectations, accountability parameters, and final outcomes are usually established at the

initiation of the liaison. These boundaries will enrich and focus the entire mentoring process (Zachary, 2009). Zachary and Fain (2022) refer to this as the negotiating phase of mentoring. The same process is often used during informal mentoring. There are some general guidelines established for the times to meet, the ways to communicate, and the general expectations surrounding the relationship.

Developmental Networks

Original mentoring literature such as Kram (1988) and Levinson et al. (1978) most often refer to a mentoring relationship as one individual guiding another. “In much of the mentoring research of the past three decades, researchers have conceptualized mentoring as the developmental assistance provided by a more senior individual within a protégé’s organization—that is, a single dyadic relationship” (Higgins & Kram, 2001, p. 264) However, Kram acknowledges that a protégé may use more than one mentor. In Kram’s 1988 foundational mentoring work, she notes that the career and psychosocial functions which support protégés can be provided by a variety of relationships. She called these individuals the constellation of relationships. A protégé may need support from an assortment of people. Relationships change over time for many reasons. Significant work relationships may transfer to other jobs or people receive promotions and move to other places. People move in and out of a protégé’s life. The relationship constellation may include family members, a boss, a special friend, a subordinate, friends outside of work or collegial peers (Kram, 1988). Scholars today have begun to see the limitation of focusing on one relationship and are starting to revisit Kram’s original proposition of a constellation of relationships (Higgins & Kram, 2001).

Kram and Monica Higgins provided research in 2001 to provide a new way of looking at an individual having multiple mentors. This new lens uses social network theory as a way to

understand and explain the need to have several mentors. Kram and Higgins call these relationships a developmental network.

While there will always be a special place in the literature for studying the single and traditional “mentor” relationship—in the sense that Levinson et al. (1978) describe—the shift in mentoring studies toward considering alternative sources suggests there is a conceptual gap, that needs to be addressed as well. In short, we are ready to consider mentoring as a multiple relationship phenomenon. (Higgins & Kram, 2001, p. 266)

Developmental networks are just a small part of an individual’s whole social network. They are the people that protégés identify as taking an active interest in helping to advance their careers. Zachary and Fain (2022) describe current mentoring this way:

Mentoring today is a partnership between individuals of varying ages, stages, and experiences. The mentor is not always the older partner in the relationship, and the relationship can be informal or formal, face-to-face, or virtual. I can also involve younger people bringing older colleagues up to speed on new ideas, peers mentoring each other, and supervisor mentoring direct reports. (p. 76)

There are several mentoring configurations in today’s world. The concept of mentoring has evolved greatly since the origin of the myth of Mentor and Telemachus.

Mentoring Outcomes

There is a range of positive outcomes for principal mentors and their protégés. Protégés benefit greatly in the area of career functions and psychosocial needs. Increased job performance, promotions, job attitudes, career satisfaction, personal and professional growth are all positive outcomes for principal protégés. “Today’s mentor is a facilitator, a partner in an evolving learning relationship focused on meeting a mentee’s goals and objectives. Today’s

mentor is an active learner and reflective practitioner in pursuit of continuous improvement” (Zachary & Fain, 2022. p. 253). All of these outcomes support the well-being of school principals.

Alabama Mentoring Context

Mentoring programs in the state of Alabama have been sporadic at best. In the summer of 2023, the Alabama Legislature passed House Bill SB 300. This bill created the School Principal Leadership and Mentoring Act. This bill provides for the implementation of a mentoring program for new principals and continuing professional development for veteran principals and assistant principals. “The goal of the program is to increase the effectiveness of school administrators resulting in improved outcomes for all students” (Orr, 2023, p. 6). The bill provides for a statewide infrastructure which will ensure consistent access to high quality mentors for school administrators. Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, each new Alabama principal will work with a principal mentor for two consecutive years. Mentors will be selected based on their history as successful school leaders. A training program to develop mentors will be created by the state.

Chapter 3: Methods

Principal attrition is a serious issue when considering its influence on the success of students. “Approximately one in five principals leave their school each year, and turnover is higher in schools that serve low-income students of color” (DeMatthews et al., 2022, p. 76). Given the importance of principal leadership (DeMatthews et al., 2022; Mahfouz & Schussler, 2021; Ray et al., 2020) improving principal retention is an important priority within the field of education. “Steady leadership is a requirement in schools because it takes time to learn about a campus, build capacity, cultivate relationships, and foster positive working conditions which contribute to school improvement” (DeMatthews et al., 2021b, p. 1). It is imperative for local school boards and state officials to find a way to counter the rising attrition rates of school principals.

School administrators are expected to handle multiple issues simultaneously assuring acceptable student test scores. They deal with constant change within their organizations and with the world outside of the school walls. It is important to note that often the impact of the things outside of the school, for example, Covid-19, added multiple levels of stress as can other familiar events in society. Cite Principal burnout is fueling the attrition rates among school principals. In recent research by Kellerman and Seligman (2023) the authors reported that half of the workforce struggles with burnout. They add that 76% of workers indicates that workplace stress negatively impacts their personal lives. Their study found healthcare costs for excessive stress is in excess of \$190 billion dollars each year.

Mahfouz and Richardson (2021) identified the issues of stress and burnout in school principals as noteworthy of research. They wrote “A significant question for the field of educational leadership is how to address the well-being of school leaders and thus improve their

work-life balance and possibly increase retention of school principals (Mahfouz & Richardson, 2021, p. 362). One area which has been identified to successfully support school principals is the process of mentoring. Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2006) agreed principals who are learning the many roles of school administration can gain genuine support from mentors. Their research reflects the difficult transformation a teacher goes through to become a school administrator and the assistance of a knowledgeable mentor can be a positive factor in this change process.

School principals today are much more than building managers. They are curriculum leaders for teachers, social workers for students, advocates for parents, representatives for their communities and the person responsible for high stakes testing results. The school principalship is stressful on many fronts and administrators need support in many ways. Yirci and Kocabas (2010) advocate for mentors. “When it is used in the educational area, especially to train new school principals, mentoring is a significant method, and it provides infinite benefits to all participants in the process” (Yirci & Kocabaş, 2010, p. 2). Mentoring for the well-being of school principals could be a solution to the Mahfouz and Richardson 2021 question. Mentoring could diminish the rising attrition rate of school principals which will then increase stability for teachers and students and improve whole school culture and climate.

In this chapter, I described the purpose of my study, my role as a researcher, the research design, the sample population, and the methodological approach. I discussed the participants, how they were recruited, the process for the recruitment, and ethical considerations.

Purpose of Study

A simple strategy for supporting the well-being of school principals is providing each principal a mentor. “Mentoring is a collaborative form of professional development rooted in a learning-focused relationship” (Connery & Frick 2020, p. 6). The study was meant to explore the

lived experiences of principals in a mentoring relationship. Using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, I sought to investigate the lived experiences of school principals with mentors and in what ways those mentors may have influenced their well-being. The study will also examine principals lived experiences through the lens of Seligman's PERMA framework and mentor intent and involvement through the lens Mertz framework.

Role of the Researcher

I was a K-12 school administrator for over twenty years. I experienced bouts of stress and burnout during my tenure as an assistant principal, principal and central office supervisor. I did not have a trained mentor during my time in my school system but I had a constellation of principals and other school leaders who mentored me as needed. The first three years of my principalship were extremely stressful due to difficult staffing. The guidance of my mentors was often the only thing that kept me from quitting my job. My professional connections to this study are very strong. My daughter is an educator which also makes my personal connections to the study very strong. I believe firmly in the importance of mentoring and I was aware that my personal beliefs and assumptions could influence my interpretation of the data. I used journaling to record my bias to ensure the study was trustworthy. I discussed my personal biases and beliefs with my peer reviewer. I used the Hermeneutic circle and moved back and forth from part to whole and reflected in the same way I researched.

I have mentoring training and currently mentor administrators in my school district; therefore, I have a personal stake in the field of mentoring. I sought to “remain unbiased, objective, and impartial” (Bloomberg 2023, p. 72.). I made every effort to stay neutral and allow the research participants' experiences to be the most important aspect in the study (Tracy, 2020). “Maintaining a reflexive approach throughout ensures a critical review of the positionality of the

researcher in the research and how this will impact both the processes and the outcomes of the research” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 140). Great effort will be made in self-reflexivity to better understand the phenomenon of mentoring for well-being.

Research Design

I applied Heidegger’s hermeneutical phenomenological approach to address the research questions. “The purpose of phenomenological research is to investigate the meaning of the lived experience of people to identify the core essence of human experience or phenomenon as described by research participants” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 88). I felt the phenomenological method would be the most appropriate way for principals to describe the experiences of having a mentor. Phenomenology relies heavily on philosophy and draws heavily on the writings of Edmund Husserl and years later from Martin Heidegger who was one of his students. “Phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 171). They reduce all the descriptions of the lived experience to the very “essence of the phenomenon” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 171). The information is then reduced into categories or meaning units, then patterns, then themes.

The hermeneutic phenomenological design by Heidegger was chosen for several reasons. Heidegger believes we cannot truly bracket our experiences because we in the world sharing existence with others. I have always thought bracketing to be a near impossible task, so I share his philosophical belief in this area. His solution to bracketing is the Hermeneutic circle. It is not a technique but a description of the process of understanding. It is a revisionary process of how we forge our pre-conceived knowledge with new information which allows us to form a new understanding. This process is circular as we move back and forth between what we know and interact with new information to create fresh understanding (Peoples, 2021). Heidegger believed

this interpretation of moving back and forth from parts to the whole and back again to the parts would lead to increasing one's understanding of new data. Heidegger saw learning as a constant revision within the circle (Peoples, 2021). This design also allows other lens or frameworks to be used in the research. This allows me to use the work of Seligman (2011) and Mertz (2004) to support this work. "Phenomenology is not only description, however; it is also an interpretive process in which the researcher interprets the meaning of the lived experience of the research participants derived from the in-depth interviews" (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 91). During this method understanding is gained by moving back and forth between the parts and whole of principal's descriptions of their experiences with their mentor.

I used a purposeful sampling of K-12 principals in Alabama. "Purposeful sampling means that they (researchers) purposefully choose data that fit the parameters of the project's research questions, goals and purposes" (Tracy, 2020, p. 82). The sample of principals were those who are actively in a mentoring relationship. I strove for a balance of male and female participants who were involved in formal and informal mentoring relationships. I also solicited different ethnicities from different areas of the states for this research. This criterion sampling strategy allowed the researcher to choose participants that meet the predetermined needs of this study (Bloomberg, 2023).

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore mentoring for well-being among school principal protégés using in-depth interviews. These interviews were conducted with protégés who were actively involved in a mentoring relationship. The following questions were used:

1. How do principals' lived experiences reflect the influence of their mentors on their overall well-being, as assessed through the PERMA model?

2. Regarding well-being, how do school principals' experience their mentors' intent and involvement?

Participants, Background, and Setting

The hermeneutical phenomenological study relied upon a purposeful criterion sampling strategy (Bloomberg, 2023) for identifying participants who were already in a mentoring relationship. This intentional selection process began with the help of NAESP to identify willing participants in the research process. I began recruiting participants by phone using the names supplied by the NAESP representative after locating only three participants who were willing to participate in the study. After unsuccessfully locating enough willing participants through NAESP the IRB was modified. The modification allowed for any principal in Alabama who was willing to be interviewed about their mentoring experience. Once the participants were identified the researcher contacted the participants and scheduled the interviews as the IRB outlined. Once consent for participation was gained, the in-depth interviews were scheduled by phone and took place at a date convenient to the participant.

Data Collection

The phenomenological study design allowed for in-depth interviews which should elicit thick descriptions of the mentoring relationship. The interview questions were aligned with the conceptual framework. Interviews were the primary source for this study. The study was designed so that interview questions align with the conceptual framework. "A primary research goal of qualitative researchers is thick description, the practice of going beyond surface understandings, to explore the contextual meanings of behaviors" (Tracy, 2020, p. 31). The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was to gain insight into the participants experiences

regarding their mentor. Semi structured interviews which are “flexible and organic in nature” (Tracy, 2020, p. 158) will be used.

The predetermined questions were aligned with both theoretical frameworks. The questions were asked to all nine participants. The interviews averaged forty minutes each. The data was recorded on a password protected cellular device. The participant interviews were then transcribed verbatim directed by the processes outlined in the IRB to ensure accuracy. The data was then coded as guided by *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* by Saldana’s Qualitative (Saldana, 2021).

Journaling

I kept a journal to reflect during the data collection, analysis, and synthesis stages of my research. I disclosed my reflections, biases, opinions and assumptions. I held true to my own lived experience of a school principal who had a constellation of mentors. I recorded patterns I began to see after the recordings were transcribed. I recorded my concerns about the process of research and my list of next steps. Hermeneutic phenomenological researchers use journaling to block out distractions and biases they constantly experience. Each time they revise a preconception, they are able to develop new meaning along the Hermeneutic Circle “(Peoples, 2021).

Peer Support/Critical Friend

A peer reviewer or a critical friend is a neutral colleague who examines your work regularly and asks questions and offers advice. They help create accountability and honesty. They also support validity and reliability (Peoples, 2021). I had one critical friend since the beginning of my dissertation efforts. I talked to her weekly and met in person several times each year. I emailed her my work and accepted the offered feedback. She is a colleague in the same

department at Auburn University and an English major. She is very familiar with the literature of my research. She provided writing and research support weekly in this process.

Data Analysis

After the data collection was complete, the interviews were transcribed. I slowly read each transcript in its entirety and reflected on the description of the lived experience of each participant. I was empathetic to the protégés stories. I thoughtfully journaled about every participant's lived experiences as Alabama school principals. Coding began for the responses to each interview question. Themes emerged from their experiences and I created narratives of direct quotes under each participant. Findings began to emerge from the themes.

Assumptions

I assumed the participants would be reflective and honest about their mentoring relationship. I also assume that increasing the well-being of a school principal would lead to a longer career for that administrator. The study assumes that the mentors care deeply for the protégés.

Credibility

I strove for credibility in this study by using various strategies. "Credibility refers to whether the participant's perceptions match up with the researcher's portrayal of them"

(Bloomberg, 2023, p. 121) These various approaches were:

- The recording for accurate transcription of interviews (Tracy, 2020, p. 183).
- I used fact checking the interviews (Tracy, 2020, p. 205).
- Transcripts were coded multiple times (Saldana, 2021).
- I kept field notes and journaled (Tracy, p. 138, 2020).

- I used a peer review/critical friend to verify accuracy of interpretation (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 121) and member checking with participants (Tracy, 2020, p. 275).

Ethical Considerations

To demonstrate respect for the participants, I provided them with various parts of the IRB associated with the study. They were assured of confidentiality and demonstrated that their time was valued by scheduling all interviews with the participants in mind. They were reminded that they could terminate their participation at any time and that there was little risk in participating in this research.

Summary

The attrition rate of principals is a serious issue in Alabama (DeMatthews, 2022; Mahfouz & Richardson, 2021; Ray et al., 2020). Educational leaders must counter this problem to stabilize the ranks of school administrators. Mentoring principals to increase their well-being may help mitigate this current issue. This study sought to explore the perceptions of school principals about their mentors, specifically in the area of well-being. Chapter three outlined the research design, data collection, and data analysis. To show credibility, I provided various strategies which were used to reflect credibility.

Chapter 4: Findings

In Chapter 1 of this dissertation, I presented my reasons for researching mentoring for the well-being of school principals. I outlined my beliefs on the importance of principal influence on the culture and climate of schools and, more specifically, on student achievement. In Chapter 2, I explored the literature on principal stress, burnout, well-being, and mentoring. In Chapter 3, I developed a hermeneutic phenomenological qualitative study design to investigate the lived experience of principals with mentors. Chapter 4 provides the findings of this phenomenological study regarding principals and their mentors' influence on their well-being. "Phenomenology is not only description, however; it is also an interpretative and highly intuitive process in which the researcher interprets the meaning of individuals' lived experiences" (Bloomberg, 2023. p. 92). School administrators are important to the culture, climate, and well-being of the school organization (Leithwood et al., 2019). The work principals do is significant, highly social, and requires them to have ongoing engagement with many individuals who can induce extreme amounts of stress. The stresses of the principalship will remain, but there should be a focus on the well-being of those who lead schools. Mentors have been found to increase the confidence and positively influence school leaders (Wheeler et al., 2024). Mentoring principals for well-being is an effort to assist the principal in dealing with stress and avoiding burnout.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to address a gap in the literature about mentoring school leaders for well-being. This study explored the lived experience of school leaders in the areas of stress, burnout, and well-being. The results of this study could be used to improve the quality of professional development for school principals to include their own personal and

professional well-being. This information could also influence the decision of state and local leaders about maintaining funding for programs which ensure principal mentors in our state.

Research Questions

1. How do principals' lived experiences reflect the influence of their mentors on their overall well-being, as assessed through the PERMA model?
2. Regarding well-being, how do school principals' experience their mentors' intent and involvement?

The interview questions and data analysis were guided by these conceptual frameworks:

- The PERMA model by Seligman (2011).
- The Mertz Framework Mertz (2004).

Data Collection

The phenomenological design was used to study the lived experience of Alabama school principals who had a mentor. "Phenomenology typically involves several in-depth interviews with individuals who have experienced the phenomenon of interest" (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 161).

During this study design the researcher focused on understanding the essence of the lived experience of the participants. "The researcher analyzes data by identifying descriptions of the phenomenon and clustering these descriptions into discrete categories or meaning units" (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 92).

Purposeful sampling was used to identify protégés who were actively involved in a mentoring relationship. "Good qualitative researchers, at the very least, engage in purposeful sampling, which means that they purposefully choose data that fit the parameters of the project's research questions, goals, and purposes" (Tracy, 2020 p. 82). Criterion sampling strategy was utilized as each participant had to involved or have experienced a mentoring relationship.

“Criterion sampling works well when all the individuals studied represent people who have experienced the same phenomenon” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 268). This purposeful sampling strategy made it possible for all participants to give insight and understanding to their own mentoring relationship. The sample size was nine interviews. This amount gave an in-depth description of the phenomenon of mentoring.

Method

The researcher read a substantial amount of the academic literature about mentoring and well-being. During that process, a literature review was written citing the best research on mentoring and well-being. From the literature, a conceptual framework was designed using Seligman’s (2011) definition of wellbeing and mentoring as defined by Mertz (2004). Interview questions were written based on those conceptual frameworks.

An IRB was then written, submitted, and approved. After considering the participants had been limited to just elementary principals in the IRB, a modification was obtained allowing the researcher to go outside of that particular pool of interview candidates to other grade levels. All candidates were recruited by phone and email. Once candidates had been located, the researcher obtained informed consent from the participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and recorded on a cellular device. “With semi-structured interview guides, a mix of questions, prompts, and topics informs your work but leaves open opportunities to follow depending on the hunches and intuitive directions” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 281). After the interviews were transcribed, the recordings were destroyed to protect the confidentiality of the participants. The transcribed interviews were then coded and analyzed multiple times.

Participants

Aubree

Aubree is a white female who has twelve years of experience in education. She has six years of experience as an administrator. She was an assistant principal for four years and is currently in her second year as principal of an intermediate school which houses grades five and six. Aubree has a Master's degree and works in an urban school.

Brody

Brody is a white male. He has fifteen years of experience in education and four years of experience in administration. He was a former football coach. He was an assistant principal for two years at a K-12 school, and he is in his second year of as a principal at a K-12 school. Brody has a Master's degree and works in a rural school.

Connie

Connie is a white female. She has thirteen years of experience in education. She has five years of experience in administration. She was an assistant principal for three years and the principal of a 9-12 school for one year. She was recently promoted to federal programs coordinator of her school system. Connie has a Ph.D. and works in a suburban region.

David

David is a Black male. He has twenty-one years of experience in education and over seventeen years of experience in administration. He was an assistant principal for over eight and years and is currently in his ninth year as principal at a K-4 school. David has a Ph.D. and works in an urban area.

Evan

Evan is a white male. He has eight years of experience in education and two years of experience in administration. He was assistant principal at a K-12 school and was in his first year as a principal at a K-12 school at the time of the interviews. Evan has a Master's degree and works in a rural area.

Farrah

Farrah is a white female. She has twenty-one years of experience in education and seven years of experience as a school administrator. She was an assistant principal for over three years and the principal for two years at a K-4 school. She was then promoted to be the elementary curriculum coordinator and federal programs supervisor for a county school district. Farrah has a Master's degree and works in a rural area.

Gayle

Gayle is a white female. She has eighteen years of experience in education and seven years of experience in administration. She was an assistant principal for three years and a principal for three years. She was recently promoted to be the curriculum specialist for a county school district. Gayle has an Ed.S. and works in a rural setting.

Hadley

Hadley has twenty years of experience in education and ten years of experience in administration. She was an assistant principal for three years and a principal for seven years. She still serves as the principal of a K-4 school. Hadley has a Ph.D. and works in an urban school setting.

Ila

Ila has twenty-seven years of experience in education and twelve years of experience in administration. She was an assistant principal for three years and a principal for nine years. She still serves as the principal of a K-8 school. Ila has a Ph.D. and works in an urban setting.

Table 1

Protégé Chart

Participant	Geographical Location	Population Descriptor	Race	Gender	Years in Education	Years as an Administrator	Highest Degree	Pathway to Principalship
Aubree	Northern	Urban	White	Female	12	6	Masters	Elem. Teacher Librarian Asst. Principal Principal
Brody	Northern	Rural	White	Male	15	4	Masters	Elem. Teacher Asst. Principal Principal
Connie	Central	Suburban	White	Female	13	5	Ph.D.	Elem. Teacher Asst. Principal Principal
David	Central	Urban	Black	Male	21	17.5	Ph.D.	
Evan	Northern	Rural	White	Male	8	2	Masters	Elem. Teacher Asst. Principal Principal
Farrah	Northern	Rural	White	Female	21	7	Masters	Elem. Teacher Asst.

								Principal Principal
Gayle	Northern	Rural	White	Female	18	7	Ed. S.	History Teacher Asst. Principal Principal
Hadley	Southern	Urban	White	Female	20	10	Ph.D.	
Ila	Central	Urban	Black	Female	27	12	Ph.D.	

Mentors

The mentors in this study had varied backgrounds and years of experience. Each connected to their protégé in a unique way. Some mentors were assigned and some were organic in nature. Six of the nine mentoring relationships remain active.

Table 2

Mentor Chart

Participant	Length of relationship	Formal Informal	Active or retired mentor	Assigned or sought out	Under or over five years since mentored
Aubree	Two Years	Formal	Active	Assigned	Under
Brody	Active	Formal	Retired	Sought	Under
Connie	Active	Informal	Active	Sought	Under
David	Four Years	Informal	Active	Sought	Over
Evan	Active	Formal	Retired	Assigned	Under
Farrah	Three Years	Informal	Active	Sought	Over
Gayle	Active	Informal	Active	Sought	Under
Hadley	Active	Informal	Active	Sought	Over
Ila	Active	Formal	Active	Assigned	Under

Data Analysis

Interviews

Once the data collection was complete, the analysis began. “The analytic procedure falls essentially into the following sequential phases: Organizing the data, coding the data, generating categories, and identifying themes and patterns” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 327). The transcribed interviews were coded several times. Upon the first reading of the interview transcriptions, certain participant phrases were underlined. During this initial reading, I tried to get an overview of what each participant was trying to communicate. “In this first go-around, read through each transcript and try to identify the big ideas” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 337). I kept a journal as certain phrases began to repeat themselves among the data. The journal was kept as a helpful way to record my thoughts during coding. “Recording your insights and ‘hunches’ as they occur means that you will not have to rely on your memory further on in the research process when you embark on interpretation, conclusions, and the final write up” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 328). On the second reading, exact quotes were noted and placed aside. Key terms were noted among all the transcriptions. Themes begin to emerge among the personal accounts of the participants. Triangulation for this study was achieved by using an approved interview protocol, aligning the questions with scholarly literature, and having a peer reviewer check the themes used while coding the interviews (Bloomberg, 2023). The themes were aligned with the research question. The next section summarizes the key themes of each research question.

Research Question 1

1. How do principals’ lived experiences reflect the influence of their mentors on their overall well-being, as assessed through the PERMA model?

Themes as Related to PERMA

Many commonalities were found in the data analysis of the nine participants. These commonalities were clustered and given a theme name. A theme was considered common if three or more participants mentioned it. A total of twelve themes emerged from the interview data analysis. The themes were derived through multiple coding sessions. Notes and charts were used along with member checking. Quotations from participants, along with key words and phrases, were identified to help reveal the theme.

Table 3

Themes Across Participants

	Aubree	Brody	Connie	David	Evan	Farrah	Gayle	Hadley	Ila
Communication	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Companionship			x			x	x	x	x
Confidence	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Focus/Prioritizing	x	x	x	x		x	x		x
Organizing	x		x	x	x	x			x
Personal/ professional support	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Positivity	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Reflection/ Mindfulness	x						x		x
Stress reduction	x	x		x				x	x
Students first mentality	x	x	x		x		x		x
Success	x	x	x			x	x		
Work-Life Balance	x	x	x		x			x	

The identified themes in Table 3 emerged from the participants' own words. The participants' experiences are aligned here with the PERMA model, Seligman's (2011) mnemonic of five domains which are used to measure well-being. While the participants' words may not have been the same as Seligman's domains (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment), all could be related to a domain. For instance, "success" is related to the domain of accomplishment, "positivity" and "confidence" are related to the domain of positive

emotion, and “companionship” and “communication” are related to the domain of relationships. Explanations for the alignment of the participants’ words and the PERMA model are further explained under each domain below. Seligman states that these domains create a sense of flourishing. “The PERMA framework is, in this respect, creating a way of life that is purposeful, meaningful, ethical, and relational” (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2022, p. 25). The themes are explained here by the words of the participants.

Positive Emotion (PERMA)

Positive emotion is a sense of joy and contentment. It is considered a measurement of happiness and life satisfaction. Our emotions range from positive to negative. Seligman (2011) also describes positive emotion as including pleasure, warmth, and comfort. Work-life balance, confidence, stress reduction, and positivity all aligned with positive emotion. The participant’s positive emotions were clearly improved as they found more work life balance. Their confidence was boosted by the words of encouragement their mentors spoke. The mentors reduced their stress by explaining stressful situations to the protégé. The positive demeanors of the mentors were recognized by many of the protégés which led to their own positive emotion. When the protégés were asked about positive emotion their quotes included references to balance, confidence stress reduction, and positivity which gave them more positive emotion.

Work Life-Balance. Work-life balance is managing one’s professional and personal lives in a way in which neither suffers. Protégés noted their mentors reminded them often to stay balanced.

“His [the mentor’s] major question to me this year is how do I balance this type of relationship professionally and personally.” (Aubree)

“He [mentor] has talked to me about priorities and how to manage work and home life.”

(Brody)

“My mentor was great at finding balance for me too, I think that is really important through it all. He really helped me narrow my focus on what was important and what needed to be handled right then and there, and what could be put off a little bit and how to prioritize and that goes back to balance, how do you balance it all? And he really pushes the fact that you’ve got to have a strong support system outside of school with family. So, you have to take care of your health. You need to be with friends and family a little bit to help with the balance.” (Connie)

“He would constantly remind me of the times to disengage and make sure that the work-life balance was there. There were times I needed time for myself as well. That was a reminder of a lot of times from him as we had in our meetings and such.” (Evan)

Confidence. The principalship is often a challenge with many things to learn daily. It is easy for new principals to become overwhelmed with the many decisions they have to make. Effective decision-making can be a byproduct of being confident in one’s abilities. The protégés in this study reported that having mentors made them more confident.

“He saw something in me that led me to where I am today. He would tell me you are ready for it. You don’t you are, but you are.” (Aubree)

“It is a big jump. I feel like going from an assistant principal to assistant principal, even though I was set up in a good situation, it was still a big jump of mindset, and having to be almost in a different light. Having someone to build my confidence to make sure I knew I was doing a good job helped a lot.” (David)

“I had a problem with confidence anyway. And being a first-year administrator and being at the school I was at was not an easy task. He was always very patient about teaching me everything so he gave me a lot of confidence.” (Farrah)

Stress Reduction. Protégés have someone to vent to about their frustrations and to get advice before taking further steps in difficult situations. The principals in this study reported that the guidance received from their mentors helped them change their perceptions about their problems and ease their worries, which caused a reduction in stress.

“Being able to know that I had someone to go to really reduces the stress and is experiencing kind of the same thing, helped reduce a lot of the stress that comes with the job.” (David)

“My mentor would help me so much by saying this is just a small thing. This too shall pass.” (Hadley)

“Sometimes there is so much to juggle. My mentor would say, ‘do not worry about this. This is what you need to focus on next.’” (Ila)

Positivity. Positivity is an emotional state which occurs when things are going well. Participants often described ways in which their mentors were edifying and encouraged them to be positive.

“He was always just uplifting and positive. He was always encouraging people to be what their hear aspires to be.” (Connie)

“He always taught me to stay positive because the way you act is the way your school culture will follow behind you.” (Farrah)

“My mentor would tell me everything is going got be alright, this is just a small issue. She would talk through the problem and then I would realize I could do this.” (Hadley)

Engagement (PERMA)

Focus, priorities, and organization are themes that aligned with engagement. The engagement of the principals was improved as they learned where to focus their energy. The instructions on how to be more organized in the principalship helped to streamline their work. The instructions from the mentors on which priorities were important helped the principals from getting lost in the many details they handle daily. When the protégés were asked about staying connected to their daily work and daily engagement, they used words such as focus, priorities, and organization, which helped them to stay engaged.

Focus and Priorities. The principals reported a number of ways their mentors helped them focus on the most important tasks and to make sure their priorities were in the right order. The protégés were grateful for the reminders about priorities. They often mentioned how their conversations with their mentor helped them to remain focused on the right decisions.

“You keep the main thing the main thing. Separate your emotions. Just home in on why we do what we do. Just be where your feet are.” (Aubree)

“He has helped try to keep my focus on this part of the job, unfortunately not the stresses of it and what comes along with it, but how to prioritize that and how to manage with keeping your priorities in line...prioritize what is important and what’s not and it can wait.” (Brody)

“He would always say, we are going to do what is right for kids at the end of the day. We are going to do what is right for kids what do we need to do to focus on that.” (Connie)

“Just helping to remember that the kids are the ultimate goal here to help them achieve and giving them tools for success. Just making sure that is always in my mind during my daily tasks.” (Evan)

“We have something called a tactical, and we go over our weekly tactical. In our tactical we have priority one, priority two, and then we will have metric one and metric two, and then key priorities, three key priorities. Then at the beginning of the year we have priorities for the year.”
(Ila)

Organization. Several of the protégés mentioned how their mentor helped guide them to be more organized. Participants often spoke of specific ways they were guided by their mentor to be more organized.

“We would talk through things like the to do list for the week, and what I had going on and what was most important that I needed to handle right then. He did a really good job of making sure I stayed focused on what was important and that was making the right decisions for kids.”
(Connie)

“My mentor was able to teach me just some small tips of being organized, prioritizing, because sometimes, at the very beginning, I did feel like I had to put out that fire right then and there, and there are some fires that can continue to burn just for a little bit longer. They were able to give me some really good feedback on how to manage my time and organize thing a little better, and a little cleaner to help with that.” (David)

“He kind of help put things in a pecking order, if that makes sense, of what needs to be maintained first and realizing those that matter.” (Evan)

“He taught me to stay organized. We kind of had a routine and he taught me how to stay focused.” (Farrah)

“She helped me to put in policies and procedures that would help my school run smoothly, to eliminate or minimize the ambiguity so that people would know this is what’s going on and this is what you do next, this is how we need to respond to this situation.” (Ila)

Relationships (PERMA)

Communication, personal and professional support, and companionship were themes that aligned with relationships. The principal protégés were outspoken on the importance of the relationship with their mentor. When the protégés were asked how their mentors helped them navigate all of their relationships they used words like listening, helping and support.

Communication. The principalship is a relational job. The protégés were quick to mention how their mentor helped to improve their communication skills.

“So, he really had to guide me on figuring out what people wanted and what they were, and I hate to say but what they were after, what they were about, what they were focused on, and how to respond to them appropriately. And again, he always went back to, at the end of the day, when you navigate relationships, you have to be upfront, honest. You actively listen to what people are saying because people want to be heard. They want their voices heard. He really stressed listen.” (Connie)

“I grew a lot working with him because we both had different personalities, so he was more sit back and listen, be more patient, not so quick to speak. So, he taught me a lot about that, and just how to deal with different teachers and different personalities and students.” (Farrah)

“He would say you got to listen to people a lot of the times they don’t really want an answer or a decision. They just want to make sure you know about it. They don’t want you to do anything, they just want you to know about it. He would say if you will just listen to them head on then ask them at the end what would you like to see happen? A lot of them will just say, well, nothing right now, I just want you to know about it.” (Gayle)

Personal and Professional Support. The principalship can be a lonely place. The protégés understood the importance of the support the mentors gave them. They often referred to the various ways their mentor gave them help.

“He saw me through the questions I had. He was one of the first people I called to say I did it.”
(Aubree)

“You can do this and here is how you are going to do this and I’m here to help you.” (Connie)

“Having someone there to build my confidence to make sure that I knew that I was doing a good job. Again, that relieved a lot of stress for me.” (David)

“I was a direct reflection on him so he always took time to show me how to do things the right way.” (Gayle)

“She helped me in so many ways. She helped my put in processes and procedures that would help my school to run smoothly and to eliminate ambiguity.” (Ila)

Companionship. The mentors understood the importance of having someone to call if needed. The close relationships with the mentors were valued by the protégés.

“Having someone guide you through maybe when you need a good push, that really what having a mentor is all about.” (Aubree)

“I was searching for someone that could share their wisdom with me. And I found that in him. He has really invested in me over the years, and I really appreciate that.” (Connie)

“We were constantly collaborating. We would often just sit and talk about all the positives and negatives.” (Farrah)

“He mentored me for two years. He knew how my mind worked.” (Gayle)

Meaning (PERMA)

Reflection, mindfulness, and maintaining a vision of students first all aligned with meaning. Meaning is often defined as purpose. When reflecting on students and the real meaning of schooling gave the principals a sense of purpose. Participants were asked about their professional priorities giving them meaning they used phrases like reflection, remember, kids, and students.

Reflection/Mindfulness. An important job of the mentor is to help the protégé reflect on their actions and to improve going forward. Protégés were clear when discussing how their mentors helped them to slow down and reflect on important decisions.

“He would always say for me to be where my feet are. He would also say just remember what you did this for and be the principal you want to have.” (Aubree)

“His policy was always if it is something that did not have to be answered immediately then you wait twenty-four hours because emotions can get in the way.” (Gayle)

“During our tactical meeting we have a step back. During the step back we go back and reflect on our metrics and key priorities from the quarter before.” (Ila)

Student’s First. A principal’s day is filled with many problems. It is often easy to forget why they do the job. The protégés were reminded often by their mentor of the product educators work toward. Student success and making decisions based on students were mentioned by many of the protégés.

“If it is best for the kids leave the emotion out of it when you make the decision.” (Aubree)

“We are going to do what is right by kids at the end of the day.” (Connie)

“Remember that kids are the ultimate goal here.” (Evan)

“Everything we do ties back to how it is helping the student.” (Ila)

Accomplishment (PERMA)

The theme of success aligned with accomplishment. Most of the principals credited their mentor with pushing them through to success. When protégés were asked about how their mentor influenced their accomplishments, they used words like degree, improvement, and professional development.

Success. Protégés mentioned their mentors helped pushed them to be successful in a number of ways. They often discussed this encouragement from the mentors as a major reason for their success.

“I think you should go back and get your degree.” (Aubree)

“He helped me to build a good rapport with m teachers and my community, and to improve my data with showing me how to put more boots on the ground with title one money.” (Brody)

“He highly encourages professional development. He encouraged me to attend Superintendent’s academy wrote my letter of recommendation.” (Connie)

“He helped me grow. He changed my life. I wouldn’t be where I am today without him.” (Farrah)

“He gave me my shot and I would not have progressed without him.” (Gayle)

Table 4

Thematic alignment with Seligman’s (2011) PERMA

	Positive Emotion	Engagement	Relationships	Meaning	Accomplishment
Communication			X		
Companionship			X		
Confidence	X				
Focus/Prioritizing		X			

Organizing		X			
Personal/Professional Support			X		
Positivity	X				
Reflection/Mindfulness				X	
Stress Reduction	X				
Student's First				X	
Success					X
Work-Life Balance	X				

Participants' Perceptions of Their Mentors' Influence on Their Overall Well-Being

The principal protégés were asked if they felt their mentors influenced their well-being in a positive or negative fashion. All candidates perceived that their well-being was positively influenced by their mentors. The following are representative quotes from the participants:

"I would say he definitely influences me in a positive way." (Aubree)

"He has helped me in a positive way." (Brody)

"Oh, certainly in a positive way." (Connie)

"Gosh, absolutely in a positive way. For me, in my experience, I really think he helped my mental health, my well-being, and all of those things in a positive way." (David)

"Definitely in a positive fashion. He constantly would remind me to disengage and make sure the work-life balance was there." (Evan)

"He absolutely influenced me positively. Like I said it changed my life because I wouldn't be where I am today." (Farrah)

“A definite yes for positively. My mom was dying with breast cancer, I was getting a divorce, my dog died. It was the saddest story you have ever read. And I was wondering how someone gets through all that. I know I had a heaviness about me. My mentor was very positive and helpful, always insisting they could step in at any moment to help with me or my school. The frequent check ins helped pick me up.” (Hadley)

“Oh, in a positive fashion, because my mentor came along when I would say this terrible and I don’t want to do this anymore. She would tell me to stop letting those bad voices speak to you like that.” (Ila)

Research Question 2

The findings for the second research question were reflected by participant responses to two interview questions. Protégés were asked to describe the intent of the mentor given the choices of psycho-social support, professional development, and career advancement. They were also asked to describe how involved they felt their mentor was during the mentoring relationship. According to Mertz (2004) there are three general areas of intent. These areas of intent are career advancement, professional development and psycho-social functions.

Intent

Mertz (2004) described intent as the end which was sought. Table 5 is a chart with participants’ perceptions of the intentions of their mentors, which fell into the following three categories: career advancement, professional development, and psycho-social function.

Table 5

Mentor Intent

Participant	Career Advancement	Professional development	Psycho-Social Function (Confidence)
Aubree	X		

Brody		X	
Connie	X	X	X
David		X	X
Evan		X	
Farrah			X
Gayle	X		
Hadley			X
Ila	X	X	X

The protégés were very clear on the intent of their mentors. They were quick to answer this question. Connie shared how her mentor has influenced her confidence:

“He really instilled confidence in me, he would say, ‘you can do this, and here is how you are going to do this and I’m here to help you. You can call me whenever you need me and we’ll walk through things.’ So, I think confidence is where he helped me the most.”

David shared how his mentor influenced his professional development and confidence:

“He definitely helped my professional development and my confidence as well. I feel like it’s a big jump going from assistant principal to principal even though I was in a good situation, it is a big jump in mind set. Having someone to build my confidence to make sure that I knew that I was doing a good job, Again, he relieved so much stress for me and that helped a lot.”

Farrah shared how her mentor influenced her confidence and career advancement:

“I would say number one he helped my confidence because I probably had a problem with that anyway. And being a first-year administrator and at my school that I taught at, that was not an easy task. He was always very patient in teaching me everything and so he gave me a lot of

confidence. And, of course, he helped by career advancement. I mean I absolutely loo sat other principals or assistant principals and I think they don't know things. He is the only reason of where I am today and it is because he taught me so much."

Participant Gayle shared about how her mentor influenced her career advancement:

"I could not have progressed in my career without him at that time. I am a female in a man's world. Everything I learned about administration I learned from him in those first two years."

Thematic Alignment with Mertz (2004)

The themes found in research question one also aligned with the three intents of mentoring as found by Mertz (2004), which are psycho-social function, professional development, and career advancement.

Table 6

Mertz Alignment

Themes	Psycho-Social Function	Professional Development	Career Advancement
Communication		X	X
Companionship	X		
Confidence	X		
Focus/prioritizing		X	
Organizing		X	
Personal/Professional Support	X		
Positivity	X		
Reflection/Mindfulness	X		
Stress-Reduction	X		
Student's First		X	
Success			X

Work-Life Balance			X
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Involvement

All the principals reported their mentor stayed in touch with them often and through numerous methods. The interview question asked the protégés to describe how involved their mentor was in terms of texts, emails, calls, and visits.

“We would always text back and forth. I would tell him when I had a rough day and he would send me a little something. He would tell me to remember what I did this for and to be the principal I wanted to have. He was good to just send me a little something.” (Aubree)

“He has communicated with me in all ways. He used texts, emails, calls and visits.” (Brody)

“Every day he has an open-door policy. There has never been a day where he is like, I can’t talk to you.” (Connie)

“At least two or three times a week we would communicate. We would always map our time together. We would have informal conversations. We would text or we would call.” (David)

“I think I spoke to him in every facet available. I had a lot of one-on-one time especially early on in my career. He would send tidbits through email or an article that would be helpful. He would send an idea through a text or a phone call.” (Evan)

Table 7

Mentor Involvement

Participants	Texts	Emails	Calls	Visits
Aubree	X		X	
Brody	X	X	X	X
Connie	X	X	X	X
David	X		X	X
Evan	X	X	X	X
Farrah	X	X	X	X
Gayle	X		X	
Hadley	X	X	X	X

Ila	X	X	X	X
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“We were constantly collaborating. Each month we would have a sit down and talk about positives and negatives and ways to improve. He really helped me grow.” (Farrah)

“Every week. There was not a week that went by in that first year that he did not text me. There was not a week went by that he didn’t check on me.” (Gayle)

“They would visit frequently or call me every day or text me every day.” (Hadley)

“Each Sunday morning, I would get a power note. I had face-to-face weekly meetings. Every morning I got a text with a hit list which was always something encouraging.” (Ila)

General Summary of Findings

Participants spoke of 12 themes of how their mentors assisted them. Each theme to be aligned with one or more of the Seligman’s elements of PERMA which are positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. The data then revealed the following specific findings. Protégés had improved hard and soft skills, improved personal and professional growth and improved effectiveness and efficacy. All participants lived experiences revealed that their mentors contributed to their well-being in one or more ways.

Mertz lists three intents or purposes of mentoring. These are psycho-social, professional development, and career development. Using the same themes from the data, which was generated by the participant interviews, the lived experiences of the participants reflected the mentors’ intentions for the protégés. The participants were able to describe the level of involvement from their mentors and the different intentions their mentors had for them. The data revealed several specific findings. The protégés saw a progression of independence in their leadership ability after working with their mentors. They also felt a deep connection to their mentors due to the level of involvement they had with each other.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This hermeneutic phenomenological study examined the lived experiences of nine school principals from different regions of Alabama who had mentors. The research focused on the lived experiences of the participants regarding how their mentors may have influenced their well-being. “Each participant’s experiences are translated through the researcher by comparison and contrast with the accounts of other participants discussing their experience of the same phenomenon” (Peoples, 2021, p. 64). Research regarding stress and burnout suggests that the pressures of life as a principal are becoming more intense each year. This study investigated mentoring for principals’ well-being using Seligman’s (2011) positive psychology framework, PERMA, and the Mertz (2004) mentoring framework. It explored principal well-being as reflected in mentoring practices. Twelve themes emerged and were aligned with the five PERMA domains: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. The key findings in this study showed the following outcomes from mentoring principals as reported by the participants.

- Improved soft skills and hard skills
- Improved personal and professional growth
- Improved confidence
- Progression of the protégé toward independence
- Deep connections with the mentor leading to improved well-being

Summary of the Study

This phenomenological qualitative study was used to explore the lived experience of principals who had mentors and the influence those mentors had on the well-being of those principals. The cornerstone for this study was a question asked by Mahfouz and Richardson in

2021, “A significant question for the field of educational leadership is how to address the well-being of school leaders and thus improve their work-life balance and possibly decrease attrition” (Mahfouz & Richardson, 2021, p. 362). The stability of leadership is important for the school culture and climate (Kim & Pendola, 2022). Student achievement hinges on it. One in five principals are leaving their schools each year in part because of the stress and burnout they endure (DeMatthews et al., 2022). Mentoring and its influence on the overall well-being of principals is an underutilized area of educational research. This study hopes to fill that gap in the literature on the influence of mentoring on the well-being of school principals.

Research Questions

1. How do principals’ lived experiences reflect the influence of their mentors on their overall well-being, as assessed through the PERMA model?
2. Regarding well-being, how do school principals’ experience their mentors’ intent and involvement?

Review of Methodology

The researcher used a phenomenological qualitative study to explore the lived experiences of school principals and their mentors. Nine participants were interviewed using two research questions. The research questions were aligned with the conceptual frameworks. The protégés were interviewed and the interviews were then coded and transcribed.

Limitations

1. This study focused only on school administrators in the state of Alabama.
2. The overall sample size might be considered small.
3. The sample was not as racially diverse as the researcher would have liked but could only interview those who consented to be a part of the study.

4. The researcher is a former school principal in Alabama.
5. The researcher currently mentors principals in Alabama.

Major Findings Related to Literature and Interpretations

Improved Hard Skills and Soft Skills

The participants experienced improved hard skills and soft skills. When considering each of the themes that emerged, many would fall into the category of a hard or soft skill. Lyu and Liu (2021) define hard skills as the technical abilities needed to complete tasks. They add that soft skills are the skills that enable employees to “fit in” at a workplace such as communication and personality traits (p. 2). Improvement in several of these areas was reported by the protégés. This was an unexpected finding. Mertz (2004) and Kram (1988) both discuss the improvement of career functions and professional development that a mentor can have on a protégé. Improvement in hard and soft skills by the protégés is the very foundation of professional development.

Whether it was the soft skill of communicating or the hard skill of organizing, each ability lent itself to the improvement of the principal. Hard skills, such as organizing, focus, and prioritizing, lend themselves to improving the engagement of the principals. Soft skills, such as improving communication, supports improved relationships. Relationships and engagement are both foundational to PERMA (Seligman, 2004). The following participants’ words further support this finding:

So, he really had to guide me on figuring out what people wanted and what they were, and I hate to say but what they were after, what they were about, what they were focused on, and how to respond to them appropriately. And again, he always went back to, at the end of the day, when you navigate relationships, you have to be upfront, honest. You

actively listen to what people are saying because people want to be heard. They want their voices heard. He really stressed listen. (Connie)

We have something called a tactical, and we go over our weekly tactical. In our tactical we have priority one, priority two, and then we will have metric one and metric two, and then key priorities, three key priorities. Then at the beginning of the year we have priorities for the year. (Ila)

“He taught me to stay organized. We kind of had a routine and he taught me how to stay focused.” (Farrah)

“He [mentor] has talked to me about priorities and how to manage work and home life.” (Brody)

“He taught me a lot about that, and just how to deal with different teachers and different personalities and students.” (Farrah)

My mentor was able to teach me just some small tips of being organized, prioritizing, because sometimes, at the very beginning, I did feel like I had to put out that fire right then and there, and there are some fires that can continue to burn just for a little bit longer. They were able to give me some really good feedback on how to manage my time and organize thing a little better, and a little cleaner to help with that. (David)

The continual learning of the school leader is important to the success of the principal and also of those in the school family. School leaders influence teachers, general school improvement, and student achievement (DeMatthews et al., 2021a; Mahfouz & Gordon, 2021). At its core, mentoring is a learning relationship. Zachary (2009) reminds us that “learning is the heart of the mentoring relationship (p. 82).

Improved Personal and Professional Growth

Principals also reported an increase in their personal and professional growth. Kram (1988), Mertz (2004), and Zachary and Fain (2022) identify that one of the main purposes of mentoring is to improve the growth and development of the protégé. The principals were encouraged to protect their family time and their alone time to keep their personal lives in check. This improved work-life balance and influences our positive emotion and meaning. Mahfouz (2020) and Ray et al. (2020) report in their research about the daily stress and challenges which accompany a principalship. The daily tasks can be overwhelming, which often leads to burnout. Although I was looking for influences on their well-being, I did not expect to see such a commonality among the participants in their personal and professional growth. Protégé's reported how their mentors encouraged them to spend time with family and time alone to maintain the needed work-life balance and to off-set the stress which accompanies the job. The mentors helped the protégés to see the humanity of the principalship and the need to maintain their own identities as individuals. They were reminded of the need to balance their professional and personal lives as much as possible.

Protégés were clear about the support of their mentors in the area of professional growth. Kram (1988) identified career functions as helping a protégé advance in their chosen field of work. Many reported the encouragement of their mentor to seek professional development opportunities outside of their own systems. Most often the growth came in interactions with the mentor which helped them solve a problem or see a problem in a different light. The protégé's would be confused or stressed over an issue, and the mentor would quickly help them see a solution. The protégés would give themselves more grace after these interactions which would

relieve the stress and support the professional growth. The participants described their growth in the following ways:

“You can do this and here is how you are going to do this and I’m here to help you.” (Connie)

“I was a direct reflection on him so he always took time to show me how to do things the right way.” (Gayle)

“She helped me in so many ways. She helped my put in processes and procedures that would help my school to run smoothly and to eliminate ambiguity.” (Ila)

“He saw me through the questions I had. He was one of the first people I called to say I did it.” (Aubree)

“He highly encourages professional development. He encouraged me to attend Superintendent’s academy and wrote my letter of recommendation.” (Connie)

He definitely helped my professional development and my confidence as well. I feel like it’s a big jump going from assistant principal to principal even though I was in a good situation, it is a big jump in mind set. Having someone to build my confidence to make sure that I knew that I was doing a good job, Again, he relieved so much stress for me and that helped a lot. (David)

Improved Confidence

Principals saw improvement in confidence throughout the mentoring process. Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) suggest that a leader’s confidence ultimately matters to the whole organization. The achievements, whether small or large, boosted their positive emotion. Several of the protégés discussed the influence their mentors had on their confidence. This process of facing a problem and overcoming the problem helped to build confidence in themselves. The experiences of the protégés revealed that they would often have a change in thinking about their own abilities

after overcoming stressful events. They would shift from anxiousness about a problem to confidence and hope in handling hard situations at their schools.

Many principals are plagued with anxiety and doubt. Connery and Frick (2020) note that principals often have self-doubt and anxious feelings about the future. The protégés in this study revealed their mentors were key in helping them overcome the anxiety of the principalship and facing the future with confidence. Their stories revealed they would move from fear and confusion to hope and confidence. This process is what Kram (1988) described as “psychological nurturing” (p. 355) “Particularly for newer administrators, having a trusted mentor is an important means of gaining professional confidence and competence and thus mitigating some of the inherent stress in the profession” (Beisser et al., 2014, p.15). The mentors were key in helping them see their own improvement. The encouragement of the mentor would immediately build the confidence of the principal. The improved confidence would then build their effectiveness and helped them fight the daily stress they experienced. Several participants described an increase in confidence as an outcome of mentoring:

“He would tell me you are ready for it. You don’t you are, but you are.” (Aubree)

“Having someone to build my confidence to make sure I knew I was doing a good job helped a lot.” (David)

“He saw something in me that led me to where I am today.

“My mentor would tell me everything is going to be alright, this is just a small issue. She would talk through the problem and then I would realize I could do this.” (Hadley)

He really instilled confidence in me, he would say, ‘you can do this, and here is how you are going to do this and I’m here to help you. You can call me whenever you need me and

we'll walk through things.' So, I think confidence is where he helped me the most.

(Connie)

Progression Toward Independence

Analysis revealed that the intent of the mentors as perceived by the participants aligned with Mertz (2004). Each participant shared their perceptions of their mentors. The intent aligned with psychosocial development, professional development, and career advancement as listed in the Mertz conceptual framework. The confidence of the protégés was improved through the interactions with their mentors as they worked together to solve problems and discussed upcoming meetings or important decisions. Kram (1988) and Connery and Frick (2020) discuss the psychosocial function as increasing the competence and effectiveness of the protégé.

Professional development was mentioned by several of the protégés as being an area of support by their mentors. Mertz (2004) reminds us that professional development and career development are different. An individual can be promoted while needing professional development. In the same manner, an individual may need professional development without getting a promotion. The protégés in the study knew the intent of their mentors and would often differentiate between these two development areas. However, most of them felt the mentor helped in both areas.

Zachary and Fain (2022) identified this phase of the mentoring relationship as enabling growth and describes it as the “real work” and “heart of mentoring” (p. 167). Throughout the interviews, the protégés would indicate how they learned to begin making decisions without the mentors’ assistance. The participants’ lived experiences revealed a progression toward independence as they worked through their struggles with the mentor alongside them. The protégés reported that this independence fueled a sense of personal achievement. This

progression toward independence is also the essence of a developmental relationship. Successful mentoring develops talent and ensures a protégés growth (Kram, 1988; Mertz, 2004; Zachary & Fain, 2022). Participants described the progression toward independence in the following ways:

“I grew a lot working with him because we both had different personalities, so he was more sit back and listen, be more patient, not so quick to speak. (Farrah)

“He saw me through the questions I had. He was one of the first people I called to say I did it.” (Aubree)

“He helped me grow. He changed my life. I wouldn’t be where I am today without him.” (Farrah)

“ We would talk every Saturday and then the phone calls became less. But at that point I had already found my groove and was established. I would then call him as needed. “ (Gayle)

Deep Connections with Improved Well-Being

Analysis of the protégé’s perceptions of their mentoring relationship revealed a high level of involvement by the mentors. According to Mertz’s (2004) definition, the time and intensity of the advisors qualified all of them to be considered mentors. The mentors were concerned and committed to the futures of the protégés. Many of the protégés revealed that they still have active relationships with their mentors years after initially forming their relationships. This level of involvement allowed for meaningful connections between the mentor and protégé. Hermeneutic phenomenology allowed me to use my lived experiences as a lens to view the study. As a former principal, I had preconceived knowledge of the importance of a mentor on the well-being of school principals. I didn’t know, however, if that was just my own experience or if it was true for others. This study and these participants offered confirmation that deep connections with a mentor does improve your overall well-being. The participants described the mentors as

available and engaging in their mentoring relationships. All participants reported having deep connections with their mentors. Learning and leadership are relational. Relationships that offer support systems for principals are key to their growth and effectiveness as leaders and to their ability to resist burnout. Participants words described improved well-being as a result of having a mentor:

“Gosh, absolutely in a positive way. For me, in my experience, I really think he helped my mental health, my well-being and all of those things in a positive way.” (David)

He would constantly remind me of the times to disengage and make sure that the work-life balance was there. There were times I needed time for myself as well. That was a reminder of a lot of times from him as we had in our meetings and such. (Evan)

“Oh, in a positive fashion, because my mentor came along when I would say this terrible and I don’t want to do this anymore. She would tell me to stop letting those bad voices speak to you like that.” (Ila)

“He absolutely influenced me positively. Like I said it changed my life because I wouldn’t be where I am today.” (Farrah)

A definite yes for positively. My mom was dying with breast cancer, I was getting a divorce, my dog died. It was the saddest story you have ever read. And I was wondering how someone gets through all that. I know I had a heaviness about me. My mentor was very positive and helpful, always insisting they could step in at any moment to help with me or my school. The frequent check ins helped pick me up. (Hadley)

Long-Lasting Positive Influence of the Mentor

Many of the mentoring relationships were several years old. The participants indicated the relationships were still active. During member reflections, Gayle noted the advice from the

mentor was like recalling your favorite teacher and how words often spoken by your favorite teacher are easy to remember. She said she could recall many conversations with her mentor and the words he had spoken to her years later. Connery and Frick (2020) and Mertz (2004) both describe the level of trust required in a mentoring relationship often results in a strong bond. This type of relationship was valued by the proteges and they indicated their relationships were several years in the making.

“He mentored me for two years. He knew how my mind worked.” (Gayle)

“I could not have progressed in my career without him at that time. I am a female in a man’s world. Everything I learned about administration I learned from him in those first two years.”
(Ila)

“I was searching for someone that could share their wisdom with me. And I found that in him. He has really invested in me over the years, and I really appreciate that.” (Connie)

Findings Related to the Research Problem

Chapter 1 discussed the research problem as principal attrition due in part to the stress and burnout of the changing landscape of the principalship. The dynamic shift of responsibilities over the last several years have intensified the many duties of school leaders. Little research has been conducted that create practices that influence principal well-being and counter burnout and attrition.

The findings in this study support improved overall well-being of the participants by their own admission and their own lived experiences. The deep connections they described with their mentors moved them to be independent and confident leaders. Their personal and professional growth, to include hard and soft skills, propelled them to be more effective and efficient school leaders. The principal protégés acknowledged that their mentors helped them solve stressful

problems and deal with situations that seemed impossible. The words of advice and encouragement offered by their mentors often led them to be less stressed and more positive.

Findings Related to the Research Questions

The PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) was used as a way to assess the overall well-being of the principals. As previously stated, each theme aligned with a domain from PERMA. The findings also align with the PERMA model as a way to reflect the overall well-being of the protégés. Positive emotion is a domain that includes confidence and how it influences our feelings in an affirmative way. The confidence gained through the mentoring experience pushed the principals to be independent and more effective leaders. The personal and professional growth, to include soft and hard skills, gave the protégés a sense of accomplishment. According to Seligman (2011), people who are living an accomplished life are living a meaningful life. The intent and involvement of the mentors indicated that they were truly fulfilling the duties of mentoring. The principal mentors had no agenda as a principal coach would have. These relationships were protégé-led as they interacted with their mentors. Many of the protégés revealed that they were still actively involved in their mentoring relationships years after forming those relationships.

Significance of the Study

School principals influence school improvement and student achievement (DeMatthews et al., 2021a; Mahfouz & Gordon, 2021). The importance of understanding well-being is crucial to making sure school administrators stay well and deal with the stress of the principalship to continue to positively impact student success. The well-being of the principal is no longer about one person's health but how the health of one person can impact many people and, namely, a large number of teachers and students. Principal well-being is crucial because of the influence it

has on school climate, school culture, teacher well-being, student well-being, and student achievement.

This research was based on the question from Mahfouz and Richardson (2021) which concerned itself with addressing the well-being of school leaders to improve their work-life balance and decrease attrition, and this research supports that mentoring does just that.

This study is one of few if not the only study which seeks to integrate the work of Seligman (2011) and Mertz (2004) to investigate the influence of mentoring on well-being. Results in this research are consistent with other research on mentoring. “Forming a relationship with a mentor was a means to an end or, in other words, a vehicle to transport them to higher levels of knowledge and experiences of well-being” (Connery & Frick, 2020, p. 13). The overall picture that emerged from this study is that well-being can be improved through mentoring. This research helps fill the gap in the literature on well-being as an outcome of mentoring.

Implications for Practice

The responsibility for the implications for practice rests with all who have power to influence the policies that guide K-12 schools. That is, those who have power and care deeply for principals, teachers, and students. Job stress in the principalship is not going away, and there is no silver bullet or magic solution to this problem. School principals work in an area that is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (Searby, 2014). Mentors ensure that principals never face the challenges of their job alone. The work of the mentor can buffer the stress of the principalship by increasing the confidence of the school leaders. This renewed confidence can create resilience in the school leaders. “Resilience is an important quality for principals to develop in order to help them bounce back from the challenges, disappointments and adversities

they face on the job” (Wells & Klocko, 2018, p. 163). Mentoring is an important practice for building confidence, which can enable principals to be resilient as they encounter stress.

State and local school leaders should create and normalize policies and procedures that keep the well-being of the school principal in mind by ensuring consistent mentoring for school principals. The mentors in this study created a moment of peace and reflection for principals which gave them clarity when making hard decisions and helped them to adapt to the stressors of the principalship. This developmental relationship increased the confidence of the administrators and helped them work through anxious feelings in order to be more effective in their jobs.

This research supports the value of mentors for developing principals. Systems and structures that care for principals should be maintained. State and local leaders should ensure new principals have a mentor, especially when they are new to the role. Having the support of a mentor not only makes the principal more effective but also decreases the likelihood of school leader attrition. Principals need support to maintain their well-being. From a practical perspective, school districts could also become more involved in the issue of well-being. For example, they could contract with nutritionists to work with principals to help maintain a healthy diet and BMI. Districts could contract with local gyms for lower rates of annual memberships and offer professional development regarding mindfulness, overall well-being, and stress-reduction techniques for new and veteran principals. It is also crucial that principal preparation programs include administrator well-being in their curricula and emphasize the value of having a mentor.

Mahfouz and Gordon (2021) discuss the role of self-care in the life of a principal because the health of a principal is important to the culture and climate of the school. Previous research by Wheeler et al. (2024) indicates that mentors positively influence self-care strategies for school

principals. The mentoring relationship is an invaluable space in which leaders can learn to care, connect, and create a vision of health for the school without depleting their own reserves.

Implications for Future Research

Future research in the area of mentoring and well-being should continue to address the relevance of the mentoring relationship in helping reduce the stress and burnout of school principals and increasing their overall well-being. Efforts should be made to continue to fill the gap on the lack of research about how mentoring principals increases well-being and influences student achievement. The principalship will remain a stressful position, but research on best practices for reducing stress and increasing overall well-being could help off-set that stress in the future.

Final Thoughts and Conclusions

This study has given voice to the principal protégés about the positive influence of their mentors and their influence on their overall well-being. All participants were able to confirm that their mentors positively influenced their well-being. It is in this interaction that I see a pathway to decrease principal attrition and increase the chances that principals will flourish. Well-being, then, is not the absence of sickness or mental illness, but the presence of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. To be able to fill our principals with the domains of PERMA is to give them every chance to avoid a life of languishing and to have a life of flourishing. This research support mentors as the vehicle to see that through.

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Appendix A

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1

AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

PROTOCOL REVIEW FORM FULL BOARD or EXPEDITED REVIEW

For assistance, contact: The Office of Research Compliance (ORC)
Phone: 334-844-5966 E-Mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu Web Address: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs>
Submit completed form and supporting materials as one PDF through the [IRB Submission Page](#)
Handwritten forms are not accepted. Where links are found hold down the control button (Ctrl) then click the link.

1. Proposed Start Date of Study: 1/1/2024 Today's Date: November 12, 2023
Submission Status (Check One): ☒ New ☐ Revisions (to address IRB Review Comments)
Proposed Review Category (Check One): ☐ Full Board (greater than minimal risk) ☒ Expedited
If Expedited, Indicate Category(ies) ([Link to Expedited Category Review Sheet](#)) Click or tap to enter category.
2. Project Title: Mentoring for Well-Being with Alabama School Principals
3. Principal Investigator (PI): Rhonda Wheeler Degree(s): Ed. S.
Rank/Title: Graduate Student Department/School: EFLT
Role/responsibilities in this project: Principal researcher; AU graduate student responsible for obtaining informed consent; completing interviews and analyzing data
Preferred Phone Number: 256-609-9380 AU Email: rtw0026@auburn.edu

Faculty Advisor Principal Investigator (if applicable): Dr. Ellen Hahn
Rank/Title: Full Professor Department/School: EFLT
Role/responsibilities in this project: Major professor/Doctoral chair-Dissertation supervisor. Will provide feedback on dissertation and required revisions.
Preferred Phone Number: 334-844-3064 AU Email: reameseh@auburn.edu

Department Head: Dr. William Murrah Department/School: EFLT
Preferred Phone Number: 334-844-4460 AU Email: wmm0017@auburn.edu
Role/responsibilities in this project: N/A
4. Funding Support: ☒ N/A ☐ Internal External Agency: Click or tap here to enter text. Pending ☐ Received ☐
For federal funding, list funding agency and grant number (if available): Click or tap here to enter text.
5. a) List any contractors, sub-contractors, and other entities associated with this project: N/A
b) List any other AU IRB approved protocols associated with this study and describe the association: Click or tap here to enter text.
c) List any other institutions associated with this study and submit a copy of their IRB approval(s): Click or tap here to enter text.

Protocol Packet Checklist

Check all applicable boxes. A completed checklist is required.

- ☒ Protocol Review Form (All required signatures included and all sections completed)
(Examples of appended documents are found on the website: <https://cws.auburn.edu/OVPR/pm/compliance/irb/sampledocs>)
- ☒ CITI Training Certificates for key personnel
- ☒ Consent Form or Information Letter and any releases (audio, video or photo) that participants will review and/or sign
- ☒ Appendix A "Reference List"
- ☒ Appendix B if e-mails, flyers, advertisements, social media posts, generalized announcements or scripts, etc., will be used to recruit participants.

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
Document for use from
01/16/2024 to _____
Protocol # 23-600 EP 2401

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☒ Appendix C if data collection sheets, surveys, tests, other recording instruments, interview scripts, etc. will be used for data collection. Attach documents in the order they are listed in item 13c.	Continued on Page 2
☐ Appendix D if they study will use a debriefing form or will include emergency plans/ procedures and medical referral lists. (A referral list may be attached to the consent document.)	
☐ Appendix E if research is being conducted at sites other than Auburn University or in cooperation with other entities. A permission letter from the site/ program director must be included indicating their cooperation or involvement in the project. NOTE: If the proposed research is a multi-site project, involving investigators or participants at other academic institutions, hospitals or private research organizations, a letter of IRB approval from each entity is required prior to initiating the project.	
☐ Appendix F Written evidence of approval by the host country, local IRB or institutions if research is conducted outside the United States	

6. General Research Project Characteristics

6A. Research Methodology	
Check all descriptions that best apply to the research methodology.	
Data Source(s): ☒ New Data ☐ Existing Data	Will recorded data directly or indirectly identify participants? ☒ Yes ☐ No
Data collection will involve the use of:	
☐ Educational Tests (cognitive diagnostic, aptitude, etc.) ☒ Interview ☐ Observation ☐ Locations or Tracking Measures ☐ Physical / Physiological Measures or Specimens ☐ Surveys / Questionnaires ☐ Other: Click or tap here to enter text.	☒ Internet / Electronic ☒ Audio ☐ Video ☐ Photos ☐ Digital Images ☐ Private records or files
6B. Participant Information	6C. Risks to Participants
Check all descriptors that apply to the TARGET population. (link to definition of target population) ☒ Males ☒ Females ☐ AU students Vulnerable Populations ☐ Pregnant Women/Fetuses ☐ Prisoners ☐ Institutionalized ☐ Children and / or Adolescents (under age 18 in AL; if minor participants, at least 2 adults must be present during all research procedures that include the minors) Persons with: ☐ Economic Disadvantages ☐ Physical Disabilities ☐ Educational Disadvantages ☐ Intellectual Disabilities Will participants be compensated? ☐ Yes ☐ No	Identify all risks participants might encounter in this research. ☒ Breach of Confidentiality* ☐ Coercion ☐ Deception ☐ Physical ☒ Psychological ☐ Social ☐ None ☐ Other (COVID-19, other medical): Click or tap here to enter text. *Note that if the investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.
6D. Corresponding Approval/ Oversight	
• Does the study include participant exposure to radiation? ☐ Yes ☒ No If yes indicate: ☐ DEXA ☐ PQCT ☐ Other • Is IBC Approval required for this study? ☐ Yes ☒ No If yes, BUA # Click or tap here to enter text. Expiration Date Click or tap to enter a date. • Is IACUC Approval required for this study? ☐ Yes ☒ No If yes, PRN # Click or tap here to enter text. Expiration Date Click or tap to enter a date.	

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- Does this study involve the Auburn University MRI Center?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Which MRI(s) will be used for this project? (Check all that apply)

☐ 3T ☐ 7T

Does any portion of this project require review by the MRI Safety Advisory Council?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Continued on Page 3

Signature of one MRI Center Representative: _____

Required for all projects involving the AU MRI Center

Appropriate MRI Center Representatives:

Dr. Thomas S. Denney, Director AU MRI Center

Dr. Ron Beyers, MR Safety Officer

7. Project Assurances

7A. Principal Investigator's Assurances

- I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
- I understand that, as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance of this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the Auburn University IRB.
- I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with Auburn University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
- I agree to comply with all Auburn policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following:
 - Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol
 - Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the Office of Research Compliance
 - Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form
 - Promptly reporting significant adverse events and / or effects to the Office of Research Compliance in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
- If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has not been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise ORC, by letter, in advance of such arrangements.
- I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
- I will prepare and submit a renewal request and supply all supporting documents to the Office of Research Compliance before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
- I will prepare and submit a final report upon completion of this research project.

My signature indicates I have read, understand and agree to conduct this research project in accordance with the assurances listed above.

Rhonda Wheeler

Principal Investigator Name

Rhonda Wheeler
Principal Investigator Signature

11/13/2023

Date

7B. Faculty Advisor / Sponsor's Assurances

- I have read the protocol submitted for this project for content, clarity, and methodology.
- By my signature as faculty advisor / sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol.
- I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress. Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
- I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant incidents and / or adverse events and / or effects to the ORC in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
- If I will be unavailable, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I

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will advise the ORC by letter of such arrangements. If the investigator is unable to fulfill requirements for submission of renewals, modifications or the final report, I will assume that responsibility.

Dr. Ellen Hahn
Faculty Advisor / Sponsor Name

Ellen Hahn
Faculty Advisor Signature

11/13/23
Date

Continued on Page 4

7C. Department Head's Assurance

By my signature as department head, I certify that I will cooperate with the administration in the application and enforcement of all Auburn University policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection and ethical treatment of human participants by researchers in my department

Dr. William Murrah
Department Head Name

William Murrah
Department Head Signature

11/15/2023
Date

8. Project Overview:

8A. A summary of relevant research findings leading to this research proposal:

(Cite source; include a "Reference List" as [Appendix A.](#))

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

There is current and relevant scholarly literature examining the stress, well-being, and flourishing of school administrators. Principals of schools care deeply for their constituents but often at the price of their own well-being. This is concerning because "School leadership has a significant effect on features of the school organization which positively influences the quality of teaching and learning" that occurs in the school (Leithwood et al., 2020, p. 2). The work principals do is significant, highly social, and dynamic and requires them to have ongoing engagement with many of individuals, which can induce extreme amounts of stress. How principals cope with their stressors is critical to the whole school organization (DeMatthews et al., 2021). The ever-increasing tasks of school administration ensure that stress is an inevitable byproduct of the school administrator's life (Mahfouz, 2020). Educator well-being is an issue that must be addressed as we know that the percentage of principals who leave their roles is increasing. Turner and Thielking (2019) indicated that they preferred a popular definition of well-being by Martin Seligman. "Leading researcher in positive psychology, Seligman (2011), states that wellbeing can be defined as a construct which includes the domains of positive emotion, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment which he has collapsed into the term PERMA" (Turner & Thielking, 2019, p. 939). Cherkowski and Walker (2018) cite PERMA as the most widely used measure of well-being in Canadian research literature. There is a trend to improve the professional development for school administrators across the nation. The use of mentors is increasing in popularity (Kutsyuruba & Godden, 2019). Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2006) suggest mentoring as a way to develop new principals and to grow them in their practice. Their research reflects how complicated it is to begin a principalship and to maintain that job. There is a range of positive outcomes for principal mentees and their mentors. Mentees benefit greatly in the area of career functions and psychosocial needs. Increased job performance, promotions, job attitudes, career satisfaction, personal and professional growth are all positive outcomes for principal mentees. "Today's mentor is a facilitator, a partner in an evolving learning relationship focused on meeting a mentee's goals and objectives. Today's mentor is an active learner and reflective practitioner in pursuit of continuous improvement (Zachary & Fain, 2022, p. 253). In the summer of 2023, the Alabama Legislature passed House Bill SB 300. This bill created the School Principal Leadership and Mentoring Act. This bill provides for the implementation of a mentoring program for new principals and continuing professional development for older principals and assistant principals. "The goal of the program is to increase the effectiveness of school administrators resulting in improved outcomes for all students" (Orr, pg. 6). The bill provides for a statewide infrastructure which will ensure consistent access to high quality mentors for school administrators. Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, each new Alabama principal will work with a principal mentor for two consecutive years. Mentors will be selected on their past history as a successful school leader. A training program to develop mentors will be created by the state.

8B. A brief summary/abstract of the study methodology, including design, population, and variables of interest. (350 word maximum, in language understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study. Note this summary/abstract can be used to prepare the concise summary in the consent document.):

Based on limited current research on administrator well-being and mentoring, a qualitative approach will be used to gain insight from the perspectives of school leaders when considering the influence of their mentors (Mertz, 2004; Zachary & Fain, 2022). This approach allows the researcher to compare and contrast the different views of the participants across the phenomenon of mentoring thus giving deeper insight into this complex issue (Bloomberg & Volpe 2019). Eight to ten principals in Alabama will be chosen as

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participants. These principals will be in an active mentoring relationship and will give consent to be interviewed. Interviews will be conducted with the participants. The interviews will be recorded on a cellular device that is password protected. The interviews will then be coded for themes that may occur during the interviews

9. Purpose

9A. State the purpose of the study and all research questions or aims. (Include a sentence that begins, "The purpose of this study is...")

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of school administrators of the influence of their mentors primarily in the areas of stress, burnout and well-being. The study will be guided by this primary research question: In what ways if any, do principals perceive support provided by their mentors in each area of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, achievement? What level of involvement do principals perceive their mentors as having according to the 2004 framework of Mertz?

9B. Describe how results of this study will be used? (e.g., presentation? publication? thesis? dissertation?)

The results of this study will be used for dissertation work, presentations and publications.

10. Key Personnel. Describe responsibilities as specifically as possible. Include information on research training or certifications related to this project. To determine key personnel see decision tree at <https://cws.auburn.edu/OVPR/pm/compliance/irb/training>. Submit a copy of CITI training documentation for all key personnel. (For additional personnel, add lines as needed).

To determine Auburn University HIPAA – covered entities click link to [HIPAA Policy](#).

If any key personnel have a formal association with institutions/entities involved in the study (for example is an employee or supervisor at the site research will occur), describe that affiliation. For all non-AU affiliated key personnel, submit a copy of their IRB approval.

Principal Investigator: Rhonda Wheeler

Rank/Title: Graduate Student

Email Address: rtw0026@auburn.edu

Degree(s): Ph. D. Candidate

Dept / Affiliation: EFLT

HIPAA Covered Entity? Yes ☐ No ☒

Roles / Responsibilities: To design, conduct, and report research project, to protect the rights and privacy of participants of the study, and to ensure protection of the data.

- AU affiliated? ☒ Yes ☐ No If no, name of home institution: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Plan for IRB approval for non-AU affiliated personnel? N/A

- Do you have any known competing financial interests, personal relationships, or other interests that could have influence or appear to have influence on the work conducted in this project? ☐ Yes ☒ No

- If yes, briefly describe the potential or real conflict of interest: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Completed required CITI training? ☒ Yes ☐ No If NO, complete the appropriate [CITI basic course](#) and update the revised Exempt Application form.

- If YES, choose course(s) the researcher has completed:

Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools- SBE 4/30/2025; Social and Behavioral Emphasis-AU-Personnel-Basic/ Refresher Social and Behavioral Emphasis- AU Personnel Basic Course 9/5/2024; Responsible Conduct of Research 4-May-2026 [Expiration Date](#)

[Choose a course](#)

[Expiration Date](#)

Individual: Ellen Hahn

Rank/Title: Full Professor

Email Address: eamsh@auburn.edu

Degree(s): Ed.D

Dept. / Affiliation: EFLT

HIPAA Covered Entity? Yes ☐ No ☒

Roles / Responsibilities: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- AU affiliated? ☐ Yes ☐ No If no, name of home institution: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Plan for IRB approval for non-AU affiliated personnel? N/A

- Do you have any known competing financial interests, personal relationships, or other interests that could have influence or appear to have influence on the work conducted in this project? ☐ Yes ☒ No

- If yes, briefly describe the potential or real conflict of interest: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Completed required CITI training? ☒ Yes ☐ No If NO, complete the appropriate [CITI basic course](#) and update the revised Exempt Application form.

- If YES, choose course(s) the researcher has completed:

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Responsible Conduct of Research 22-January 2026; History and Ethical Principals 28-Sept 2025; International Research 30-Sept-2025; Social and Behavioral Emphasis 29-Jan 2026; Workers as Vulnerable populations 30- Sept 2025; Research and Public Elementary and Secondary Schools 29-January 2025; Audio-Visual 29-Jan 2025; Research with Children 29-Jan 2025.

Expiration Date

Choose a course

Expiration Date

11. Location of research.

11A. List all locations where data collection will occur. If applicable, attach permission letters as Appendix

E. (School systems, organizations, businesses, buildings and room numbers, servers for web surveys, etc.) Be as specific as possible.

(See sample letters at <https://cws.auburn.edu/OVPR/pm/compliance/irb/sampledocs>)

Data Collection will occur with principals in Alabama who are in a mentoring relationship with Mentors used through NAESP. See attached letter from NAESP in Appendices. Data Collection will occur on a password protected phone.

11B. Will study data be stored within a HIPAA covered facility? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, which facility(ies) (To determine AU HIPAA covered entities, go to VII of the [HIPAA Hybrid Entity Policy](#)):

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

12. Participants (If minor participants, at least 2 adults must be present during all research procedures that include the minors.)

12A. Describe the targeted/ intended participant population for the study. Include the anticipated number of participants and inclusion and exclusion criteria and the procedures to ensure more than 1 adult is present during all research procedures which include the minor.

☐ Check here if existing data will be used and describe the population from whom data was collected including the number of data files.

☐ Check here if permission to access existing data is required and submit a copy of the agreement to access.

Participants of this qualitative study will be principals in Alabama who are in a mentoring relationship through NAESP. Participants will be contacted by email and will receive a letter of consent form as an attachment. If they agree to participate, I will receive written consent from each one before beginning to gather data. The researcher's recruitment script will include how the data will be used. Participants will be reminded to obtain a copy of the informed consent for their own records.

12B. Describe, step-by-step in lay language all procedures to recruit participants. Include in [Appendix B](#) a copy of all e-mails, flyers, advertisements, recruiting scripts, invitations, etc., that will be used to invite people to participate. (See sample documents at <https://cws.auburn.edu/OVPR/pm/compliance/irb/sampledocs>)

The researcher, Rhonda Wheeler, does not have any formal relationship with any of the participants. Participant nominations will come from a representative of NAESP. I will then reach out via email to determine the willingness of the participant to participate in the study. If they agree to participate, they will be sent an informed consent to sign and return. Upon receipt of the informed consent form the researcher will contact the participant to by email and/or telephone to schedule an interview.

12C. Minimum number of participants required to validate the study? 8

Number of participants expected to enroll? 10

Provide the rationale for the number of participants. Eight participants will be enough to provide greater context and data for data analysis

Is there a limit to the number of participants that will be included in the study?

☒ No ☐ Yes, the number is [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

12D. Describe the process to compensate, amount and method of compensation and/or incentives for participants. [AU Procurement and Business Services \(PBS\) policies](#) (benefits to participants are NOT compensation)

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If participants will not be compensated, check here: ☒

Indicate the amount of compensation per procedure and in total: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Indicate the type of compensation: ☐ Monetary ☐ Incentives

☐ Raffle or Drawing incentive (Include the chances of winning.)

☐ Extra Credit (State the value)

☐ Other

Describe how compensation will be distributed (USPS, email, etc.): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

13. Project Design & Methods

13A. Describe, step-by-step, all procedures and methods that will be used to consent participants. If a waiver is being requested, indicate the waiver, and describe how the study meets the criteria for the waiver. If minors will be enrolled describe the process to obtain parental/ legally authorized guardian permission.

☐ Waiver of Consent (including using existing data)

☐ Waiver of Documentation of Consent (use of Information Letter)

☐ Waiver of Parental Permission (for college students 18 years or younger)

All research activities include the use of participants' names, which will be changed to pseudonyms. I will obtain consent for each participant by explaining what the research study is about, what they will be asked to do, the length and time commitment, what the risks and benefits are, how the data will be used, how their privacy will be protected, and that their participation is voluntary. Before beginning the study, each participant will return a signed consent form by email. They will then be contacted to agree upon a time for a 45-minute interview.

13B. In lay language, understandable by someone not familiar with the area of study, describe the complete research design and methods that will be used to address the purpose. Include a clear description of who, when, where and how data will be collected. Include specific information about participants' time and effort.

The research design for this study is a qualitative case-study focusing on interviews. Once an informed consent is received by the researcher, the participant will be contacted by phone or email to set up an interview. The 45-minute interview will take place and be recorded on a personal cellular device which is password protected. The interview will be transcribed for specific codes and themes related to mentoring and well-being. Any additional documents will be volunteered by the participants, and, therefore, do not require any additional permissions. The frameworks utilized in this study are the PERMA framework by Seligman, 2011, and a mentoring framework by Mertz, 2004.

13C. List all data collection instruments used in this project, in the order they appear in [Appendix C](#). (e.g., surveys and questionnaires in the format that will be presented to participants, educational tests, data collection sheets, interview questions, audio/video taping methods etc.)

Data collection instrumentation includes: 1. The interview protocol. 2. Interview data will be collected on a cellular device using a voice recording app. These recordings will not be stored in the cloud to ensure the confidentiality of the information. The device is password protected.

13D. Data analysis: Describe how data will be analyzed. If a data collection form (DCF) will be used, submit a copy of the DCF.

Interview data will be analyzed to gather preliminary information regarding participants' knowledge, experiences, and perspectives related Mentoring and Well-Being. The interviews will be recorded, reviewed, transcribed, and evaluated. Upon completion of data analysis, interpretations and conclusions will be drawn.

- 13E. List any drugs, medications, supplements, or imaging agents that participants will ingest/ receive during participation in the study or indicate not applicable (N/A).

N/A

14. Risks & Discomforts: List and describe all the risks participants may encounter in this research including risks from item 6d of this form, in this research. If deception will be part of the study, provide the rationale for the deception, describe the debriefing process, and attach a copy of the debriefing form that will be used as Appendix D. (Examples of possible risks are in section #6C)

The risks and discomforts associated with this study are minimal. However, there is a chance of a breach of confidentiality. The probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in this study is not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered during daily life or everyday conversation. There could be some psychological risk of a participant experiences any discomfort with an interview question.

15. Precautions / Minimization of Risks

- 15A. Identify and describe all precautions that will be taken to eliminate or reduce risks listed in items 6.c. and 14. If participants can be classified as a "vulnerable" population, describe additional safeguards that will be used to assure the ethical treatment of vulnerable individuals. If applicable, submit a copy of any emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists in Appendix D. (Sample documents can be found online at <https://cws.auburn.edu/OVPR/pm/compliance/irb/sampledocs> precautions)

The data from this study will be collected by the primary researcher and stored on a secure server in AU Box and confidentiality of information is maintained. The data will only be available to the researchers. Direct access to interviews will only be available to the primary researcher and the dissertation chair. To eliminate and reduce risks of breach of confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used to replace participant names. The code list for real names will be kept in a separate location from the data files. To reduce risk of participant discomfort, participants will be reminded that they are not required to respond to any interview question that creates discomfort for them.

- 15B. If the internet, mobile apps, or other electronic means will be used to collect data, describe confidentiality and/or security precautions that will be used to protect (or not collect) identifiable data? Include protections used during collection of data, transfer of data, and storage of data. If participant data may be obtained and/or stored by apps during the study, describe.

The information collected will only be used for its intended purpose and will not be provided to any other organization or entity. The information will be stored on a secure server in AU Box. Audio recordings will be stored on the researcher's personal cellular device that is password protected. Audio results will not be stored in the cloud to minimize risk in a breach in confidentiality. Once transcription is complete, all audio recordings will be destroyed.

- 15C. Does this research include purchase(s) that involve technology hardware, software or online services?

☐ YES ☒ NO

If YES:

- Provide the name of the product and the manufacturer of the product Click or tap here to enter text.
- Briefly describe use of the product in the proposed human subject's research. Click or tap here to enter text.
- To ensure compliance with AU's Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Policy, contact AU IT Vendor Vetting team at vetting@auburn.edu to learn the vendor registration process (prior to completing the purchase).
- Include a copy of the documentation of the approval from AU Vetting with the revised submission.

- 15D. Additional Safeguards

Will DEXA, pQCT, or other devices which emit radiation be used? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, the IRB will notify the Auburn Department of Risk Management and Safety, who will contact the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) and secure approval. Research which includes device(s) which emit radiation may NOT be initiated NOR will IRB stamped consent documents be issued until the

Revised 07/12/2022

IRB is notified of ADPH approval.

Will a Certificate of Confidentiality (CoC) issued by NIH be obtained ☒ Yes ☐ No If yes, include CoC language in consent documents and include the documentation of CoC approval. Research which includes a CoC may not be initiated NOR will IRB stamped consent documents be issued until the IRB is notified of CoC approval. [AU Required CoC Language](#)

Is the study a [clinical trial](#)? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, provide the National Clinical Trial (NCT) # [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) and include required clinical trial information in all consent documents. [AU Clinical Trial Information](#)

16. Benefits

16A. List all realistic direct benefits participants can expect by participating in this study. (Compensation is not a benefit) If participants will not directly benefit check here. ☒

Participants are principals in Alabama schools. The benefits of participation are academic benefits to deepen knowledge of mentoring and well-being, which ultimately affects student achievement.

16B. List realistic benefits for the general population that may be generated from this study.

As the research on well-being of school principals becomes better understood, it is imperative that the schools and school systems play a more informed and intentional role of care for administrators, other school personnel and the families they serve. Research that effectively recognizes and responds to the well-being of school personnel will play an essential role in creating healthier school environments. School leaders play an essential role in creating and sustaining healthy school organizational climate and culture. The more their needs can be met, the better all stakeholders' needs will be satisfied. Mentoring school principals to improve their well-being is an effective support strategy. This study of mentoring for well-being will fill a gap in current research and help support districts and school principals in leadership for their organizations.

17. Protection of Data

17A. Data are collected:

- ☐ Anonymously with no direct or indirect coding, link, or awareness by key personnel of who participated in the study (skip to item E)
- ☐ Confidentially, but without a link to participant's data to any identifying information (collected as "confidential" but recorded and analyzed "anonymous") (Skip to item E).
- ☒ Confidentially with collection and protection of linkages to identifiable information.

17B. If data are collected with identifiers and coded or as coded or linked to identifying information, describe the identifiers and how identifiers are linked to participants' data.

The interviews will be confidential but will only occur with participants who agree to be interviewed. After the participant provides an email address, they will be contacted to schedule an interview. The interviews will not be linked to email addresses. Pseudonyms will be used for participants.

17C. Provide the rationale for need to code participants' data or link the data with identifying information.

Pseudonyms are needed so the researcher can keep participant data consistent.

17D. Describe how and where identifying data and/or code lists will be stored. (Building, room number, AU BOX?) Describe how the location where data is stored will be secured. For electronic data, describe security measures. If applicable, describe where IRB-approved and participant signed consent documents will be kept on campus for 3 years after the study ends.

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Once the data has been collected, it will be stored on a secure, encrypted server (AU Box) to ensure security and confidentiality of information is maintained. The code list linking the participants to pseudonyms will be kept in a separate location from the data and will be destroyed after all data has been collected and names have been changed to pseudonyms. The secure server for data storage will be AU BOX.

17E. Describe how and where data will be stored (e.g., hard copy, audio/ visual files, electronic data, etc.), and how the location where data is stored is separated from identifying data and will be secured. For electronic data, describe security. Note use of a flash drive or portable hard drive is not appropriate if identifiable data will be stored; rather, identifying participant data must be stored on secured servers.

All participants will be asked to maintain confidentiality. All identifying information will be coded and kept in a separate file. All identifiable data, code lists, etc will be kept in AU Box.

17F. List the names of all who will have access to participants' data? (If a student PI, the faculty advisor must have full access and be able to produce study data in the case of a federal or institutional audit.)

Rhonda Wheeler, the primary investigator, and Dr. Ellen Hahn, faculty advisor, will have access to the participants which will be coded with pseudonyms.

17G. When is the latest date that identifying information or links will be retained and how will that information or links be destroyed? (Check here if only anonymous data will be retained ☐)

All identifying information and links (coding list) will be retained until all data from data sources referenced above have been collected and transcribed. Once interviews have been transcribed and accuracy verified, audio recordings and code lists will be destroyed, no later than December 20, 2024.

Version Date: [Click or tap to enter a date.](#)

References

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Recruitment Telephone Script

My name is Rhonda Wheeler, and I am a Ph. D. candidate from the College of Education, Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology at Auburn University. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study I am conducting on mentoring for well-being. You have been chosen as a possible participant in the study because you are a principal in public school and an active participant in NAESP's mentoring program, and we believe your knowledge and insight would add great value to this body of research. We are hoping you would be willing to consider participation in this research.

As a participant, you would be asked to schedule a time to conduct a forty-five-minute interview, where I would ask you a series of ten questions about your experiences with your mentors. The entire process should take no more than one hour.

(Briefly review information outlined in Informed Consent that might be influence the participants' interest in the study)

Risks: Breach of confidentiality is a minimal risk of the study, due to identifiable data being collected. However, pseudonyms will be used once data has been collected to minimize any associated risk.

Compensation/Benefits: There is no compensation and no direct benefits associated with participation. However, indirect benefits may include reflection on leadership experiences that lead to personal growth or professional development. Additionally, information from this study may be used to help better prepare and support school leaders as they develop personal and professional well-being. However, I cannot promise that you will receive any or all of the benefits I have described.

Cost: There is no cost associated with participation in this study.

Privacy: Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. The researcher will use pseudonyms and will not use any identifiable data in the analysis or presentation of information. Findings of the study will be used to inform my dissertation.

If you would like to participate in this research study, I will send you via email the corresponding consent form. Once you sign and return it to me, I will contact you to schedule the interview.

Do you have any questions that I might be able to answer at this time? If so, please feel free to ask them now or you are welcome to email me, Dr. Ellen Hahn at reamseh@auburn.edu or rtw0026@auburn.edu. The researchers will provide a copy of the signed informed consent form to you for your records.

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
Document for use from
01/16/2024 to -----
Protocol # 23-600 EP 2401

RECRUITMENT EMAIL (sent following recruitment phone call)

My name is Rhonda Wheeler. I am from the College of Education, Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology at Auburn University. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study I am conducting on "Mentoring for Well-being with Alabama School Principals" I believe your perspective and insight would add great value to this body of research. I am hoping you would be willing to consider participation in this research.

As a participant, you will be asked to schedule a time to conduct a forty-five-minute interview, during which time you will be asked a series of ten questions about your experiences as a principal. The entire process should take no more than one hour between both the survey and the interview.

(Briefly review information outlined in Informed Consent that might be influence the participant's interest in the study)

Risks: Breach of confidentiality is a minimal risk of the study, due to identifiable data being collected. However, pseudonyms will be used once data has been collected to minimize any associated risk.

Compensation/Benefits: There is no compensation and no direct benefits associated with participation. However, indirect benefits may include reflection on leadership experiences that lead to personal growth or professional development. Additionally, information from this study may be used to help better prepare and support school leaders in leading and developing a school environment that supports well-being for all. However, I cannot promise that you will receive any or all of the benefits I have described.

Cost: There is no cost associated with participation in this study.

Privacy: Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. The researchers will use pseudonyms and will not use any identifiable data in the analysis or presentation of information. The use of Qualtrics presents no greater risk than the everyday use of the Internet. Findings of the study will be used for presentations or publications.

If you would like to participate in this research study, please respond to this email by returning the attached informed consent document signed and dated. I will provide you with a copy of the document for your records. Upon receiving your informed consent document, you will be contacted to schedule the interview

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask them by responding to this email, Dr. Ellen Hahn, at reamseh@auburn.edu or Rhonda Wheeler, at rtw0026@auburn.edu.

ATTACHED:
Informed Consent Form

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
Document for use from
01/16/2024 to _____
Protocol # 23-600 EP 2401

Interview Questions for Research Participants

Opening to the interview:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. I have us scheduled for an hour together. Does this still work for you? I want to honor our time constraints. Therefore, while I encourage you to elaborate on your answers to my questions, we will be sure to cover all the issues within this one-hour time frame (Tracy 2020).

1. Talk me through the beginning of your mentoring experience?
2. In spite of the daily stresses and problems that comes with managing a school have you found your mentor was able to help you maintain a positive mindset? If so, can you describe that? (Positive emotion)
3. In terms of staying connected to your work and daily engagement, has your mentor been successful in keeping you focused? Can you talk about that? (engagement)
4. How has your mentor helped you navigate all the relationships you have to manage as a school administrator? (relationships)
5. What professional priorities has your mentor encouraged you to make as a school leader? (meaning)
6. How has your professional achievement been influenced by your mentor? (achievement) (Mertz- intent)
7. Can you describe how involved your mentor has been with you in terms of the time spent communicating with you in terms of texts, emails, calls and visits (Mertz)
8. The areas of psychosocial support (confidence), professional development, and career advancement are usually the spaces in which our mentors influence us the most. In which of these dimensions do you see your mentor benefitting you the most and why? (Mertz)
9. Do you feel your health and overall well-being has been influenced by the mentoring relationship in a positive or negative fashion and why?
10. Do you think your principal preparation program prepared you for the principalship specifically in the area of finding mentors and maintaining your well-being?

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Protocol # 23-600 EP 2401

Lydia D. Davenport, Ed.D.
Aspiring Principal Mentor Program (APLP)
253 Lofton Road
Huntsville, Alabama 35806
Ldavenport4@knology.net
256-929-3569 Cell

Institutional Review Board
c/o Office of Research Compliance
115 Ramsay Hall
Auburn University, AL 36849

Dear IRB Members,

After reviewing the proposed study, "Mentoring for Well-Being with Alabama School Principals" with Rhonda Wheeler, Ph. D. candidate, and Ellen Hahn, Auburn Professor at Auburn University, I have granted permission for the study to be conducted with mentors under the guidance of the Leading-Edge Transformational Model Project who are NAESP National certified mentors.

The purpose of this study is to determine the perception of principals about the influence their mentors have on their well-being. The primary activity will be interviewing principals who volunteer to participate in the study.

These events will occur from January 2024 through April of 2024.

I understand Dr. Hahn and Mrs. Wheeler have agreed to provide my office a copy of the Auburn University IRB-approved, stamped consent documents before the participants are recruited. Any data collected by Mrs. Wheeler will be kept confidential. Mrs. Wheeler has agreed to provide us a copy of the results of this study.

If the IRB has any concerns about the permission being granted by this letter, please contact me at the phone number or email listed above.

Sincerely,

Lydia D. Davenport

Lydia D. Davenport
Director



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, LEADERSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

(NOTE: DO NOT SIGN THIS DOCUMENT UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL STAMP WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

INFORMED CONSENT

for a Research Study entitled "Mentoring for Well-Being with Alabama School Principals"

You are invited to participate in a research study to explore mentoring for well-being of Alabama school principals. The study is being conducted by Rhonda Wheeler – PhD candidate, under the direction of Dr. Ellen Hahn, in the Auburn University College of Education. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a school principal and are age 19 or older.

What will be involved if you participate? If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to engage in a 45-minute interview with the researcher that includes 10 questions. The interviews will be recorded through a voice recording application located on the researchers' personal cellular phones. This data will be transcribed by the researchers and destroyed when the study is complete. Your total time commitment will be approximately 60 minutes, which includes the survey and interview components.

Are there any risks or discomforts? The risks associated with participating in this study are breach of confidentiality by someone gaining unapproved access to your data or the online data being hacked or intercepted, as occasionally occurs when information is provided via an online format. To minimize these risks, we will use a secure system to collect this data, store all data on a password protected computers, external drives, and cellular devices. However, these measures cannot completely eliminate the potential risk. We will use a pseudonym and all identifying information will be maintained separately from your research data, thus preventing the ability for the data to be linked to you should a breach occur. We will destroy any identifying information after the study has been completed.

Participants Initials _____

Page 1 of 2

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Protocol # 23-600 EP 2401

4036 Haley Center, Auburn, AL 36849-5221; Telephone: 334-844-4460; Fax: 334-844-3072

www.auburn.edu

Are there any benefits to yourself or others? If you participate in this study, you can expect to contribute to the data that could provide valuable knowledge and insight related to school leader well-being. This information will help current and future educational leaders understand the current state of principal well-being. This will inform future research about practices that promote educator well-being. We cannot promise you that you will receive any or all the benefits described.

Will you receive compensation for participating? Participation in this study is voluntary and there is not an associated compensation.

Are there any costs? If you decide to participate, you will not incur any costs associated with participation in this study. Auburn University has not provided for any payment if you are harmed as a result of participating in this study.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn if it is identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University or the Department of Education.

Your privacy will be protected. Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Information obtained through your participation may be stored securely on the researchers' computers which will be de-identified and will not include any of your personal contact information. If we quote you, we will use pseudonyms (fake names).

If you have questions about this study, please ask them now or contact Dr. Ellen Hahn at (334) 844-3067 or by email at reamseh@auburn.edu. A copy of this document will be given to you to for your records.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at IRBadmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

Participant's Signature Date

Printed Name

Investigator Obtaining Consent Date

Printed Name

Co-Investigator Date

Printed Name

Page 2 of 2

The Auburn University Institutional
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01/16/2024 to -----
Protocol # 23-600 EP 2401



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, LEADERSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

(NOTE: DO NOT SIGN THIS DOCUMENT UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL STAMP WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

INFORMED CONSENT
for a Research Study entitled

"Mentoring for Well-Being with Alabama School Principals"

You are invited to participate in a research study to explore mentoring for well-being of Alabama school principals. The study is being conducted by Rhonda Wheeler – PhD candidate, under the direction of Dr. Ellen Hahn, in the Auburn University College of Education. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a school principal and are age 19 or older.

What will be involved if you participate? If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to engage in a 45-minute interview with the researcher that includes 10 questions. The interviews will be recorded through a voice recording application located on the researchers' personal cellular phones. This data will be transcribed by the researchers and destroyed when the study is complete. Your total time commitment will be approximately 60 minutes, which includes the survey and interview components.

Are there any risks or discomforts? The risks associated with participating in this study are breach of confidentiality by someone gaining unapproved access to your data or the online data being hacked or intercepted, as occasionally occurs when information is provided via an online format. To minimize these risks, we will use a secure system to collect this data, store all data on a password protected computers, external drives, and cellular devices. However, these measures cannot completely eliminate the potential risk. We will use a pseudonym and all identifying information will be maintained separately from your research data, thus preventing the ability for the data to be linked to you should a breach occur. We will destroy any identifying information after the study has been completed.

Participants Initials _____

Page 1 of 2

Are there any benefits to yourself or others? If you participate in this study, you can expect to contribute to the data that could provide valuable knowledge and insight related to school leader well-being. This information will help current and future educational leaders understand the current state of principal well-being. This will inform future research about practices that promote educator well-being. We cannot promise you that you will receive any or all the benefits described.

4036 Haley Center, Auburn, AL 36849-5221; Telephone: 334-844-4460; Fax: 334-844-3072

www.auburn.edu

Will you receive compensation for participating? Participation in this study is voluntary and there is not an associated compensation.

Are there any costs? If you decide to participate, you will not incur any costs associated with participation in this study. Auburn University has not provided for any payment if you are harmed as a result of participating in this study.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn if it is identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University or the Department of Education.

Your privacy will be protected. Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Information obtained through your participation may be stored securely on the researchers' computers which will be de-identified and will not include any of your personal contact information. If we quote you, we will use pseudonyms (fake names).

If you have questions about this study, please ask them now or contact Dr. Ellen Hahn at (334) 844-3067 or by email at reamseh@auburn.edu. A copy of this document will be given to you to for your records.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844- 5966 or e-mail at IRBAdmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

Participant's Signature Date Investigator Obtaining Consent Date

Printed Name

Printed Name

Co-Investigator

Date

Printed Name

Page 2 of 2

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM) COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2 COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

• **Name:** Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
 • **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
 • **Institution Email:** reamseh@auburn.edu
 • **Institution Unit:** efit
 • **Phone:** 7065737563

• **Curriculum Group:** Responsible Conduct of Research
 • **Course Learner Group:** AU Basic RCR Training for ALL Faculty, Staff, Postdocs, and Students
 • **Stage:** Stage 1 - RCR
 • **Description:** This course is for investigators, staff and students with an interest or focus in Biomedical Research. This course contains text, embedded case studies AND quizzes.

• **Record ID:** 50319525
 • **Completion Date:** 22-Jan-2023
 • **Expiration Date:** 22-Jan-2026
 • **Minimum Passing:** 90
 • **Reported Score*:** 94

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Authorship (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16597)	01-Oct-2022	5/5 (100%)
Collaborative Research (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16598)	01-Oct-2022	5/5 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest and Commitment (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16599)	22-Jan-2023	3/5 (60%)
Data Management (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16600)	22-Jan-2023	5/5 (100%)
Mentoring (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16602)	22-Jan-2023	5/5 (100%)
Peer Review (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16603)	22-Jan-2023	5/5 (100%)
Research Misconduct (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16604)	22-Jan-2023	5/5 (100%)
Plagiarism (RCR-Basic) (ID: 15155)	22-Jan-2023	4/5 (80%)
Using Animal Subjects in Research (RCR-Basic) (ID: 13301)	22-Jan-2023	5/5 (100%)
Research Involving Human Subjects (RCR-Basic) (ID: 13566)	22-Jan-2023	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing Institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/2k32efb3d7-be1c-41e0-ab33-c7c4d78b35a1-50319525

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)
 101 NE 3rd Avenue
 Suite 320
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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

• Name: Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
• Institution Affiliation: Auburn University (ID: 964)
• Institution Email: reamseh@auburn.edu
• Institution Unit: efit
• Phone: 7065737563

• Curriculum Group: IRB Additional Modules
• Course Learner Group: History and Ethical Principles - SBE
• Stage: Stage 1 - Basic Course

• Record ID: 51739705
• Completion Date: 29-Sep-2022
• Expiration Date: 28-Sep-2025
• Minimum Passing: 80
• Reported Score*: 80

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	29-Sep-2022	4/5 (80%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing Institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

• Name: Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
• Institution Affiliation: Auburn University (ID: 964)
• Institution Email: reamseh@auburn.edu
• Institution Unit: efit
• Phone: 7065737563

• Curriculum Group: IRB Additional Modules
• Course Learner Group: International Research - SBE
• Stage: Stage 1 - Basic Course

• Record ID: 51764711
• Completion Date: 01-Oct-2022
• Expiration Date: 30-Sep-2025
• Minimum Passing: 80
• Reported Score*: 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
International Research - SBE (ID: 509)	01-Oct-2022	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing Institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

• **Name:** Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
 • **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
 • **Institution Email:** reamseh@auburn.edu
 • **Institution Unit:** efit
 • **Phone:** 7065737563

• **Curriculum Group:** IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel - Basic/Refresher
 • **Course Learner Group:** IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel
 • **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
 • **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Key Personnel (including AU Faculty, Staff and Students) and Faculty Advisors Involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

• **Record ID:** 48419823
 • **Completion Date:** 30-Jan-2022
 • **Expiration Date:** 29-Jan-2025
 • **Minimum Passing:** 80
 • **Reported Score*:** 91

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127)	30-Jan-2022	3/3 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	30-Jan-2022	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	30-Jan-2022	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	30-Jan-2022	4/5 (80%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	30-Jan-2022	3/5 (60%)
Students in Research (ID: 1321)	30-Jan-2022	5/5 (100%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928)	30-Jan-2022	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing Institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?ka761743c-52ab-4fd8-8a05-7b0469caab72-48419823

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**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS***

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

• **Name:** Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
 • **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
 • **Institution Email:** reamseh@auburn.edu
 • **Institution Unit:** efit
 • **Phone:** 7065737563

• **Curriculum Group:** IRB Additional Modules
 • **Course Learner Group:** Workers as Research Subjects - A Vulnerable Population
 • **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

• **Record ID:** 51764710
 • **Completion Date:** 01-Oct-2022
 • **Expiration Date:** 30-Sep-2025
 • **Minimum Passing:** 80
 • **Reported Score*:** 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483)	01-Oct-2022	4/4 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing Institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

• Name: Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
• Institution Affiliation: Auburn University (ID: 964)
• Institution Email: reamseh@auburn.edu
• Institution Unit: efft
• Phone: 7065737563

• Curriculum Group: IRB Additional Modules
• Course Learner Group: Research In Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE
• Stage: Stage 1 - Basic Course

• Record ID: 48419807
• Completion Date: 30-Jan-2022
• Expiration Date: 29-Jan-2025
• Minimum Passing: 80
• Reported Score*: 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Research In Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	30-Jan-2022	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing Institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

• Name: Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
• Institution Affiliation: Auburn University (ID: 954)
• Institution Email: reamseh@auburn.edu
• Institution Unit: efit
• Phone: 7065737563

• Curriculum Group: Research with Audio-Visual Mobile Data Collection Tools: Ethics and Regulations
• Course Learner Group: Same as Curriculum Group
• Stage: Stage 1 - Basic Course

• Record ID: 47037360
• Completion Date: 30-Jan-2022
• Expiration Date: 29-Jan-2025
• Minimum Passing: 80
• Reported Score*: 80

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY

	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Research with Audio-Visual Mobile Data Collection Tools: Ethics and Regulations (ID: 20426)	30-Jan-2022	4/5 (80%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing Institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/7k90359324-44b6-4312-8d21-c392efb552cb-47037360

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**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS***

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

• **Name:** Ellen Hahn (ID: 944893)
 • **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
 • **Institution Email:** reamseh@auburn.edu
 • **Institution Unit:** efit
 • **Phone:** 7065737563

• **Curriculum Group:** IRB Additional Modules
 • **Course Learner Group:** Research with Children - SBE
 • **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

• **Record ID:** 51764709
 • **Completion Date:** 30-Jan-2022
 • **Expiration Date:** 29-Jan-2025
 • **Minimum Passing:** 80
 • **Reported Score*:** 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507)	30-Jan-2022	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing Institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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Completion Date 01-May-2022
Expiration Date 30-Apr-2025
Record ID 44808258

This is to certify that:

Rhonda Wheeler

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

IRB Additional Modules

(Curriculum Group)

Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE

(Course Learner Group)

1 - Basic Course

(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Auburn University

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Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

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Completion Date 04-May-2023
Expiration Date 04-May-2026
Record ID 50323237

This is to certify that:

Rhonda Wheeler

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Responsible Conduct of Research

(Curriculum Group)

AU Basic RCR Training for ALL Faculty, Staff, Postdocs, and Students

(Course Learner Group)

1 - RCR

(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Auburn University

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Completion Date 06-Sep-2021
Expiration Date 05-Sep-2024
Record ID 44808259

This is to certify that:

Rhonda Wheeler

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification
through CME.

IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel - Basic/Refresher
(Curriculum Group)

IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel
(Course Learner Group)

1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Auburn University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

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