What School Factors Influence Teachers' Perceptions of Safety

in Their Classrooms and Schools?

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Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and

State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

In

Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

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April 29, 2016

Blacksburg, Virginia

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to describe factors that make teachers feel safe in their classrooms and school buildings. An in-depth exploration of contributing factors to feelings of safety for teachers will assist the field of education when planning facilities and preparing current and future school administrators in leading schools with a healthy and safe climate for teachers. For this study, the researcher surveyed all teaching personnel in a school division which was a total of 133 full-time, fully licensed teachers employed by a rural school division in Southside Virginia.

A survey instrument with both quantitative and open ended questions was developed to investigate perceptions of safety in participants' responses regarding the physical characteristics of school buildings and classrooms, the influence of colleague relationships, and administrative practices and school division policies that influence teachers' feelings of safety. The quantitative survey questions utilized a Likert-scale format for participants to indicate degrees of agreement with statements with responses that ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The opened ended questions provided for qualitative investigation by allowing participants to provide answers in their own words regarding the four research sub-questions.

Findings from the study indicated that teachers in the study generally felt safe in their schools. Teachers indicated perceiving that the greatest violence risk was posed by outside intruders and concern for safety was not generally caused by student behavior. Teachers' perceptions of safety were influenced by the presence of a resource officer in their school building, locked exterior doors, the use of surveillance cameras, the presence of a supportive and visible school principal, and the support of their teacher colleagues.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my husband, Matt. Without your constant support, encouragement, and understanding, this would not have been possible. I am thankful to my parents for always believing in me, and to my children, Hans and Olivia, for always encouraging me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many people who assisted and encouraged me through this dissertation process. I am very grateful for Dr. Glen Earthman for serving as chairman of my committee. He is a true gentleman and scholar who guided me through this study. He was always patient, helpful, and encouraging. It was Dr. Earthman's wisdom and encouragement that steered me through each step of this process.

Dr. Carol Cash, Dr. Gerry Sokol and Dr. David Alexander were also extremely helpful in the completion of this study and assisted me in navigating through both my preliminary and prospectus exams. Each of them provided me with needed feedback and offered their own expertise in the area of education. I was fortunate to be able to work with such a knowledgeable and experienced committee.

I would also like to acknowledge my work family for their continuous words of support and encouragement. You will always have a special place in my heart.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Incidences of school violence, such as the Columbine High School massacre in 1999 in Columbine, Colorado and the Sandy Hook Elementary tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut in 2012, have received national media coverage (New York Times, 2012). The students and faculty can be direct victims or be victimized by witnessing these events, living with the aftermath of loss of friends and families, and experiencing the overall loss of a sense of safety within the school setting. Teachers, students, and parents across the United States can also be victims of these tragedies because of the potential loss of the feelings of safety and security within school environments. Teachers, even when not directly impacted by the tragedies, can be effected by the school violence episodes through loss of feelings of safety within their school environment. Perpetuating that fear and feelings of being unsafe are the frequent experiences of aggression that teachers may encounter on a daily basis from students, parents, or in accessing their school buildings due to crime in the neighborhood in which they teach (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2000).

The concern for school safety and the recognition of the importance of teachers and students feeling safe at school is demonstrated each year when The Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey is administered across Virginia as part of the Annual School Safety Audit. The Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey is conducted through a partnership by the Center for School and Campus Safety in the Department of Criminal Justice Services, in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Education. (Center for School and Campus Safety in the Department of Criminal Justice Services, 2014). The yearly survey collects information from high school students and teachers across the Commonwealth regarding perceptions of safety among high school teachers and students. In the 2014 School Climate Survey, high school teachers throughout Virginia reported generally feeling safe in Virginia Public Schools. With the increase in attention to school tragedies and the growing concern for school safety, why are teachers in Virginia reporting that they continue to feel safe in Virginia Public Schools?

A look at previous research in the field of education can provide clues about areas to explore when identifying factors that make teachers feel safe. According to a study by Maxwell (2000), the physical appearance of school facilities influence student, parent, and staff

perceptions of safety. Maxwell identified features such as paint color, cleanliness, parking, lighting, location of bathrooms, locked doors, landscaping and displaying student work as influencing factors on perceptions of safety for teachers, students, and parents. Other researchers such as Vettenburg (2002) reported factors such as general perceptions of job satisfaction as considerations when reviewing teacher feelings of safety. The environment, in which teachers work, such as class size, job pressure, and supportive working environments should be reviewed, according to Vettenburg, when trying to understand teachers' perceptions of safety. Researchers Roberts, Wilcox, May and Clayton (2007) report the community crime rate in which the school is located as playing a major role in teacher perception of teacher safety. The influence of school violence policies on K-12 teachers' fear of student initiated crimes was researched by Ricketts (2007) and examined the influence of school violence policies specifically on teacher fear of student initiated crimes against teachers.

When trying to determine what makes teachers feel safe, the clues provided by current research point to three major areas of teachers' work experiences: 1) Physical environment; 2) Policies governing the teacher; 3) Co-workers; 4) Practices of the administration and adherence to division level safety policies. A deeper exploration of these four areas is warranted to understand teachers' feelings of safety. In order to protect and develop feelings of safety among teachers, educational leaders and policy makers must understand the origins of those feelings, and able to rank contributing factors of feelings of safety by level of importance to teachers.

Purpose of the Study

Feeling safe at school is essential to teachers' job satisfaction and instructional performance (Ricketts, 2007). The purpose of the study was to describe factors that make teachers feel safe.

Research Question

The main research question for this study was: *What school factors influence teachers' perceptions of safety in their classrooms and school buildings?* When exploring teachers' feelings of safety within their schools and classrooms, four primary areas of teachers' work environments exists. Those four main areas are the physical environment in which teachers work, the relationships with colleagues, and the practices of administration and their adherence

to division safety policies. These areas of teachers' work environments can be represented in four research sub-questions:

(1) What physical characteristics of school facilities contribute to feelings of safety for teachers?

(2) How do relationships with colleagues within the school environment influence perceptions of teacher safety?

(3) How does the practices of school administrators influence feelings of safety in teachers, and

(4) How does a principal's adherence to division safety policies influence teachers' feelings of safety?

Significance of the Study

School leaders and policy makers need to have a thorough understanding of school facilities characteristics that make teachers feel safe within their classrooms and school buildings. Recognizing that the perceptions of safety for teachers is more complex than a review of physical school attributes, exploration of the governing safety policies of a school system, administrative practices of principals, and teacher relationship with colleagues are also needed to provide a comprehensive review for understanding feelings of safety for teachers. An in-depth exploration of contributing factors to feelings of safety for teachers is needed for the field of education when planning facilities and preparing current and future school administrators in leading schools with a healthy and safe climate for teachers.

The findings of this study can be used by educational leaders as a source of information to increase teachers' perceptions of safety in their schools and classrooms. By exploring teachers' perceptions of the influence of the physical characteristics of school facilities, educators can utilize the findings of this study when planning renovations, new school construction designs, or decision making in schools regarding placement, grouping, and aesthetics of classrooms and buildings.

Having access to the findings of educational research regarding the influence of colleague relationships and administrative practices on teachers' perceptions of safety will be useful to educational leaders when seeking to retain successful teachers. Retention of a successful teaching staff and low turnover of teachers within a school is essential to building solid instructional teams. Cultivating a climate of safety and security for all teachers is of concern for principals when attempting to retain a highly qualified staff and retention of qualified teachers is a goal that frequently appears on principal evaluation forms. Having research to guide the development of a safe feeling climate for teachers is essential to school leadership success.

Definition of Terms

In order to provide clarification to the reader, key vocabulary used in this study has been defined. The following terms were utilized frequently: *school facilities, colleagues, safety policies, and administrative practices.* Precise definitions for the purposes of this study were as follows:

School Facilities include the physical school building structure where teachers work. This term also included the grounds surrounding the school structure as well as temporary building structures such as mobile units.

Colleagues were defined as individuals employed within the same school division as a teacher.

Safety Policies were defined as School Board adopted written governance intended to influence and determine decisions, and actions that pertain to maintaining the safety and security of students, employees, and visitors within the school division.

Administrative Practices were defined as the actions of school principals in carrying out the duties of school leadership and management.

School Factors are defined as facility characteristics, collegial relationships, presence of school policies, and administrators' adherence to safety policies.

Delimitations

Delimitations of this study included limiting the population studied to teachers employed in one Virginia public school. This study did not include public charter schools. The population studied was also limited to school teachers in rural Virginia who teach in schools containing pre-kindergarten through grade five, and secondary grades containing sixth through twelfth grade student populations.

Limitations

The first limitation of this study was that the researcher also served as the school superintendent where the teachers in the study were employed. The relationship of the researcher to the participants may have provided bias to the participants' responses.

The second limitation of the study was the current focus in the school system where the teachers in the study were employed on the facilities needs at the elementary schools. This community focus may have biased teacher responses to place heavier emphasis on physical facilities of schools when discussing teachers' perceptions of safety.

The third limitation posed is that the study was conducted in one rural school division in Southside Virginia with a limited population and the study findings cannot be generalized beyond the population.

Organization of the Study

The focus of this study included influencing factors on teachers' feelings of safety in their classrooms and school buildings. Chapter 1 included an introduction, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, definitions, delimitations and limitations of the study, and organization of the study. An explanation of the literature search and review process was presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 provided an overview of the study's methodology which was conducted in a mixed methods design. Discussion of the research design, informed consent procedures, the data collection and data quality procedures and the strategies used for data management and analysis, and an audit trail were also presented. Chapter 4 included the results of the study along with an explanation of the data collection and data analysis. Chapter 5 included the summary of findings, discussion, conclusion, and implications for further research.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Leaders in the field of education recognize the importance of promoting feelings of safety in schools. A safe and secure learning environment is a fundamental element in providing academic success for students of all ages. Yet, educational systems vary in their provision of safe learning environments for students and faculty. According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2014), during the 2011–12 school year, 9 percent of school teachers reported being threatened with injury by a student from their school. The percentage of public education teachers in the United States reporting that they had been physically attacked by a student from their school in 2011–12 was higher than in any previous survey year with five percent of the teacher survey respondents indicated that had been physically attacked by a student a school. Also according to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2014) students ages 12–18 were victims of approximately 1,364,900 nonlife-threatening victimizations at school, including 615,600 thefts and 749,200 acts of violence, 89,000 of which were serious violent victimizations during the 2012 school year.

Any instance of crime or violence at school not only affects the individuals involved, but also may disrupt the educational process for students, the learning environment of the school, and the surrounding community (Brookmeyer, Fanti, & Henrich 2006; Goldstein, Young, & Boyd 2008). Criminal activity and violence not only negatively affect those individuals directly involved, the surrounding community and school environment, but also undermine and reduce teachers' ability to teach (Henry, 2000). According to research by Henry (2000), the implications of school violence are significant beyond the scope of the immediate occurrence or victims. The residual effects of school violence are prolonged and complex and are negatively pervasive to the productivity and success of students and teachers who attempt to teach and learn in a culture of violence. Feelings of safety are essential to student engagement and connectedness which are critical to promoting student achievement in the educational setting (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005). Effective teachers, who have a secure feeling of safety, are essential to the engagement and success of students in school.

Educational leaders are faced with the dilemma of a large percentage of teachers leaving the profession within their first few years. Factors influencing teacher attrition rates include standardized testing pressures, student discipline, and school violence. (Sass, D. A., Flores, B. B., Claeys, L., & Pérez, B, 2012). Studies have historically focused exclusively on students as victims and failed to investigate the impact that school related crime has on school personnel. Teachers' perceptions of safety influence job satisfaction and teacher engagement which influences student achievement and school districts' ability to meet required educational standards prescribed by state and federal mandates (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005).

Teachers who may have been the victims of attacks at school may suffer from battered teacher syndrome (Bloch, 1976). This syndrome which can affect victimized teachers is characterized by various symptoms that can include episodes of depression, increased blood pressure, insomnia, and headaches. Even after physically healing from associated being assaulted, many teachers are unable to recover psychologically and choose to leave the teaching profession (Elliot, Hamburg, & Williams, 1998). For teachers who decide to remain in the teaching profession after a physical assault, the victimization experience can have lingering professional implications. Characteristics noted in teachers who are recovering from violent attacks in school include increased teacher absenteeism, decreased emotional attachment and engagement with students, and an overall decline in the quality of their instruction (Ting, Sanders, & Smith, 2002).

According to Stewart and Robles-Piña (2011) perceptions and acts of violence were two different constructs that evoked strong reactions. Teachers' feelings of being unsafe are influenced by the media portrayal of school safety issues. A psychological construct pertaining to teachers' feelings of safety is a construct that Tversky and Fox (1995) labeled as "bounded subadditivity" (p.282). According to their research, bounded subadditivity is a cognitive process defined as a construct that causes the individual to believe that an increase in the probability that the likeliness of an event of violence will occur in the future. This belief is influenced by the actual occurrence of events in the past that were once thought to be impossible to occur. When the construct described by Tversky and Fox was used to understand the perception of school

safety, the number and nature of school shootings appears to have significantly altered society's view of school safety (Stewart & Robles-Piña, 2011).

Adding to teachers' increasing fear of school violence has been the destruction of long-held beliefs that acts of violence in school generally occurred in criminally-ridden and poverty-affected, localities. Yogan and Henry (2000) argued that the suburban locations of recent shooting sprees have significantly influenced the public's overall view of school safety. These changes in society's views of school safety in recent years have made understanding teachers' perceptions of safety an ever changing construct. Understanding and addressing the issue of teachers' perceptions of safety is critical to the field of education.

Description of the Data Search

Online resources within the Virginia Tech library were utilized in the data search on this research topic. EBSCO host and ERIC were used to search for peer reviewed journal articles dating from 1995 to the present using the terms teacher safety, school safety, teacher attrition, collegiality, and teacher perceptions of school safety. Including a twenty -year span for parameters of research allowed the researcher to include the period in history when school violence initially gained national attention. The Richland High School shooting occurred November 15, 1995, in Lynnville, Tennessee when a senior student at the school, killed one teacher and one student, and seriously wounded another teacher (Associated Press, 1995). The twenty- year span of data review was selected to capture two decades of research during a period of history when school safety was gaining national attention. Multiple peer reviewed journal articles were generated from the search criteria utilized. The search was further narrowed by focusing on school safety as it pertained to the United States public education system. Therefore, articles pertaining to research within the United States were selected for review from the search results and peer reviewed journal articles based on school systems from outside of the United States were not selected for review and study. The researcher chose to focus on two decades of research during a period of time in the United States when school safety was of a growing concern and therefore studies conducted outside of the United States were not chosen as part of the literature review. Virginia Tech's Electronic Theses and Dissertation archives were searched using the terms school safety, school violence, and teacher perceptions of school safety. Those same terms were utilized in the Google search engine to locate dissertations from the same time

period from other universities including Cornell University and University of Maryland. The Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice website was explored and school safety of audit reports were reviewed from the years 2007-2011. The more recent time span dates of the school safety audits were chosen so that the most current reports available on school safety could be used in the literature review. Finally, the Google search engine was utilized using the terms teacher safety, school safety, teacher attrition, collegiality, and teacher perceptions of school safety.

The Role of School Facilities

When researching challenges pertaining to the influence of teacher safety on public educational systems, the physical attributes of school buildings have surfaced as a topic of discussion in teachers' perceptions of safety (Maxwell, 2000). In fact, Earthman (2004) stated that the most important criteria for an adequate school were the safety and health of students. According to Dinkes, Cataldi, and Lin-Kelly (2007) public schools maintained a variety of facilities attributes and security practices intended to promote the safety of students and staff. In the School Survey on Crime and Safety (2014), public school officials across the nation were surveyed about the existence of characteristics of school facilities intended to limit or control access to school campuses. According to the School Survey on Crime and Safety, 85 percent of public schools controlled access to school buildings by securing exterior doors during school hours, and 41 percent controlled access to the school campus with locked or monitored gates and 43 percent used one or more security cameras to monitor the interior and exterior of school facilities. The use of security measures varied by school level with the highest use of security measures reported being used at the secondary level.

In research conducted on student and teacher safety in Chicago Public Schools by Steinberg, Allensworth, and Johnson (2011) teacher and student perceptions of safety decrease in areas of the school buildings with larger groups of students and less presence of organizational structure and adult supervision. In teacher interviews provided during the research study, teachers gave anecdotal illustrations of how locked classroom doors were useful in separating students in the classroom from student altercations in the hallways of their schools. Having the ability to create a protective barrier for themselves as well as the students provided a resource for crowd control during incidences of disruptive students. In the study by Steinberg, Allensworth, and Johnson (2011), a teacher provided a description of how she utilizes the classroom door as a

means of providing safety to her students: "I always throw the kids into the hall. One way or another I get the kids into the hall, because otherwise they destroy my room. They rip things off the walls, when they're rolling around they knock over the desks, the other kids get involved. . . And so as I get the fight into the hall, I lay myself back against the door, and that's how I keep the rest of the kids in the classroom. And that's kind of what we all do, the teachers against the door on the outside, you can keep the kids in the room. . . . [Once], I went back in [to the classroom] after [a] fight and [the students inside] were so irritated that I wouldn't let them out of the room that they cracked my oak podium in half" (p. 15).

In addition to the facilities security features, the physical appearance of school facilities influences student, parent, and teacher perceptions of safety and feeling welcome at schools (Steinberg, Allensworth, & Johnson, 2011). According to research by Maxwell (2000), children as young as nine years old are attune to their physical surroundings at school and can delineate between positive and negative features of a school building. In Maxwell's study, the school population sampled consisted of students, teachers, and parents enrolled and affiliated with an elementary school constructed in the 1950s with an enrollment of 400 students in grades pre-kindergarten through sixth grades. The findings of Maxwell's study indicated that school features such as displayed student work, cleanliness and maintenance of the building, existence of visitor policy, bulletin boards containing current and relevant information, and location of the main office were the physical attributes of school building that contributed to feelings of safety. The appearance of well-maintained school buildings with freshly painted walls in a pleasing color give the appearance of the building being well tended and effectively supervised. Cleanliness of hallways and office areas are influencing factors of feelings of safety in a school for teachers, students, and parents. According to Maxwell (2000), proper maintenance of these areas promotes perceptions of an orderly and calm school environment. Teachers and parents perceive parking lot proximity to school entrances as important factors in safely accessing schools as well as the location and cleanliness of bathrooms in school. Displayed student work also is identified as a physical characteristic that influence feelings of safety. During Maxwell's study, teachers reported feelings of increased safety because of evidence of increased student engagement when anonymity is reduced within the school environment and instead individualized successes and teamwork are evident throughout the school.

Research by Bowers and Urick (2011), using a large, nationally representative U.S. database of student achievement and school facility quality, suggested that there most likely was not a direct effect of facility condition such as maintenance on student achievement beyond the necessary sufficient heating, lighting, roofing, and other basic building provisions. Their findings suggested it may be that actual facility quality, be it structural or maintenance that influenced educator's perceptions of their school facilities that in turn influenced the overall academic and motivational climate of the school. The school academic and motivational climate then had positive or negative implications on student achievement. Bowers and Urick (2011) wrote the following: "the implications of our findings for administrators, policy makers and researchers is that while we were unable to find a direct effect of facility disrepair on student achievement, this does not necessarily mean that facilities and achievement are not related. As reviewed in the past literature, adequate facilities are most likely necessary for student achievement, but differences in facility maintenance, while unequally distributed across students and schools, may not be sufficient to move test scores either up or down" (p.10).

According to a report released by the Institute of Education Sciences (2014) forty-three percent of public schools reported the presence of one or more security staff at their schools at least once a week during the school year. The school resource officer (SRO) program began in public schools in the United States in the early to mid-1950s, but the program did not gain national attention until the 1990s in response to various school shootings that gained the attention of national media (Weiler & Cray, 2011). Research by Hernandez, Floden and Bosworth (2010) indicated that the community crime occurrence, in which a school is nested, had a strong negative influence on the teachers' individual feelings of safety. Their research explored the relationship between incident reports to local law enforcement, and students' and teachers' perceptions of school safety. The researchers compared quantitative data collected from law enforcement agencies with qualitative data provided by students and teachers during focus groups. Findings showed that incidents of serious violence and attacks, minor violence, and other school-related crime, in that order, constituted the most frequently reported incidents. Infrequently reported events included intimidation and bullying, and weapon and alcohol possession. However, the number of reported incidents to local law enforcement did not show to be an indicator of teacher perceptions of school safety.

Research by Roberts, Wilcox, May, and Clayton (2007) indicated that although individual experiences had the strongest influence on teachers' perceptions of school safety, those individual experiences had common themes among teachers at certain schools. The characteristics of those schools, such as the community where the schools are located, contribute to the individual feelings of being unsafe at school. Roberts, Wilcox, May and Clayton (2007) further indicated that physical disorder of a school and the community crime occurrences in which the school was nested had a strong negative influence on the teachers' individual feelings of safety. Research by Hernandez, Floden and Bosworth (2010) also indicated that the community crime rate in which a school was nested had a strong negative influence on the teachers' individual feelings of safety. Their research explored the relationship between incident reports to local law enforcement, and students' and teachers' perceptions of school safety. The researchers compared quantitative data collected from law enforcement agencies with qualitative data provided by students and teachers during focus groups. Findings showed that incidents of serious violence and attacks, minor violence, and other school-related crime, in that order, constituted the most frequently reported incidents. Infrequently reported events included intimidation and bullying, and weapon and alcohol possession. However, the number of reported incidents to local law enforcement did not show to be an indicator of teacher perceptions of school safety.

Later research by Bosworth and Hernandaz (2011) revealed that some schools can transcend crime and violence issues of a surrounding neighborhood and provide an environment perceived as safe by students and teachers. Research was conducted utilizing twenty-two focus groups with students and faculty in 11 secondary schools in Arizona. Schools in the study were selected from a sample based on proximity to Indian reservations, size, and type of school. According to their research, well-functioning schools can mitigate the crime and effects of the surrounding community by providing a safe haven for students and teachers within schools. Their research findings indicated that the two major factors contributing to schools being able to mitigate the community where schools were located were organization/discipline and caring relationships. Students in the study reported feeling safe in schools that were described as well-organized with clear rules and discipline procedures with highly visible adults that the students perceived as caring. The faculty and administrators in the study actively implemented strategies to deal with routine events as well as crises. The highly structured schools with strong leadership

in the study were able to transcend the crime of the surrounding neighborhood. Those schools were able to maintain a culture of calmness and stability within the school which promoted feelings of safety among teachers and students. The perceptions held by the students and faculty extended beyond the schools and into the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Role of Colleague Relationships

Teachers' perceptions of safety are influenced by the existence of teacher relationships among faculty (Bosworth & Hernandaz, 2011). Teachers' perceptions of safety are much more complex than describing school safety as simply the absence of violence. Teachers' perceptions of school safety were influenced in research by many variables including school climate and the existence of colleague relationships (Booren, Handy, & Power, 2011). School climates encompassed the perceptions of safety by school staff and the connection and support that teachers feel from one another and school administration (Roberts, Wilcox, May & Clayton, 2007). The role of colleague relationships has been shown through research to be a major contributor to teacher job satisfaction including contributing to the development of a positive school climate, increased job satisfaction for teachers, retention and consistent attendance for teachers new to the profession, and better parent-teacher relationships (Brown & Medway, 2007; DiStefano, Monrad, May, McGuiness, & Dickenson, 2007). Teachers, who reported working in supportive school climates, had positive teacher morale, and teachers reported feelings of accomplishment and connectivity to students. Having a positive school where teachers felt safe and supported was also conducive to positive indicators of school success such as standardized test scores, student discipline, and school division report card data (DiStefano et al. 2007; Greenberg, 2004; Sebring, Allensworth, Bryk, Easton, & Luppescu, 2006).

Teaching assignments and work environments vary within the field of education. Teachers who worked in environments that are described as a supportive school climate among faculty reported a greater sense of commitment to the teaching profession (Sass, Flores, Claeys, & Pérez, 2012). In their research, Sass, Flores, Claeys, and Perez examined teacher data to identify teacher and school variables associated with high attrition in Texas public schools. The findings of their study revealed that teacher attrition rates were greater during the high stakes-testing era, at low-performing schools, and for public charter schools. During times of stress when high stakes testing occurs, colleague relationship and support decreased as teachers

struggled to meet job demands. It was during those times of stress and job demands that colleague relationships can became strained and time restraints did not allow for socialization among faculty members.

Teachers frequently face difficult student behavioral incidents which may place teachers at risk of harm. However, having the support of colleagues when faced with difficult student matters has shown to be a factor in teachers returning to the teaching profession (Buchanan, et al., 2013). Research regarding retention of qualified teachers indicated school factors such as support and collegiality among faculty as contributing to teachers' sense of self-worth and job satisfaction (Bosworth & Hernandaz, 2011). As teachers are faced with challenging students, parental, and administrative pressures, collegiality among faculty provides support when teachers may otherwise feel helpless (Blase, 2009).

Teachers described a supportive school climate as a caring atmosphere with positive relationships, and overall feelings of comfort. In contrast, schools with poor school climates are described as having administrators, counselors, and division leadership displaying denial, apathy, and complacence (Booren, Handy, & Power, 2011). Teachers who had positive relationships with fellow employees reported feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction in their teaching professions (Giacometti, 2005). In Giacometti's study, a combination of factors affecting teacher satisfaction and retention were examined. A questionnaire was administered to 450 randomly selected first, second, and third year teachers across the nation. The survey explored the domains affecting teacher satisfaction and retention and domains that emerged through the survey results were used in the final analysis to develop findings. The domains that emerged from the study included emotional factors; school and community support; instructional support; preparation in teaching curriculum and managing students, and assessing students; collaboration; compensation and benefits; motivation to teach, and culture shock. According to research by Roberts, Wilcox, May, and Clayton (2007), teachers who worked together within a school were also known to have shared views of safety and job satisfaction. Although individual teachers possessed unique experiences, teachers who worked together within the same school building developed a collective or shared perspective on school climate and safety.

According to some educational research, the climate of a school can be more influential on perceptions of school safety than neighborhood crime statistics where the school is located (Bosworth & Hernandaz, 2011; Steinberg, Allensworth, & Johnson, 2011). In well-organized schools characterized by clear expectations for behavior and discipline protocols, highly visible and caring adults, and demonstrated respect between faculty and administrators, students and adults report feeling safe at school, even when the surrounding neighborhoods have high crime rates (Bosworth & Hernandaz, 2011). Schools that were perceived as more safe frequently shared the characteristic of people working together and building trusting, collaborative relationships among faculty and with family and community. The ways in which members of the school faculty interacted with families, students, and their colleagues explained many of the variances of perceptions of safety across schools even when the schools were nested within communities with similar crime rates (Steinberg, Allensworth, & Johnson, 2011).

The Role of Safety Policies and Administrative Practices

School safety procedures must be implemented by strong school leadership in order to effectively manage school safety and crisis incidents (Cornell & Sheras, 1998). School principals are charged with the responsibility of the safety of students and teachers on a daily basis and must rely on school division level policies to guide them in safety procedures and daily decision making. Teachers' knowledge of and perceptions of the effectiveness of those school policies impact their fear of school violence (Ricketts, 2007). Although school policies regarding safety exist, most safety policies lack input from teachers into these safety-based policies due to policies being developed at the state level (Finley, 2004). As a result, teachers were increasingly left out of violence based policy decisions being made in their schools (Finley, 2004; Plucker & Slavkin, 2000). Understanding the impact that school violence has on teachers is important for several reasons. Much like students, teachers can also be victims of violence and theft in schools (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005). Because teachers are frequently the victims of school violence, their perceptions and understanding of school violence policies are critical to the development of effective policies for school divisions.

Although most school districts have comprehensive policies for dealing with school violence, their enforcement of those policies by administration may be inconsistent (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Payne, 2000) The existence of school-based policies that deal with disruptive

students is essential, but enforcing those policies is just as critical to having schools perceived as safe by teachers. Having policies that are not enforced by school and district administration has a negative influence on teacher safety (Ricketts, 2007) The actions of principals set the tone for the climate of a school and their leadership is an important contributing factor to teachers' perceptions of school safety. Vettenburg (2002) reviewed subjective factors such as teacher perceptions of victimization risk and general perceptions of job satisfaction as intermediate factors to be considered when reviewing teacher feelings of safety. Vettenburg's research provided an in-depth review of factors associated with teachers' disengagement from the teaching profession related to the anti-social behavior of students and consequent teachers' feelings of being unsafe. The findings of this study indicated that teachers' feelings of unsafety were not directly affected by the presence of student anti-social behavior but are instead were related to teachers' subjective interpretation of students' behaviors. Vettenburg's study indicated the relevance of teachers' subjective perceptions of one's own victimization experiences and one's perceptions of job worth and job satisfaction pertaining to students, correlated to teachers' reported feelings of being unsafe. Having the teacher's voice heard by administration reduced feelings of helplessness and victimization.

Vettenburg (2002) wrote the following: "Teachers having a positive attitude toward their jobs (that is, teachers who like their job, are satisfied and think that their capacities are used to the full) and about their relationships with students, colleagues and the school board, tend to feel that the victimization risk is smaller and will report victimization less frequently than others" (p. 45). Principals who had a physical presence within the school and were responsive to student behaviors and supports were essential elements in creating the perception of safety schools (Finley, 2004). Conoley, Hindmand, Jacobs, and Gagnon (1997) identified ten common mistakes made by school principals and other division level leaders when handling school crisis. At the top of their list was the administrative practice of waiting until a crises event escalates before addressing the problem. Unfortunately, the practice among some school leaders to function in a reactive mode and ignoring potential problems until a crises event manifests was common. The daily procedures and precautions taken in a proactive manner by principals were essential to perceptions of safety by teachers (Ricketts, 2007).

Qualities of leadership, teamwork, and responsibility were also essential ingredients of successful crisis management and promoting a safe school environment (Cornell & Sheras, 1998) to be successful, school leaders must have a well-developed vision of how their schools should operate on a daily basis and what the goals they want to accomplish. Effective school leaders are able to articulate and follow through on why certain practices and policies exist in order to maintain the safety of the school. School leaders who have a vision for how a school should function utilizes that vision to guide decision making rather than simply reactively giving in to the demands of others.

According to Cornell and Sheras (1998) an effective school leader promotes feelings of safety in the school environment by comprising teams of individuals with defined roles and responsibilities to respond to difficult situations within a school environment. A school administrator should establish in advance of a crisis situation, well-defined roles of each team member and team members who are willing to work together and share a common goal. School crises often raise complicated questions of responsibility which may lead to a delay in action from the school leader's response team.

Cornell and Sheras (1998) described the third aspect of responsibility of a school leader as responsiveness. The principal who focuses on promoting a safe environment for teachers and students is responsive to student concerns and emerging problems. Once student concerns are identified an effective school leader engages other parties, such as parents and community agencies. The process of disengaging students in need of services does not provide for a climate of responsiveness or support and can lead to the existence of an unsafe environment. School practices such as suspension and expulsion of students for less serious infractions may encourage the practice of disengaging from challenging students. Research by Morrison and D'Incau (1997) indicated that long term suspension can reflect a failure by the school staff to be responsive to the needs of students by providing interventions and services. Morrison and D'Incau (1997) found in their study that many expelled students were struggling with issues stemming from personal or family crises, felt disengaged from the school community, or had emotional difficulties which could have been mitigated through special education or counseling support services. School leadership which responds to student and teacher needs within the school exhibits responsive leadership which promotes feelings of safety among teachers. According to

Vanderbilt University researchers Goldring, Porter, Muprhy, Elliott, and Craven (2009), effective principals ensure that their schools are lead in a manner that allow both adults and students to put learning at the center of their daily academic activities. According to these Vanderbilt researchers, a healthy school environment was characterized by basic factors such as safety and orderliness, as well as less tangible leadership characteristics such as exhibiting a supportive and responsive attitude toward the student body and a perception by teachers that they were an integral part of a community of professional educators focused on good instruction of students.

Summary

Quality of teaching, teacher absentee rate and attrition, and teacher-student relationships can suffer based on how safe teachers feel at school (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder & Baum, 2005; Finley, 2004; Payne, Gottfredson, & Gottfredson, 2003) Although school violence statistics may not reflect frequent acts of school violence against teachers, the perception exists that schools are no longer considered as safe as they were twenty years ago. Perceptions of school safety and acts of violence are two different constructs but both evoke strong reactions and have significant influences on teachers in public schools. Those strong reactions pose challenges for educational leaders. Understanding the underlying contributing causes of teachers feeling unsafe involves exploring four main categories of teachers' job experiences. The four categories of teachers' work experiences include the building facility where the teacher is employed, the working relationships with fellow colleagues, the existence of school board policies that guide in the governing of schools, and the leadership practices of administrators. School facilities characteristics such as proper maintenance of buildings, lighting, locked exterior doors, centralized school office location, and displayed student work are characteristics which have a positive influence on teacher, student, and parental perceptions of safety and should be considered when attempting to promote feelings of safety for teachers (Maxwell, 2000). Also important to increasing feelings of safety of teachers is the existence of friendships and support among school staff (Bosworth & Hernandaz, 2011). The adoption of well devised safety policies by school division leadership, and adhered to consistently by responsive and engaged school principals, are essential to establishing feelings of safety among teachers (Ricketts, 2007).

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine factors that increase teachers' perceptions of safety within their classrooms and school buildings. The researcher sought to understand if the physical characteristics of school buildings and classrooms influenced feelings of safety for teachers. The researcher also explored whether the existence of relationships with colleagues influenced feelings of safety for teachers, and if teachers' perceptions of safety were influenced by administrative practices and the adherence to division level safety policies.

Study Population

The study population consisted of all teaching personnel in the school division which is a total of 133 full-time, fully licensed teachers employed by a rural school division in Southside Virginia. The population of teachers consisted of 23 Caucasian males, four African American males, 91 Caucasian females, one Latino female and 14 African American females. The teachers ranged in years of experience from one year to 40 years of experience in the field of education. The teacher assignments covered all teaching areas from grades Pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade. During the time of the survey collection, four teachers were out on medical leave which made for a total of 129 surveys deployed.

The schools in the division included three elementary schools located throughout the county, one middle school, and one high school. The largest elementary school in the study, which was built in 1982, had an enrollment of 429 students in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. All instructional classrooms were located within the building with the exception of the computer lab which was housed in a mobile unit. The second largest elementary school, which was constructed in 1959, had an enrollment of 247 students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. All classes of fourth and fifth grade students were located in mobile units located behind the school. Art, music, physical education, library, computer lab, and special education classrooms were located in mobile units behind the school. The smallest elementary school in the study, built in 1959, contained 186 students in grades pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. All instructional areas were housed within the school building.

The school division in the study contained three elementary schools and one middle school and one high school on adjoining campuses. The middle school in the study had an enrollment of 400 students. The middle school classrooms and administrative offices were housed within one building of the middle school. However, the cafeteria, gymnasium, physical education classrooms, and weight rooms were housed in a separate building connected the main building by a covered walkway. The high school in the study had an enrollment of 600 students and was built in 1938. The high school had an open campus design that contained two additional buildings behind the main school and a 180-acre farm behind the high school as part of the campus.

Participant Selection

All teachers from each school in the division were invited to participate in the study. A description of the study was provided and invitations to participate were sent via school email. Participants self- selected themselves by indication of interest and a willingness to participate in the study.

Data Needed for Sub-questions

Because teachers' classrooms and facilities are unique and individual to personal experiences, a survey instrument with both quantitative and open ended questions was developed to discover perceptions in participants' responses regarding the physical characteristics of school buildings and classroom, colleague relationships, and administrative policies that influence teachers' feelings of safety. The Likert scale questions allowed the researcher to rank the school facilities characteristics by importance to the respondents and open-ended questions in the survey instrument provided needed descriptions of colleague relationships and the influence that these relationships had on teachers' feelings of safety. Data obtained from these Likert scale questions and open-ended questions were needed to establish whether relationships exist with colleagues and if those relationships influenced teachers' perceptions of safety. A description of the relationship with colleagues was needed to ascertain the existence of supportive relationships with colleagues. These data were needed to establish a ranking of the importance of those feelings when ascertaining teachers' perceptions of safety and in determining how to support and build those relationships within schools.

Although school administrators have differing leadership practices, the researcher sought to establish if principal practices were contributing factors to teachers' feelings of safety and the open-ended style questions provided a description of practices which influenced teachers' perceptions of safety. A description of the value of principals' support and practice of enforcing safety policies within the school building was used to determine if there was value in policies for the purposes of increasing teachers' feelings of safety.

Instrumentation

The research design for this study included both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The primary method of data collection in this research study was an electronic survey that was sent to each employee using the Virginia Tech Web-based survey collection tool, Qualtrics. An electronic survey was utilized because an internet-based survey instrument could access large number of potential participants (Lazar & Preece, 1999). The first three questions of the electronic survey provided information on the teacher characteristics of the respondent. Questions four through 20 utilized a Likert scale question format to investigate the research questions in the study. Questions 21-24 of the survey instrument were in an open-ended format to provide further exploration and descriptive information from the respondents. The researcher also explored whether the existence of relationships with colleagues influenced feelings of safety for teachers, and if teachers' perceptions of safety were influenced by administrative practices and the adherence to division level safety policies

In the construction of the survey instrument, statements were provided in Likert scale responses and open ended question format. The goal of the researcher was to increase the study population by utilizing an electronic survey and to delve into the perceptions of safety of teachers by providing an opportunity for expression with the completion of statements. The mixed-methods design allowed the researcher to discover participants' perspectives of a larger number of participants and discover themes and patterns among groups of participants. The demographic information at the beginning of the survey provided the researcher with information pertaining to the differences in responses among elementary and secondary teachers' responses. The survey instrument was validated by testing the survey instrument with colleagues within the regional area of Southside Virginia.

Data Collection

The time allotted for data collection was four weeks. A letter (see Appendix C) was sent that included a brief overview of the purpose of the study, the human rights of the participants as set forth by the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, and general directions needed to complete the survey (see Appendix A). Prior to gathering data, a request for approval of research was requested by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix D). Once the study was approved through the IRB, the researcher will sought approval from the school board to conduct research in the school division. Upon school division approval to complete research, teachers from the school division were contacted via email to request their participation. Teachers were sent an email that included information regarding the purpose of study, time line for completing the survey, and the internet link to Qualtrics, the VT web-based survey tool. The electronic survey included information for informed consent and provided all participates with a prompt to agree to consent prior to completing the survey. The electronic survey instrument concluded with a notification of completion of the survey. At the conclusion of the research study, teachers were provided a link to review the research document to review the findings for those teachers that were interested in the findings of the study.

Informed Consent

To ensure ethical procedures during research, the researcher provided an explanation of the participants' risks and benefits and equitable selection and fairness to all participants involved in the study (National Commission for the protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979).   Seidman (2006) outlined eight steps to describe informed consent procedures specific to IRB conditions: 1) an invitation to the study which describes the scope, length, purpose and sponsors of the research, 2) explanation of potential risks to participants, 3) rights of the participants to withdraw, 4) possible benefits of the study and to its participants, 5) confidentiality, 6) explanation of how the results will be disseminated, 7) consent for participants under the age of 18, and 8) researcher and IRB's contact information and use of language that is comprehensible to participants in the study. The researcher provided written informed consent information containing eight essential components to participants. The informed consent (see Appendix B) document was provided to the respondent at the beginning of the electronic survey instrument.

Bias Statement

The use of an electronic survey was utilized to provide some distance between the researcher and the respondents. Participants, in electronic survey formats, answer more freely than in other research process due to a greater sense of anonymity (Harris & Dersch, 1999). Participants in the electronic survey did so in an anonymous format. The teachers and staff members participating in the study were directed to a link to take the survey. The link was provided to the teachers and staff members in a letter to them regarding the study. This approach allowed for the participants to participate without being identified by their school email addresses. The participants in the study were also allowed to skip the first three survey questions which could potentially be perceived as reducing anonymity of the participants because of the demographical information requested. The questions in the survey instrument were framed from the perspective of informing future administrators of practices to promote feelings of safety for teachers. Utilizing that perspective reduces teachers' perceptions that their responses were evaluative of their current administrators. Framing the questions on the survey instrument in this manner provided for free expression by the respondents.

Data Analysis

The responses gathered from the electronic survey will be automatically downloaded into a Microsoft Excel worksheet because human error associated with data entry is reduced through electronic data collection (Duffy, 2002; Lazar & Preece, 1999).

The electronic survey data will be analyzed using the statistical data provided in the Qualtrics web-based survey tool. A complete listing of the data analysis methods utilized for each of the questions on the survey instrument and the relationship of items with each research question were included in a table format. Data related to research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequencies, percentages, and means were calculated for the responses. These data were displayed in tables along with discussion of the results. The tables included the number of participants in the survey, the number and percentage of participating elementary and secondary teachers, and the number and percentages of male and female respondents. The tables displayed the descriptive statistics of the results of responses to the Likert scale questions, to include a ranking from the Likert-scale style questions of the most important facilities

characteristics to teachers' feelings of safety, and response themes of the open ended questions. A listing of the most reported factors that induce the feeling of safety were developed from both the Likert-scale style questions and the open-ended questions for each of the four areas of interest. The demographic information was analyzed to determine if a relationship existed between feelings of safety and the teaching assignment being elementary or secondary. The demographic information was utilized to determine if there was a relationship between teachers' feelings of safety and years of experience in the field of education.

The final part of the survey instrument examined teachers' feelings of safety in their schools and classrooms using open-ended survey questions. The codes and themes that emerged from the open-ended survey questions were analyzed and presented using strategies described by Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002). These strategies will include 1) chunking and coding the data; 2) constant comparative method to elicit patterns and, 3) hypothesis or theory development (Anfara et al.).

Chunking and coding data involved putting the data into "chunks" before the researcher brings meaning to the patterns in the data. As the chunks became more repetitive and definitive, the researcher categorized these initial chunks into smaller groups of information or codes and major themes (Patton, 2002). Key words were identified in participants' responses and the words identified will serve as a guide to chunking and coding small pieces of data to help the researcher discover themes and patterns in the teachers' responses. Chunking and coding data served as a strategy for creating an audit trail during research.

Constant comparative method involved pattern analysis when the researcher compared the participants' findings by grouping the themes and categories together as they were expressed by the participants within the research setting. By grouping answers to the open-ended survey questions, the researcher analyzed different perspectives on central issues (Patton, 2002). The researcher used a theme notebook to compare and contrast themes as they emerge through the open-ended survey response process. Participants' responses were organized with a chart to help with identification and visualization of emerging themes. The chart was organized by research questions for the benefit of the researcher, and upon completion of the study, for the benefit of the reader.

The final stage of data analysis involved the researcher analyzing the information gained from the study and conveying the meaning of those lessons through comparison of the findings and the data present in current literature. Comparing the theory developed from the research to current literature provided perspective from the literature on the findings of the study (Creswell, 2003). The themes that emerged from this research study were compared to current literature of teachers' feelings of safety. The findings of the study were compared and contrasted to current literature within the field. The supporting documentation of the methodologies indicated of the methodologies indicated can be found on the Appendices located in the back of the dissertation document.

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to describe factors that make teachers feel safe. The main research question for this study was: *What school factors influence teachers' perceptions of safety in their classrooms and school buildings?* When exploring teachers' feelings of safety within their schools and classrooms, four primary areas of teachers' work environments exists. Those four main areas are the physical environment in which teachers work, the relationships with colleagues, the practices of administration, and administrative adherence to division safety policies. These areas of teachers' work environments can be represented in four research sub-questions:

(1) What physical characteristics of school facilities contribute to feelings of safety for teachers?

(2) How do relationships with colleagues within the school environment influence perceptions of teacher safety?

(3) How does the practices of school administrators influence feelings of safety in teachers, and

(4) How does a principal's adherence to division safety policies influence teachers' feelings of safety?

Findings

Description of the population. The study population consisted of all teaching personnel in the school division which was a total of 133 full-time, fully licensed teachers employed by a rural school division in Southside Virginia. The population of teachers consisted of 23 Caucasian males, four African American males, 91 Caucasian females, one Latino female and 14 African American females. The teachers ranged in years of experience from one year to 40 years of experience in the field of education. The teacher assignments covered all teaching areas from grades pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade. During the time of the survey collection, four teachers were out on medical leave which made for a total of 129 surveys deployed. Of the 129 surveys

deployed, 85 surveys were returned which constituted a 66% return rate on the survey instrument.

The electronic survey instrument consisted of 26 survey questions. The survey tool allowed for participants to skip the first three questions in the survey if they felt the information could be revealing during its completion. Refer to table 1 to review the percentage of respondents' completion of each question in the electronic survey.

Table1

Participation Rate by Question

Survey questions	Responses	Percentages
1. How many years have you been teaching (including this year)?	82	(96.47%)
2. What is your gender?	82	(96.47%)
3. What grade levels do you teach?	82	(96.47%)
4. I feel safe at school.	85	(100%)
5. I am concerned about outside intruders coming into my school and committing acts of violence.	85	(100%)
6. I am concerned for my safety due to student behavior.	85	(100%)
7. Locked exterior doors make me feel safe at school.	85	(100%)
8. Locked doors between the main office of the school and the remainder of the school that prevents visitors from accessing the classrooms makes me feel safe.	85	(100%)
9. Security cameras on the interior and exterior of a school make me feel safe at school.	85	(100%)
10. Having a classroom located inside the main school building makes me feel safe.	85	(100%)
11. I feel safe when I work in a school with colleagues who support me.	85	(100%)
12. My colleagues come to my aid during a critical student incident.	85	(100%)

(table continued)

Table 1 *(cont.)*

Survey questions	Responses	Percentages
13. Having an administrator who is visible during the school day makes me feel safe at school.	85	(100%)
14. Adherence to visitor policy by administration makes me feel safe at school.	85	(100%)
15. The administrative practices of my school principal important to my feelings of safety.	85	(100%)
16. The support of a building principal makes me feel safe at school.	85	(100%)
17. Are you knowledgeable about the school division safety policies?	85	(100%)
18. Having a school crises plan makes me feel safe at school.	85	(100%)
19. Having a school division wide crises plan makes me feel safe at school.	85	(100%)
20. It is important to my feelings of safety to have a resource officer in my school building.	85	(100%)
21. I feel as safe now as a teacher as I felt, or would have felt, ten years ago as a teacher.	85	(100%)
22. What do you feel are the most important school and classroom facility characteristics in making you feel safe as a teacher?	85	(100%)
23. How do colleague relationships influence your feelings of safety as a teacher?	75	(88%)
24. What advice would you give to new principals to increase teachers' perceptions of safety in school?	75	(88%)
25. Does the existence of school system policies pertaining to student discipline and crises planning influence your feelings of safety as a teacher?	70	(82%)
26. I give consent for my responses to be utilized in this study.	85	(100%)
Total Responses	85	

The 82 participants, who answered question 1 of the electronic survey, have been employed as teachers for an average of 12 years. Of the 82 participants in the study who answered the second question of the study, 22% of the respondents were male and 78% of the respondents were female. Out of the 82 participants who responded to question three of the

survey instrument, 49% of the respondents were elementary teachers and 51% of the respondents were secondary teachers.

The main research question. The main research question for this study was *What school factors influence teachers' perceptions of safety in their classrooms and school buildings?* Items 4, 5, 6, and 21 of the survey instrument established if teachers felt safe at school and what are some of the primary causes of feeling unsafe at school. Item 4 of the survey instrument asks for the respondent to provide level of agreement with the statement "I feel safe at school." The highest percentage of the chosen response indicated a response of somewhat in agreement with the statement in 52% of the responses. Because the underlying theme of this study is understanding teachers' feelings of safety, additional cross tabulations were conducted to compare teachers' feelings of safety by elementary or secondary teaching assignments and male and female respondents. The survey results indicated that teachers, including male, female, elementary and secondary teachers, feel safe at school. Item 5 of the survey asked for the respondent to indicate degree of agreement with the statement "I am concerned about outside intruders coming into my school and committing acts of violence." The agreement level most frequently chosen by the survey population indicated somewhat agreement by 48% of the participants. Item 6 of the survey instrument asked for degree of agreement with the statement "I am concerned for my safety due to student behavior." The highest percentage of respondents indicated that they were not concerned for their safety due to student behavior. Respondents indicated 32% of the time that they were not concerned for their safety due to student behavior. Item 21 of the survey asked for a comparison of teachers' feelings of safety as compared to 10 years ago. The responses varied from 20% of the survey respondents indicated strong agreement and 20% of the respondents indicated strong disagreement. Refer to tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 for a table summary of the responses.

Table 2

Item 4 I Feel Safe at School.

	Answer	Percentage of Participants	Female Response Totals	Male Response Totals	Elementary Teacher Responses	Secondary Teacher Responses
1.	Strongly agree	35.37%	21	8	14	17
2.	Somewhat agree	52.44%	36	7	18	20
3.	Neither agree or disagree	1.22%	1	0	0	1
4.	Somewhat disagree	7.32%	5	1	5	2
5.	Strongly disagree	3.66%	1	2	3	2
Total		100%	64	18	40	42

Table 3

Item 5 I am Concerned about Outside Intruders Coming Into My School and Committing Acts of Violence.

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	8.54%
2.	Somewhat agree	47.56%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	13.41%
4.	Somewhat disagree	19.51%
5.	Strongly disagree	10.98%
Total		100%

Table 4

Item 6 I am Concerned for My Safety Due to Student Behavior.

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	3.66%
2.	Somewhat agree	24.39%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	20.73%
4.	Somewhat disagree	19.51%
5.	Strongly disagree	31.71%
Total		100%

Table 5

Item 21 I Feel as Safe Now as a Teacher as I Felt or Would Have Felt 10 Years Ago as a Teacher.

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	20%
2.	Somewhat agree	26%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	20%
4.	Somewhat disagree	16%
5.	Strongly disagree	20%
Total		100%

Research question 1. What physical characteristics of school facilities contribute to feelings of safety for teachers? Items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 20 of the survey instrument collected quantitative data related to sub-question 1. "What physical characteristics of school facilities contribute to feelings of safety for teachers?" Survey item 7 asked for level agreement to be given regarding the statement "Locked exterior doors make me feel safe at school." The highest percentage of responses fell in the category of somewhat agree with 45% of the participants indicating that locked exterior doors did influence their perceptions of safety. The majority of the respondents indicated that locked exterior doors do in fact increase teachers' perceptions of safety when at school. Survey item 8 requested level of agreement with the statement "Locked doors between the main office and the remainder of the school that prevents visitors from accessing the classrooms makes me feel safe at school." The responses of the participants varied

for this survey question. The survey population indicated strong agreement with the statement 28% of the time, somewhat in agreement 31% of the time, neither agree nor disagree 31% of the time, somewhat disagree 7%, and strongly disagree 2% of the time. Survey item 9 indicated an agreement response to the question "Security cameras on the interior and exterior of a school make me feel safe at school." Respondents indicated strong agreement with the statement of feelings of safety by the presence of security cameras on school premises. The response of somewhat in agreement with the statement occurred 40% of the time. Survey item 10 asks for level of agreement with the statement "Having a classroom located inside the main school building makes me feel safe." The participants did indicate strong agreement with the perception of safety with a classroom located within a school building and indicated strong agreement or somewhat agreement in 62% of the responses. Survey item 20 asked for degree of agreement with the statement "It is important to my feelings of safety to have a resource officer in my school building". The response of 79% indicated the presence of a resource officer in the building as an influence on teachers' perceptions of safety. This survey question received the highest percentage of strong agreement of any question on the survey. Refer to tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 for a table summary of the responses.

Table 6

Item 7 Locked Exterior Doors Make Me Feel Safe at School.

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	37.80%
2.	Somewhat agree	45.12%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	8.54%
4.	Somewhat disagree	3.66%
5.	Strongly disagree	4.88%
Total		100%

Table 7

Item 8 Locked Doors Between the Main Office of the School and the Remainder of the School that Prevents Visitors from Accessing the Classrooms Makes Me Feel Safe.

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	28.40%
2.	Somewhat agree	30.86%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	30.86%
4.	Somewhat disagree	7.41%
5.	Strongly disagree	2.47%
Total		100%

Table 8

Item 9 Security Cameras on the Interior and Exterior of a School Make Me Feel Safe at School.

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	32.10%
2.	Somewhat agree	39.51%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	17.28%
4.	Somewhat disagree	8.64%
5.	Strongly disagree	2.47%
Total		100%

Table 9

Item 10 Having a Classroom Located Inside of the Main Building Makes Me Feel Safe.

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	35.37%
2.	Somewhat agree	26.83%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	25.61%
4.	Somewhat disagree	7.32%
5.	Strongly disagree	4.88%
Total		100%

Table 10

Item 10 It Is Important to My Feelings of Safety to Have a Resource Officer in My School Building.

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	79%
2.	Somewhat agree	15%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	4%
4.	Somewhat disagree	2%
5.	Strongly disagree	0%
Total		100%

Item 22 of the survey instrument employed an open ended response question in order to obtain qualitative data to delve more deeply into teachers' perceptions of safety as they are influenced by school and classroom facility characteristics. Item 22 of the survey poses the question "What do you feel are the most important school and classroom facility characteristics?" The purpose of employing this method of questioning also provided the researcher to seek themes in the participant responses. The five themes that emerged from item 22 were locked exterior doors, supportive administration, presence of a resource officer, external and internal cameras, and the existence of a well- rehearsed crises plan. Table 11 provides an overview of the responses and displays the data by theme.

Table 11

Item 22 What Do You Feel Are the Most Important School and Classroom Facility

Characteristics?

Theme	Responses
Locked exterior doors	"locked doors and classroom inside the building…" (R6) "sturdy classroom doors with deadbolts…" (R9) "ability to lock doors…" (R10) "doors that lock on the exterior of the school…" (R11) "doorbell access to the school…" (R14) "locked doors…" (R15) "locked doors and closely monitored visitors…" (R16) "classrooms all housed within one building so we can be locked inside…" (R26) "locked doors that prohibit parents and visitors from freely accessing the entire school instead of remaining in the main office…" (R29) "I am currently in a mobile unit outside the main building. Even though my classroom door stays locked, I feel less safe because anyone could be right outside of my door at any time…" (R36) "all students and classroom located inside he main building with locked doors…" (R43) "keyless entry…" (R39) "locked and supervised exterior doors…" (R42) "doors that are supposed to be locked actually being locked…" (R55) "requiring visitors to only access the main office from the locked front doors and having them unable to access the rest of the school… (R62) 'locked doors and visitor sign in with no exceptions…" (R72) "locked doors are needed that prevent visitors from roaming through the building…" (R77) "locked doors and barriers so visitors cannot go directly to the classrooms…" (R78)

(table continued)

Table 11 *(cont.)*

Theme	Responses
Supportive administration	"an administrator who is strong on student discipline and supports teachers consistently…" (R16) - Visible administration that handles student discipline issues quickly and effectively. (R13) "Support…" (R21) "Administrative support…" (R22) "student discipline…" (R23) "an administration that does not allow parents to freely access classrooms…" (R29) "having help from administration immediately when there is trouble…" (R40) "good communication with administration within the building…" (R42) "an atmosphere of respect. The biggest threat is from within, not strangers. Fostering a good environment is crucial." (R44) "Prompt intervention when a student is having a crises…" (R56)
Resource officer	"Resource officer…" (R12) (R14) (R34) (R41) (R49) (R50) "Full time resource officer…" (R52) (R57) (R64) "Visible resource officer…" (R77) "Resource officer at the front door…" (R78) "Most importantly a school resource officer."
Cameras	"Cameras…" (R8) "Cameras at locked doors…" (R15) "Cameras throughout the building…" (R17) "Monitored cameras…" (R25) "Security cameras…" (R37) "cameras on exterior doors…" (R38) "monitored security cameras…" (R49)
Crises Plan	"ability to communicate with others during a crises event…" (R10) "being able to quickly evacuate the building…" (R19) "crises planning…" (R26) "emergency procedures…" (R40) 'plans for alternative communication…" (R45) "having a planned meeting place in an emergency…" (R70) "Being prepared with plans of action. Having the discussions ahead of time with administration makes me more confident that my actions would be more in line with the expectations of a teacher. I think it would eliminate some of the hesitation in the event we were threatened." (R60) "Lockdown drills…" (R55)

Research question 2. How do relationships with colleagues within the school environment influence perceptions of teacher safety? Electronic survey items 11 and 12 requested responses that indicate levels of agreement to statements regarding relationships with colleagues and the influence of those colleague relationships on perceptions of safety for teachers. Survey item 11 provides the statement "I feel safe when I work in a school with colleagues that support me." The respondents gave a majority of strong agreement with this safety with 68.29% of the participants indicating that colleague relationships strongly influence perceptions of safety for teachers. Electronic survey question 12 requested responses to the statement "My colleagues come to my aid during a critical student incident." The participants in the survey indicated a response of strongly agree at a response rate 62.20%. Refer to tables 12 and 13 and for a summary of the survey responses.

Table 12

Item 11 I Feel Safe when I Work in a School with Colleagues who Support Me.

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	68.29%
2.	Somewhat agree	20.73%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	9.76%
4.	Somewhat disagree	0.00%
5.	Strongly disagree	1.22%
Total		100%

Table 13

Item 12 My Colleagues Come to My Aid during a Critical Student Incident.

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	62.20%
2.	Somewhat agree	17.07%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	13.41%
4.	Somewhat disagree	4.88%
5.	Strongly disagree	2.44%
Total		100%

Item 23 of the survey instrument employed an open ended response question in order to obtain qualitative data to delve more deeply into teachers' perceptions of safety as they are influenced by colleague relationships. Item 23 of the survey poses the question "How do colleague relationships influence your feelings of safety as a teacher?" The purpose of employing this method of questioning also provided the researcher with an opportunity to obtain themes in the participant responses. The three themes that emerged from Item 23 were colleague relationships were important to crises planning, colleagues provided emotional support, and colleagues' relationships had no influence on perceptions of teachers' safety. Of the six respondents that indicated that colleague relationships had no influence on teachers' perceptions of safety, five of the respondents were male teachers at the secondary level. There were a total of six male respondents at the secondary level that completed the survey. Table 14 provides an overview of the responses and displays the data by theme.

Table 14

Item 23 How Do Colleague Relationships Influence Your Feelings of Safety as a Teacher?

Theme	Responses
Safety during crises events	• "I think teachers will help each other if necessary in a crisis situation…" (R14)
	• "Good relationships make me feel like we have each other's backs in a dangerous situation…" (R15)
	• "Having colleagues, you can trust and depend on make you feel more at ease, especially if there were to be a time of crisis. I know I could depend on those near me for any support needed…" (R16)
	• "Knowing who you work with and being able to have that support system is vital in feeling comfortable at work!! I have had other teachers literally save my life when I taught alternative education..." (R17)
	• "Having cell phones and being able to contact each other if a bad situation were to happen…" (R18)
	• "Having a concrete school wide plan with my colleagues in place makes me feel safe…" (R26)
	• "I know I can count on my colleagues during any type of crisis…" (R27)
	• "We are all watching out for each other…" (R24)
	• "If I know my colleagues are supportive of me then I know I can count on them when I am in need. It makes me feel safe because if something would happen I could call on them…" (R58)
	• "I know that my colleagues will come to my aid if I ever needed their assistance; likewise, they know that I will come and assist them whenever the need arise. Over the years, I have assisted my neighboring teachers with student altercations. Also, they have done the same for me. Without a doubt, I know my colleagues will help out in any way possible…" (R62)

(table continued)

Table 14 *(cont.)*

Theme	Responses
Safety during crises events	• "They come to my aide or call for help in an emergency…" (R72) • "They come and help me when I need help with a difficult student or parent…" (R73)
Emotional support	• "When I know and can count on fellow colleagues to assist me when needed, I feel safe…" (R11) • "Getting along and supporting each other is extremely important as an educator…" (R44) • "I like how the teachers at my school work together…" (R54) • "Everyone wants to work in pleasant environment..." (R60) • "We all look out for each other…" (R66) • "They support me and give me advice on handling difficult parent and student situations…" (R68) • "They come and help me when I need help with a difficult student or parent…" (R69) • "Having good relationships with colleagues insures good communication about concerns and support to bring concerns to administration…" (R62) • "We are a family…" (R12)
No influence	• "not at all…" (R31) (R28) • "They do not really influence my feelings of safety…" (R48) • "They don't have any bearing on my feelings of safety…" (R49) • "None…" (R57) (R65) • They don't…" (R63)

Research question 3. How does the practices of school administrators influence feelings of safety in teachers? Survey question items 13, 14, 15, and 16 address research question 3 of the research study. These survey items explore the influence of principals' practices and behaviors on teachers' perception of safety within classrooms and buildings. Survey item 1 requests a level of agreement with the statement "Having an administrator who is visible during the school day makes me feel safe at school." Respondents to the survey indicated strong agreement with the statement 52.44% of the time and indicated somewhat agreement 30.49% of the time. Survey item 14 provided the statement "Adherence to visitor policy by administration makes me feel safe at school." The participants in the study indicated strong agreement 62.96% of the time and in somewhat agreement 25.93% of the responses. Survey item 15 provides the statement "The administrative practices of my school principal are important to my feelings of safety." Participants in the study indicated strong agreement 57.50% of the time. Participants indicated somewhat of agreement in 32.50% of the responses. Survey item 16 addresses the importance of principal support in to teachers' perceptions of safety. Survey item

16 provides the statement "The support of a building principal makes me feel safe at school."
The participants in the study indicated strong agreement in 67.90% in the responses. Participants
indicated somewhat agreement in 19.75% of the responses. Refer to tables 15, 16, 17, and 18 and
for a summary of the survey responses.

Table 15

*Item 13 Having an Administrator who is Visible during the School Day Makes Me Feel Safe at
School.*

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	52.44%
2.	Somewhat agree	30.49%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	9.76%
4.	Somewhat disagree	2.44%
5.	Strongly disagree	4.88%
Total		100%

Table 16

Item 14 Adherence to Visitor Policy by Administration Makes Me Feel Safe at School.

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	62.96%
2.	Somewhat agree	25.93%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	8.64%
4.	Somewhat disagree	0.00%
5.	Strongly disagree	2.47%
Total		100%

Table 17

Item 15 The Administrative Practices of My School Principals are Important to My Feelings of Safety.

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	57.50%
2.	Somewhat agree	32.50%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	6.25%
4.	Somewhat disagree	1.25%
5.	Strongly disagree	2.50%
Total		100%

Table 18

Item 16 The Support of a Building Principal Makes Me Feel Safe at School.

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	67.90%
2.	Somewhat agree	19.75%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	11.11%
4.	Somewhat disagree	0.00%
5.	Strongly disagree	1.23%
Total		100%

Item 24 of the survey instrument employed an open ended response question in order to obtain qualitative data to delve more deeply into teachers' perceptions of safety as they are influenced by the practices of school principals. Item 24 of the survey poses the question "What advice would you give to a new principal to increase teachers' perceptions of safety in school?" The purpose of employing this method of questioning also provided the researcher with an opportunity to obtain themes in the participant responses. The three themes that emerged from Item 24 were enforcing policies and expectations, responsiveness, and visibility. Table 19 provides an overview of the responses and displays the data by theme.

Table 19

Item 24 What Advice Would You Give to New Principals to Increase Teachers' Perceptions of

Safety in School?

Themes	Responses
Enforce policies and expectations	"Establish perimeters that the students and community understands…" (R22) "Support your teachers with parents and don't let the parents and visitors walk all over the building…" (R6) "Please support new teachers in decisions they make regarding the children in their classrooms. When a parent comes up because their child is in trouble, do not cave to the parent…" (R9) "Follow a strict visitor policy..." (R27) "Continue to update and revaluate safety plans each. Make sure all staff members are clear on the process, responsibilities and procedures. Enforce division wide visitor rules to schools…" (R29) "Make no exceptions to the rules…" (R39) "Allow each teacher to have access to the building at any time, but students and outsiders have limited access/only the front entrance…" (R40) "They need to adhere to visitor policies at each school. They should not overreact to every incidence that is publicized in the media…" (R51) "Making sure doors are locked and students strongly disciplined…" (R54) "They need to make sure all parents check in the office and check out with the office before they leave..." (R57) "When visitors enter the school, have everything blocked off so that they must enter at the main office then let in to the rest of the school if needed…" (R60) "Making sure that parents or visitors do not come down the hallways and into classrooms unless given permission and have a visitors pass…" (R63) "Parents need to know that you will enforce visitor policies and not be bullied of intimidated by parents who insist that rules be waived for their children…" (R69) "Do not allow parents to be disrespectful to teachers or allow them to run the school…" (R70) "Monitor who is in your building and don't allow people to bully their way into the building or being allowed to break the rules…" (R71) "Don't let parents bully teachers. Students need to be held accountable…" (R73) "Don't let parents run the school. When parents cross the line they need to be called on it. I worry more about parents than I do an unknown intruder in the building…" (R74) "All visitors should adhere to the visitor policy. Don't let parents and community members wander in our building or come into our classes uninvited…" (R75)

Table 19 *(cont.)*

Responsiveness	• "Listen to the teachers and their concerns and/or ideas! Validate their concerns. Support your teachers. One feels much safer when they know administration has their back…" (R18)
	• "Involve ALL teachers in the process of crisis planning…" (R15)
	• "Tell teachers to get to know their students and to report an issue if you see one. Treat your co-workers as teammates. It is still statistically more dangerous to drive to the grocery store…" (R23)
	• "Be supportive…" (R24)
	• "Continue to update and revaluate safety plans each. Make sure all staff members are clear on the process, responsibilities and procedures. Enforce division wide visitor rules to schools…" (R29)
	• "Communicate clearly with your staff, create a school culture where students and faculty can express concerns and plan well…" (R42)
Visibility	• "Be visible, walk around during class changes, lunch time, and bus loading/unloading…" (R13)
	• "Be visible in the halls…" (R17) (R19)
	• "Be seen…" (R20)
	• "Always be available…" (R21)
	• "Be visible, talk to teachers to make sure they are doing their parts, and discipline students/teachers when they break the rules..." (R26)
	• "Patrol the halls on a regular basis throughout the day…" (R32)
	• "Be present…" (R67)

Research question 4: How does a principal's adherence to division safety policies influence teachers' feelings of safety? Survey questions 17, 18, and 19 explore the influence of division safety policies on teachers' perceptions of safety. Survey question 17 asks "Are you knowledgeable about the school division safety policies?" The participants in the study responded with very knowledgeable or moderately knowledgeable 72% of the time. The responses indicated a relative comfort level with the knowledge of school division safety policies. Participants in the survey indicated level of agreement with the statement "Having a school crises plan makes me feel safe at school." Survey participants indicated they were somewhat in agreement with the statement at a response rate of 51%. The second highest response rate was 34% with participants indicating that they strongly agreed with the statement. Survey question 19 asked for agreement with the statement "Having a school division crises plan makes me feel safe at school." Participants in the study responded to the statement as somewhat in agreement 51% of the time. The responses to this survey question varied from strongly agree

to somewhat disagree. The participants responded with neither agree nor disagree with a response rate of 16%. Tables 20, 21, and 22 provide a summary of the responses.

Table 20

Item 17 Are You Knowledgeable about School Division Safety Policies?

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	22%
2.	Somewhat agree	34%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	38%
4.	Somewhat disagree	4%
5.	Strongly disagree	2%
Total		100%

Table 21

Item 18 Having a School Crisis Plan Makes Me Feel Safe at School.

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	34%
2.	Somewhat agree	51%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	10%
4.	Somewhat disagree	4%
5.	Strongly disagree	1%
Total		100%

Table 22

Item 19 Having a School Division Wide Crisis Plan Makes Me Feel Safe at School.

	Answer	Percentage of Response
1.	Strongly agree	24%
2.	Somewhat agree	51%
3.	Neither agree or disagree	16%
4.	Somewhat disagree	9%
5.	Strongly disagree	0%
Total		100%

Item 25 of the survey instrument employed an open ended response question in order to obtain qualitative data to explore teachers' perceptions of safety as they are influenced by school system policies pertaining to student discipline and crisis planning. Item 25 of the survey poses the question "Does the existence of school system policies pertaining to student discipline and crises planning influence your feelings of safety as a teacher?" The purpose of employing this method of questioning also provided the researcher with an opportunity to locate themes in the participant responses. The three themes that emerged from Item 25 were that policies had no influence on teachers' perceptions of safety, influence of policies did exist because of administrations enforcement of policy, and influence of policies did exist because of enforcement of student behavior. Table 23 provides an overview of the responses and displays the data by theme.

Table 23

Item 25 Overview of the Responses by Themes.

Themes	Responses
No Influence	• "No, I feel as if they don't currently affect me…" (R38) • No, because they are not strong enough at the elementary level. Behavior incidents are not reported correctly and are often "swept under the rug". The administrators do not take behavior issues seriously enough at the elementary level…" (R47) • "Not really- if a crisis is going to happen, even if prepared for, policies aren't always enforced. You do what you need to do to keep your students and yourself safe…" (R54) • "It all depends on the teacher and their ability to manage classroom environments…" (R53) • "No." (R9) (R30) (R31) (R33) (R35) (R44) (R48)
Yes due to administrative enforcement of policy	• "Yes, because it makes you feel that CCPS has your back and wants everything to well at school. When the staff and students feel safe then you are able to relax and learn to the best of everyone's ability…" (R21) • "Yes, it makes me feel safer as a teacher…" (R27) • "Yes. The most important part is to follow the policies on discipline and crisis procedures…" (R28) • "I feel safe with the student discipline and crisis planning in our system because it is properly enforced and the principal on site is great at backing up the teacher…" (29)

(table continued)

Table 23 *(cont.)*

Themes	Responses
Yes due to administrative enforcement of policy	• "Yes I like consistency…" (R38) • "I think these are good policies to have in place and do increase safety…" (R51) • "Yes. School policies are crucial to the environment. Consistency of those policies/rules are effective in monitoring school climate..." (R57) • "Yes, as long as the policies and plans are known and followed…" (R63)
Yes due to administrative enforcement of student behavior	• "Yes. I know that there are rules that will be followed…" (R10) • "Yes. There needs to be enforced consequences…" (R20) • "Yes. I know that dangerous students will be given extra support or removed…" (R54) • "Yes, because I know there are boundaries that cannot be crossed…" (R68) • "Yes, because I know that discipline will be enforced…" (R69) • "Yes. I know that the school board office is not afraid of parents and students and will take up for teachers…" (R70) • "Yes. Discipline sets the tone for the culture of a school. Consistent and effective application of discipline create a safer school culture, especially in the area of bullying. Knowing what the crisis plans are and practicing them help minimize panic in an event…" (R39) • "Yes. Student discipline policies should be enforced for the safety of the teacher, but more importantly the safety of the other students…" (R40) • "Yes, as we do not allow any type of weapon on campus…" (R41) • "Yes having a standard of expected conduct and behaviors in school establishes order which is essential should a crisis occur. Standards should be communicated and consistently implemented. Crisis situations and expectations should be set forth to the student body…" (R42)

Summary

While all the responses of the participants in the survey varied in detail, the data generated from the survey instrument did provide useful information regarding the characteristics of schools, principals, colleague relationships and school division policies in understanding the influence of those characteristics on teachers' feelings of safety. This was made evident by the participant's responses to the Likert-scale questions which provided levels of agreement from each of the participants. The open-ended questions on the survey provided an opportunity for teachers to respond in a format that provided information for the purposes of allowing themes to emerge through participant responses. Chapter Five provides a summary of

the findings, presents implications, discusses limitations of the study, and makes suggestions for future studies in the field

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Introduction

School factors that influence teacher's perceptions of safety were examined in this study. The purpose of this study was to describe factors that make teachers feel safe in their classrooms and school buildings. The study included all teachers in a rural school division in Southside Virginia. The study examined the following main research question and four sub-questions: *What school factors influence teachers' perceptions of safety in their classrooms and schools?*

(1) What physical characteristics of school facilities contribute to feelings of safety for teachers?

(2) How do relationships with colleagues within the school environment influence perceptions of teacher safety?

(3) How does the practices of school administrators influence feelings of safety in teachers, and

(4) How does a principal's adherence to division safety policies influence teachers' feelings of safety?

Summary of Findings

Main research question. What school factors influence teachers' perceptions of safety within their classrooms and school buildings? Items 4, 5, 6, and 21 of the survey instrument established if teachers felt safe at school and what are some of the primary causes of feeling unsafe at school.

The survey results indicated that teachers generally perceived themselves to be safe at school. The participants also indicated that although they generally perceived themselves as being safe at school, the greatest threat to teachers' safety was perceived to be from an outside intruder and not a perceived threat of student generated acts of violence. This finding was consistent among male and female respondents as well as elementary and secondary respondents. When teachers were asked if they perceived themselves to be as safe as ten years ago, the responses indicated that teachers ranged in their perceptions of safety. While 20% responded that

they felt strongly that they felt as safe as they did ten years ago, 20% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

This finding supports the research of Yogan and Henry (2000) which indicates that teachers' perceptions of safety are influenced by external forces such as crime and poverty and contribute to teachers' perceptions of safety as being an ever changing construct. This finding also supports the research of Sass, Fores, Claeys, and Perez (2012) which indicates that violence from outside intruders are part the reason for teachers leaving the education profession within the first few years of teaching.

Research question 1. What physical characteristics of school facilities contribute to feelings of safety for teachers? Items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 20 of the survey instrument collected quantitative data related to sub-question 1. "What physical characteristics of school facilities contribute to feelings of safety for teachers?" The findings from Research Question 1 provided the researcher with a ranking by teachers of the preferred physical characteristics of school which increase their perceptions of safety. Table 24 below provides a ranking of school physical characteristics which influence teachers' perceptions of safety at school.

Table 24

A Ranking of Physical School Physical Characteristics that Contribute to Teachers' Perceptions of Safety.

Ranking	Physical characteristic of schools
1.	Resource officer
2.	Locked exterior doors
3.	Having a classroom located inside of the main building
4.	Interior/Exterior security cameras
5.	Locked doors between the main office of the school and the remainder of the building.

Item 22 of the survey instrument employed an open ended response question in order to obtain qualitative data to delve more deeply into teachers' perceptions of safety as they are influenced by school and classroom facility characteristics. Item 22 of the survey poses the question "What do you feel are the most important school and classroom facility

characteristics?" The purpose of employing this method of questioning also provided the researcher to seek themes in the participant responses. The five themes that emerged from item 22 were locked exterior doors, supportive administration, presence of a resource officer, external and internal cameras, and the existence of a well- rehearsed crises plan.

The most frequently occurring theme was the influence of a resource officers' presence at school on the perceptions of safety by teachers. Several respondents indicated specifically a full time resource officer who is highly visible within the school made them feel safe. The second most frequent theme was the existence of locked doors and the classrooms located within one secure building. One elementary teacher responded, "I am currently in a mobile unit outside of the main building. Even though my classroom door stays locked, I feel less safe because anyone could be right outside of my door at any time…" (R36).

The third most prevalent theme to occur was the existence of a well- rehearsed crises plan as a positive influence of teachers' perceptions of safety. The importance of talking and communicating as a school faculty about crises planning emerged as an important part of crises planning. One respondent wrote, "Being prepared with plans of action. Having the discussions ahead of time with administration makes me feel more confident that my actions would be more in line the expectations of a teacher. I think it would eliminate some of the hesitation in the event we were threatened."(R60). Supportive administration emerged as a theme and ranked very closely behind the crises planning as a theme in the responses. Frequently the themes of crises planning and supportive administration were closely intertwined. Responses included, "Good communication within the building makes me feel safe." (R42) Another teacher wrote, "Having help immediately from administration immediately when there is trouble…" (R40). When discussing administrative support, a teacher wrote, "an atmosphere of respect. The biggest threat is from within, not strangers. Fostering a good environment is crucial." (R44).

The final theme that emerged from the open-ended questions included cameras as an important feature of a school that influences teachers' perceptions of safety. Cameras were indicated as important to teachers but teachers also specifically indicated that cameras were needed on both the exterior and interior of the building. Monitoring of cameras was included on several responses as well as the location of the cameras such as at all entrances. Figure 25

provides a ranking as indicated by teacher responses to open ended questions of the school physical qualities which influence teachers' perceptions of safety.

Table 25

Ranking as Indicated by Teacher Responses to Open Ended Questions of the School Physical Qualities which Influence Teachers' Perceptions of Safety.

Ranking	Physical characteristic of schools ranked by themes
1.	Resource officer
2.	Locked doors and classrooms located within the building
3.	Well- rehearsed crises plan
4.	Supportive administration
5.	Monitored security cameras on the exterior and interior of the school

(2004). Maxwell (2000) The findings of this research agree with research by Maxwell (2000) and Earthman investigated the influence of physical characteristics of schools and the influence of these physical characteristics on teachers' perceptions of safety. Her study supported the finding that locked exterior and interior doors influenced teachers perceptions of safety. Likewise, research by Earthman (2004) stated that the most important criteria for an adequate school were safety and health of students.

Research question 2. How do relationships with colleagues within the school environment influence perceptions of teacher safety? The three themes that emerged from Research Question 2 were colleague relationships were important to crises planning, colleagues provided emotional support, and colleagues' relationships had no influence on perceptions of teachers' safety. Of the six respondents that indicated that colleague relationships had no influence on teachers' perceptions of safety, five of the respondents were male teachers at the secondary level.

The findings of the qualitative study portion of the survey presented three themes with the most prevalent of them being that colleague relationships do influence teacher perceptions of safety in the event of crises events. Colleague relationships generally do positively influence teachers' feelings of safety as indicated by the following statement by a teacher: "I know that my colleagues will come to my aid if I ever need their assistance; likewise, they know that I will

come and assist them whenever the need arises. Over the years, I have assisted neighboring teachers with student altercations. Also, they have done the same for me. Without a doubt, I know my colleagues will help out in any way possible…" (R62). Another teacher wrote,

"Knowing who you work with and being able to have that support system is vital in feeling comfortable at work!! I have had other teachers literally save my life when I taught alternative education…" (R17).

The second theme that emerged in the open-ended responses included the influence on the emotional support of colleagues having an influence on teachers' perceptions of safety. Teacher responses included the following: 'We look out for one another." (R66), 'They support me and give me advice on handling difficult student and parent situations…" (R68) and "I like how teachers at my school work together." (R54). One respondent summarized with a description of the relationship among colleagues at her school as "We are family." (R12).

The third theme that emerged from the open-ended response question regarding the influence of colleague relationships included that some respondents indicated that colleague relationships had to influence on their feelings of safety at school. Responses included the following: "Not at all…" (R31) and "They don't have any bearings on my feelings of safety…" (48). Five of the six respondents who indicated that colleague relationships had no bearings on their feelings of safety were male teacher at the secondary level. Table 26 provides a table of the ranking of the themes present in colleague relationships which influenced teachers' perceptions of safety.

Table 26

Influence of Colleague Relationships on Teachers' Feelings of Safety

Ranking	Influence of colleague relationships
1.	Safety during crises events
2.	Emotional support
3.	No influence

The findings from Question 2 support the research of Bosworth and Hernandez (2011). Research by Bosworth and Hernandez (2011) indicates that having the support of colleagues when faced with difficult student matters has shown to be a factor in teachers returning to the teaching profession. Blasé (2009) research indicates that as teachers a are faced with challenging students, parental, and administrative pressures, collegiality among faculty provides support when teachers may otherwise feel helpless.

Research question 3. How do the practices of school administrators influence feelings of safety in teachers? Survey question items 13, 14, 15, and 16 addressed research question 3 of the research study. These survey items explored the influence of principals' practices and behaviors on teachers' perception of safety within classrooms and buildings. Survey item one requests a level of agreement with the statement "Having an administrator who is visible during the school day makes me feel safe at school." Respondents to the survey indicated strong agreement with the statement 52.44% of the time and indicated somewhat agreement 30.49% of the time. Survey item 14 provided the statement "Adherence to visitor policy by administration makes me feel safe at school." The participants in the study indicated strong agreement 62.96% of the time and in somewhat agreement 25.93% of the responses. Survey item 15 provides the statement "The administrative practices of my school principal are important to my feelings of safety." Participants in the study indicated strong agreement 57.50% of the time. Participants indicated somewhat of agreement in 32.50% of the responses.

Item 24 of the survey instrument employed an open ended response question in order to obtain qualitative data to delve more deeply into teachers' perceptions of safety as they were influenced by the practices of school principals. Item 24 of the survey posed the question "What advice would you give to a new principal to increase teachers' perceptions of safety in school?" The three themes that emerged from Item 24, which asked for advice for new principals, were enforcing policies and expectations, responsiveness, and visibility.

The underlying theme which reoccurred in the responses was the concern for the need for administrative support in volatile parental and community situations and to support strong school wide discipline. The respondents provided a listing of advice to new principals when trying to

establish feelings of safety for teachers. Table 27 displays quotes from survey participants which represents re-occurring themes in teacher responses.

Table 27

What Advice would you give to New Principals to Increase Teachers' Perceptions of Safety in School?

Theme	Responses
Enforce policies and expectations	• "Establish perimeters that the students and community understands…" (R22) • "Support your teachers with parents and don't let the parents and visitors walk all over the building…" (R6) • "Please support new teachers in decisions they make regarding the children in their classrooms. When a parent comes up because their child is in trouble, do not cave to the parent…" (R9) • "Follow a strict visitor policy..." (R27) • "Enforce division wide visitor rules to schools…" (R29) • "Make no exceptions to the rules…" (R39) • "They need to adhere to visitor policies at each school. They should not overreact to every incidence that is publicized in the media…" (R51) • "Making sure doors are locked and students strongly disciplined…" (R54) • "They need to make sure all parents check in the office and check out with the office before they leave..." (R57) • "Making sure that parents or visitors do not come down the hallways and into classrooms unless given permission and have a visitors pass…" (R63) • "Parents need to know that you will enforce visitor policies and not be bullied or intimidated by parents who insist that rules be waived for their children…" (R69) • "Do not allow parents to be disrespectful to teachers or allow them to run the school…" (R70) • "Monitor who is in your building and don't allow people to bully their way into the building or being allowed to break the rules…" (R71) • "Don't let parents bully teachers. Students need to be held accountable…" (R73)

(table continued)

Table 27 *(cont.)*

Theme	Responses
Enforce policies and expectations	• "Don't let parents run the school. When parents cross the line they need to be called on it. I worry more about parents than I do an unknown intruder in the building…" (R74) • "All visitors should adhere to the visitor policy. Don't let parents and community members wander in our building or come into our classes uninvited…" (R75)
Responsiveness	• "Listen to the teachers and their concerns and/or ideas! Validate their concerns. Support your teachers. One feels much safer when they know administration has their back…" (R18) • "Involve ALL teachers in the process of crisis planning…" (R15) • "Tell teachers to get to know their students and to report an issue if you see one. Treat your co-workers as teammates. It is still statistically more dangerous to drive to the grocery store…" (R23) • "Be supportive…" (R24) • "Continue to update and revaluate safety plans each. Make sure all staff members are clear on the process, responsibilities and procedures. Enforce division wide visitor rules to schools…" (R29) • "Communicate clearly with your staff, create a school culture where students and faculty can express concerns and plan well…" (R42)
Visibility	• "Be visible, walk around during class changes, lunch time, and bus loading/unloading…" (R13) • "Be visible in the halls…" (R17) (R19) • "Be seen…" (R20) • "Always be available…" (R21) • "Be visible, talk to teachers to make sure they are doing their parts, and discipline students/teachers when they break the rules..." (R26) • "Patrol the halls on a regular basis throughout the day…" (R32) • "Be present…" (R67)

The findings of this research study support the research by Finley, Plucker, and Slavkin (2000) which supported the need for frequent and open communication between school administration and teachers. Cornel and Sheras (1998) described the importance of school administrators in their being responsive to teacher and student needs when creating an environment of high structure and high support. Findings from the present research supports the findings of Cornel and Sheras (1998) that crisis planning and communication well in advance of a crisis event is crucial to perceptions of safety among teachers.

Research question 4: How does a principal's adherence to division safety policies influence teachers' feelings of safety? Item 25 of the survey posed the question "Does the existence of school system policies pertaining to student discipline and crises planning influence your feelings of safety as a teacher?" The open-ended question format provided the researcher with an opportunity to locate themes in the participant responses. The three themes that emerged from Item 25 were that policies had no influence on teachers' perceptions of safety, influence of policies did exist on perceptions of student safety because of administrations' enforcement of policy, and influence of policies on teachers' perceptions of safety did exist because of the use of those policies on administrative enforcement of student behavior. Table 28 displays in table format the findings of the themes indicated by the participants.

Table 28

Does the Existence of School System Policies Pertaining to Student Discipline and Crises Planning Influence Your Feelings of Safety as a Teacher?

Themes	Responses
1.	No influence
2.	Yes due to administrative enforcement of policy
3.	Yes due to administrative enforcement of student behavior

The findings from Question 4 of this study support the findings of Ricketts (2007) who found that teachers' knowledge and perception of effectiveness of school and division based safety policies were important to teachers' perceptions of safety and order within schools. The findings of this study also support the findings of Gottfredson, Gottfredson, and Payne (2000) who found that the enforcement of safety policy by administration is crucial to the effectiveness of the policies. Existence of the policies with a school and division without consistent enforcement, does not lead to perceptions of safety by teachers.

Implications

Based on the data and the findings from this study, there are several recommendations that should be considered when attempting to increase teachers' perceptions of safety within schools and classrooms. Recommendations are reported by each sub-question from the study.

Research question 1. What physical characteristics of school facilities contribute to feelings of safety for teachers? The quantitative data from the survey instrument reflects that the most important physical characteristics of a school that influences teachers' perceptions of safety occur in the following order: 1) Existence of a full time resource officer 2) Locked exterior doors 3) Having a classroom located inside of the building 4) Exterior/interior security cameras 5) Locked doors between the main office and the remainder of the building. The qualitative data from the survey instrument, which reflects teachers' responses to open ended questions, reflect that the ranking of school facility characteristics are as follows: 1) Resource officer 2) Locked doors and all classrooms located within one building 3) Existence of a well-rehearsed crises plan 4) Supportive school administration 5) Monitored security cameras on the exterior and interior of the school. The implications of the findings from sub-question one are to inform leaders in the educational field on the influence of physical characteristics of schools on teachers' perceptions of schools. During a time of limited funding for public schools, school divisions can utilize these data to prioritize spending on school facilities and resources which bring the greatest influence on teacher perceptions of safety. While funding is involved in the findings of some of the ranked characteristics of school, some of the ranked characteristics such as a supportive administration, crises planning and rehearsal, and supportive administration are facility characteristics that can be achieved through planning and training.

Research question 2. How do relationships with colleagues within the school environment influence perceptions of teacher safety? Implementation of strategies that would encourage and promote the positive relationships with colleagues would have influence on teachers' feelings of safety. Principals of schools and school division level administration should promote and build relationships among colleagues to increase teachers' perceptions of safety. The data from the qualitative portion of the survey instrument indicated that teachers generally valued colleague relationships during crises events and for emotional well-being at school. These findings provide support for the need to engage teachers in activities which support and assist in maintaining communication and positive colleague relationships.

Research question 3. How do the practices of school administrators influence feelings of safety in teachers? The presence of a supportive school principal was shown by the data from this study to have a positive influence on teachers' perceptions of safety. Establishing

a collaborative working environment within a school and at the school division level will have a positive influence on teachers' perceptions of safety. Administrative leadership programs should consider incorporating training for aspiring principals on the importance of enforcing policies and expectations, being responsive to teachers' concerns, and being visible within the school.

Research question 4: How does a principal's adherence to division safety policies influence teachers' feelings of safety? The data from this study indicates that a principal's adherence to division safety policies influence teachers' feelings of safety.
The data from this study are beneficial for school divisions for reiterating the importance of the consistent implementation and enforcement of school division policy pertaining to student discipline, visitor policy and crises planning. Each of these areas of findings have implications on understanding teachers' perceptions of safety as those feelings relate to the enforcement of policies at the school and school division levels when dealing discipline issues with students and navigating parental requests and challenges.

Suggestions for Future Studies

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of school factors on teachers' perceptions of safety at school and in their classrooms. However, the study population was limited to a rural school division in Southside Virginia. Future studies should consider expanding to school divisions outside of Southside Virginia to include urban school divisions. Furthermore, considerations should be given to employing a larger sample population in the study.

Future studies may want to delve deeper into the findings of this study by further exploring the themes that emerged in the qualitative portions of the study. Because the respondents indicated such a strong response to the influence of a resource officer on teacher perceptions of safety, it would be interesting to explore the beliefs and experiences behind those findings.

Lastly, future studies may want to consider employing face to face interviews and focus groups as part of the data collection for the qualitative data. This addition to the research methodology would allow for follow-up questions to the participant responses and to allow the researcher to expand on responses to help provide for data saturation and clarity.

Reflections

Overall, this study was successful with regard to survey deployment and data collection. The survey instrument was deployed uneventfully and the return rate was generally strong. The school system did have some disruption in school due to inclement weather and the survey period was extended from two weeks to four weeks. Some clarification was needed for participants on the definition of classroom teacher. Several librarians and related arts teachers were unsure if they were to answer the survey questions. After that clarification was provided, the participant participation increased.

Overall the research study was a positive experience and it was interesting to see survey responses as the electronic surveys were completed and submitted. The research study provided for some very interesting insights into the teachers' perceptions of safety within the school division. The level of detail that the teachers provided in the open ended questions of the survey varied greatly. While some teachers provided one word responses, other teachers went to great lengths to share their views and provide illustrative details to support their views. Throughout the study, it was evident that teachers were concerned about the topic school safety and that school leaders are employing school safety practices within their school buildings.

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APPENDIX A
SURVEY QUESTIONS

Electronic Survey

Teacher Characteristics
Please respond to each question below by selecting the response item that applies to you by filling in the blank.

1.   How many years have you been teaching (including this year)? _____

2.   What is your gender?

     ____ Female ____ Male

3.   What grade levels do you teach?

     _____Elementary
     _____Secondary

Research Questions
Please provide your opinion about each of the statements by selecting the most appropriate number using the following scale:
Strongly Disagree:1; Disagree:2; Uncertain:3; Agree: 4; Strongly Agree:5

4.   *I feel safe at school.*
     1   2   3   4   5

5.   *I am concerned about outside intruders coming into my school and committing acts of violence.*
     1   2   3   4   5

6.   *I am concerned for my safety due to student behavior.*
     1   2   3   4   5

7.   *Locked exterior doors make me feel safe at school.*
     1   2   3   4   5

8.   *Locked doors between the main office of the school and the remainder of the school that prevents visors from accessing the classrooms makes me feel safe.*
     1   2   3   4   5

9.   *Security cameras on the interior and exterior of a school make me feel safe at school.*
     1   2   3   4   5

10. *Having a classroom located inside the main school building makes me feel safe.*
    1   2   3   4   5

11. *I feel safe when I work in a school with colleagues who support me.*
    1   2   3   4   5

12. *My colleagues come to my aid during a critical student incident.*
    1   2   3   4   5

13. *Having an administrator who is visible during the school day makes me feel safe at school.*
    1   2   3   4   5

14. *Adherence to visitor policy by administration makes me feel safe at school.*
    1   2   3   4   5

15. *The administrative practices of my school principal important to my feelings of safety.*
    1   2   3   4   5

16. *The support of a building principal makes me feel safe at school.*
    1   2   3   4   5

17. *Are you knowledgeable about the school division safety policies?*
    1   2   3   4   5

18. *Having a school crises plan makes me feel safe at school.*
    1   2   3   4   5

19. *Having a school division wide crises plan makes me feel safe at school.*
    1   2   3   4   5

20. *It is important to my feelings of safety to have a resource officer in my school building.*
    1   2   3   4   5

21. *I feel as safe now as a teacher as I felt, or would have felt, ten years ago as a teacher.*
    1   2   3   4   5

22. *What do you feel are the most important school and classroom facility characteristics in making you feel safe as a teacher?*

23. *How do colleague relationships influence your feelings of safety as a teacher?*

24. *What advice would you give to new principals to increase teachers' perceptions of safety in schools?*

25. *Does the existence of school system policies pertaining to student discipline and crises planning influence your feelings of safety as a teacher? If so,how?*

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Participants in **Research Projects Involving Human Subjects**

Title of Project: What School Factors Influence Teachers' Perceptions of Safety in Their Classrooms and Schools?

Investigator(s): Nancy Hardie Leonard leonardn@ccps.k12.va.us,

I. The purpose of the study is to describe school factors that make teachers feel safe. When exploring teachers' feelings of safety within their schools and classrooms, four primary areas of teachers' work environments exists. Those four main areas are the physical environment in which teachers work, the relationships with colleagues, and the practices of administration and their adherence to division safety policies. The findings of this study will provide information to educational leaders regarding school building and classroom characteristics, teacher colleague relationships, and school leadership policy and practices that influence teachers' feelings of safety.

II. Procedures
As part of the study, you are asked to complete an electronic survey. Upon IRB approval, teachers will be contacted to request participation in the study. Teachers are invited to participate in data collection by completing the electronic survey. Participation is voluntary and will not affect your employment with your school division. The survey should take about 10 minutes and may be completed at any time during the data collection window. If you agree to participate in this study, please select 'yes' for the informed consent and continue on with the survey.

III. Risks
There are no risks with this research study. Please know that survey data will be submitted anonymously. The only identifying variables include: gender, school level, and years in teaching. Specific school data will not be disaggregated.

IV. Benefits
Please know that no promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality
All data will be collected anonymously. Informed consent data is the only identifiable information and, as such, will be stored separately. The only identifying variables include: gender, school level, and years in teaching. These data will be used to describe the sample population and will be coded to increase anonymity. Specific school data will not be disaggregated. At no time will the researchers release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent.

The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

VI. Compensation
Participation is this study does not include compensation. However, your valued time will add to the limited research regarding school factors contributing to feelings of safety for teachers.

VII. Subject's Consent
I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent. Choose 'yes' on the prompt above to grant consent and continue with the survey.

VIII. Freedom to Withdraw
It is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty.

Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a subject should not continue as a subject.

Should you withdraw or otherwise discontinue participation, you will be compensated for the portion of the project completed in accordance with the Compensation section of this document.

IX. Questions or Concerns
Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact one of the research investigators whose contact information is listed below:

Nancy Leonard – leonardn@ccps.k12.va.us   or 434-542-5151

Dr. Glen Earthman – earthman@vt.edu or 540-231-4561

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the VT IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore at moored@vt.edu or (540) 321-4991

APPENDIX C
LETTER TO TEACHERS

Teachers,

I am currently working on a research study as part of the requirements for a doctorate in Educational Leadership with Virginia Tech. Recently, the Charlotte County School Board and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) have granted me permission to conduct research for my study: What School Factors Influence Teachers' Perceptions of Safety in Their Classrooms and Schools?

As part of the study, I am surveying teachers currently working in elementary and secondary schools to gather data on to describe school factors that make teachers feel safe. When exploring teachers' feelings of safety within their schools and classrooms, four primary areas of teachers' work environments exists. Those four main areas are the physical environment in which teachers work, the relationships with colleagues, and the practices of administration and their adherence to division safety policies. The findings of this study will provide information to educational leaders regarding school building and classroom characteristics, teacher colleague relationships, and school leadership policy and practices that influence teachers' feelings of safety. Participation will involve completion of an electronic survey. The survey consists of 20 Likert scale rating questions and 5 open-ended questions, should take about 10 minutes, and can be completed at any time before Friday, February 12, 2016.

Please know that survey data will be submitted anonymously. The only identifying variables include: gender, school level, and years in teaching. Specific school data will not be disaggregated.

Consent for participation in the study will be requested at the beginning of the electronic survey. Since this is the only identifiable data, it will be stored separately to ensure anonymity.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nancy Leonard
Doctoral Candidate
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

APPENDIX D

HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL

VirginiaTech

Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board
North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech
300 Turner Street NW
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959
email irb@vt.edu
website http://www.irb.vt.edu

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 27, 2016

TO: Glen I Earthman, Nancy Hardie Leonard

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires July 29, 2020)

PROTOCOL TITLE: What School Factors Influence Teachers’ Perceptions of Safety

IRB NUMBER: 16-052

Effective January 26, 2016, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As:	**Exempt, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 2,4**
Protocol Approval Date:	**January 26, 2016**
Protocol Expiration Date:	**N/A**
Continuing Review Due Date*:	**N/A**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

Invent the Future