

THE EFFECTS OF PRINCIPAL SUPPORT ON GENERAL AND SPECIAL  
EDUCATORS' STRESS, JOB SATISFACTION, HEALTH, SCHOOL  
COMMITMENT, AND INTENT TO STAY IN TEACHING

by

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Special Education Administration

(ABSTRACT)

Principal support enhances the work-place environment and encourages teachers to do their best. Little is known, however, about the support behaviors of principals that teachers perceive to be important. Previous studies have focused on the 'broad concepts' of principal support without addressing specific behaviors. Therefore, a more comprehensive investigation is needed into what general and special education teachers consider important principal support behaviors.

The purpose of this study was to identify the support dimensions that both general and special education teachers perceive that they receive from their principals and determine which dimensions they consider most important. A secondary purpose was to investigate the effects of perceived principal support on teacher stress and personal health, job satisfaction, school commitment and intent to stay in teaching.

A Principal Support Questionnaire was developed to measure the support dimensions for this study. Support items were based on House's (1981) framework for support as well as summaries of open-ended interviews with teachers, and information gathered from the literature. Measures for stress, job satisfaction, school commitment, personal health, and intent to stay were adopted or modified from extant instruments. Questionnaires were mailed to a stratified random sample of 201 teachers of emotionally disturbed students (ED), 206 teachers of learning disabled students (LD), and 206 teachers of educable mentally handicapped (EMH) students. The population of general educators was formed by asking participating special educators to give a questionnaire to a general education teacher in their building. Response rates included; 55% from ED teachers, 68% from LD teachers, 62% from EMH teachers and 50% from general education teachers.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, linear contrast t-tests, one way analyses of variance and forward selection regression analyses. Post hoc tests were used to determine which means were significantly different from each other.

Major findings include: 1) special and general educators rated both the importance and extent of emotional support somewhat higher than the other support dimensions; 2) work related variables such as frequency of interaction with principal and camaraderie and optimism are better predictors

of the extent of support than are demographic variables; and  
3) extent of emotional, informational, and instrumental support are significant predictors of job satisfaction, school commitment and personal health.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT . . . . .	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS . . . . .	viii
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	xii
LIST OF FIGURES . . . . .	xiv
LIST OF APPENDICES . . . . .	xv
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Support Defined . . . . .	1
House's Framework of Support . . . . .	2
Effects of Principal Support . . . . .	3
Rationale for Study . . . . .	7
Purpose . . . . .	9
Definitions of Terms . . . . .	10
Outline of Study . . . . .	12
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE . . . . .	13
Introduction . . . . .	13
Stress and Burnout . . . . .	14
Stress Defined . . . . .	15
Burnout Defined . . . . .	17
Stress and Burnout in Human Services . . . . .	19
Stressors . . . . .	19
Teacher's Perceptions of Stress/Burnout . . . . .	22

Factors Associated with Stress and Burnout  
Among General and Special Educators . . . . . 24

Studies Comparing General and Special  
Educators . . . . . 32

Social Support . . . . . 33

    Support Defined . . . . . 34

    Importance of Support . . . . . 36

    Administrators/Principals: A Source of  
    Support . . . . . 37

    Outcomes of Support . . . . . 39

Teachers' Perceptions of Administrative  
Support/Non-Support . . . . . 46

    Supportive Behavior . . . . . 46

    Non-Supportive Behavior . . . . . 48

Summary . . . . . 50

Needs for Further Study . . . . . 51

III. METHODOLOGY . . . . . 54

    Purpose and Research Questions . . . . . 54

    Procedure . . . . . 55

        Questionnaire Method and Rationale . . . . . 55

        Sample . . . . . 56

    Description of the Instrument . . . . . 57

        Support Measures . . . . . 58

        Additional Support Items . . . . . 59

        Job Satisfaction Measure . . . . . 60

        Job Stress Measure . . . . . 60

        School Commitment Measure . . . . . 60

	Intent to Stay Measure . . . . .	61
	Personal Health Measure . . . . .	61
	Demographic and Miscellaneous . . . . .	61
	Development, Field-testing, and Distribution of Instrument . . . . .	62
	Item Selection . . . . .	62
	Field Testing . . . . .	64
	Mailing the Questionnaire . . . . .	64
	Data Analysis . . . . .	65
	Methodological Limitation and Problems that Occurred . . . . .	66
	Summary . . . . .	69
IV.	RESULTS . . . . .	71
	Summary of Response Rates . . . . .	71
	Demographic and Miscellaneous Information . . . . .	72
	Characteristics of Respondents . . . . .	72
	Characteristics of School Environment . . . . .	76
	Research Questions and Results . . . . .	80
	Research Questions One and Two . . . . .	80
	Research Question Three . . . . .	95
	Research Question Four . . . . .	101
	Additional Findings . . . . .	105
	Question: To what extent can demographic and other miscellaneous variables along with job satisfaction, stress, school commitment, personal health and extent of principal support predict how long a person intends to stay in teaching? . . . . .	105

	Question: Do general and special education teachers experience significantly different feelings about job satisfaction, school commitment, stress, personal health and intent stay in teaching? . . . . .	106
	Question: Who usually provides the most support to general and special educators and is their support considered important? .	109
	Summary of Results . . . . .	113
V.	DISCUSSION . . . . .	118
	Importance of Support . . . . .	118
	Extent of Support . . . . .	128
	Comparison Between General and Special Education Teachers on Extent and Importance of Support . . . . .	131
	Effects of Support . . . . .	132
	Intent to Stay in Teaching . . . . .	136
	Implications for Educational Agencies . . . . .	138
	Suggestions for Future Research . . . . .	140
	REFERENCES . . . . .	143
	APPENDICES . . . . .	157
	VITA . . . . .	202

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1: Cronbach's Alpha . . . . .	67
2: Summary of Distribution and Return Rate . . . . .	73
3: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample . . . . .	74
4: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample . . . . .	75
5: Frequency and Percent of Socioeconomic Level of Students Taught by the Sample . . . . .	78
6: Means, Standard Deviations and Ranges of School Environment Items Among the Sample . . . . .	79
7: Extent and Importance of Support Subscales: Emotional, Appraisal, Informational and Instrumental . . . . .	82
8: Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranking for Extent and Importance of Emotional Support Items Among Special and General Educators . . . . .	88
9: Means, Standard Deviations, and Rankings for Extent and Importance of Appraisal Support Items Among Special and General Educators . . . . .	90
10: Means, Standard Deviations, and Rankings for Extent and Importance of Informational Support Items Among Special and General Educators . . . . .	92
11: Means, Standard Deviations, and Rankings for Extent and Importance of Instrumental Support Items Among Special and General Educators . . . . .	93
12: Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations Among Variables for Descriptive Statistics Among Special Educators . . . . .	96
13: Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations Among Variables for Descriptive Statistics Among General Educators . . . . .	97

Table	Page
14: Cross Validation Results of Forward Selection Regression Showing Metric Equations for Predicting Extent and Importance of Support Expressed by Special Education Teachers . . . . .	99
15: Cross Validation Results of Forward Selection Regression Showing Metric Equations for Predicting Extent and Importance of Support Expressed by General Education Teachers . . . . .	100
16: Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations Among Variables for Descriptive Statistics Among General and Special Educators . . . . .	103
17: Cross Validation Results of Forward Selected Regression Showing Metric Equations for Predicting Job Satisfaction, Stress, School Commitment, Personal Health, and Intent to Stay Among General and Special Educators . . . . .	104
18: Response Frequencies (Percentages) to Intention to Stay in Teaching . . . . .	107
19: Double Cross Validation Results of Forward Selections Regression to Predict Intent to Stay in Teaching . . . . .	108
20: Between Group Comparisons of Respondents' Expressions of Job Satisfaction, Stress, Commitment, Personal Health, and Intent to Stay in Teaching . . . . .	110
21: Extent and Importance of Support Ratings Received from Various Sources Across All Groups . . . . .	112
22: Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations of the Respondents' Perceptions of the Extent and Importance of Principal's Supportive Behaviors . .	195

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1: House's (1981) Typology of the Four Dimensions of Support and their Effects on Selected Dependent Variables . . . . .	4

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Page
A. Questionnaire . . . . .	157
B. Interview Questions . . . . .	166
C. Support Descriptors . . . . .	170
D. Correspondence with Dr. House and Resulting Specification Chart . . . . .	175
E. Cover Letters Used in Mailing Packet . . . . .	186
F. Reminder Letter . . . . .	189
G. Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations of the Respondents' Perceptions of the Extent and Importance of Principal's Supportive Behaviors . . . . .	194

CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Principal support is so powerful that it effects the feelings that teachers have about themselves and their work (Fimian, 1986a, 1986b, 1987; Halpin and Croft, 1963; Lortie, 1975). For example, supportive principals enhance the workplace environment and encourage teachers to do their best (Blase, 1987; Fimian, 1986b; LaRocco & Jones, 1978; Rosenholtz, 1987; Werner, 1980); whereas, non-supportive principals create an atmosphere of ill will and helplessness (Blase, 1987; Caplan, 1974; Fibkin, 1983; Rosenholtz, 1987).

Yet, providing support is not a simple task because educators need help in a variety of areas, from assistance with everyday tasks to recognition and respect. Since principal support plays such an important role in the professional development of both general (Blase, 1987; Castetter, 1976; Lortie, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1987) and special educators (Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Breton & Donaldson, 1991; Fimian, 1986b; Lawrenson & McKinnon, 1982), the next section focuses on the meaning of support.

Support Defined

Support is a multidimensional concept that includes a wide range of activities (Caplan, 1974; Gottlieb, 1978; House, 1981; Kahn & Antonucci, 1980; Pinneau, 1976). Principals can provide support by assisting with student

discipline problems, providing opportunities for curriculum leadership, promoting teacher morale, and providing materials for learning activities (Lortie, 1975). Principals can define goals and seek teacher input (Blase, 1987), help teachers cope with stress and burnout (Dworkin, Haney, Dworkin & Telschow, 1990), facilitate professional development (Pajak, 1990), supply helpful feedback and encouragement for their efforts (Rosenholtz, 1989), and provide time to plan and create lessons and complete paperwork (George, George, & Grosenick, 1991; Taylor & Salend, 1983).

Due to the multidimensional domains of support, House (1981), proposed that support could be divided under broad dimensions of behaviors. A discussion of House's framework of support follows.

#### House's Framework of Support

House's (1981) theoretical framework of support suggests that support is an interpersonal transaction involving one or more of the following dimensions of behaviors: 1) emotional support, (liking, love, and empathy); 2) instrumental support (providing goods and services, money, labor, time, or modification of the environment); 3) informational support (providing advice, suggestions, directions, and information about the environment); and 4) appraisal support (providing information relevant to self esteem, affirmation, feedback and social comparison). Figure 1 presents a schematic

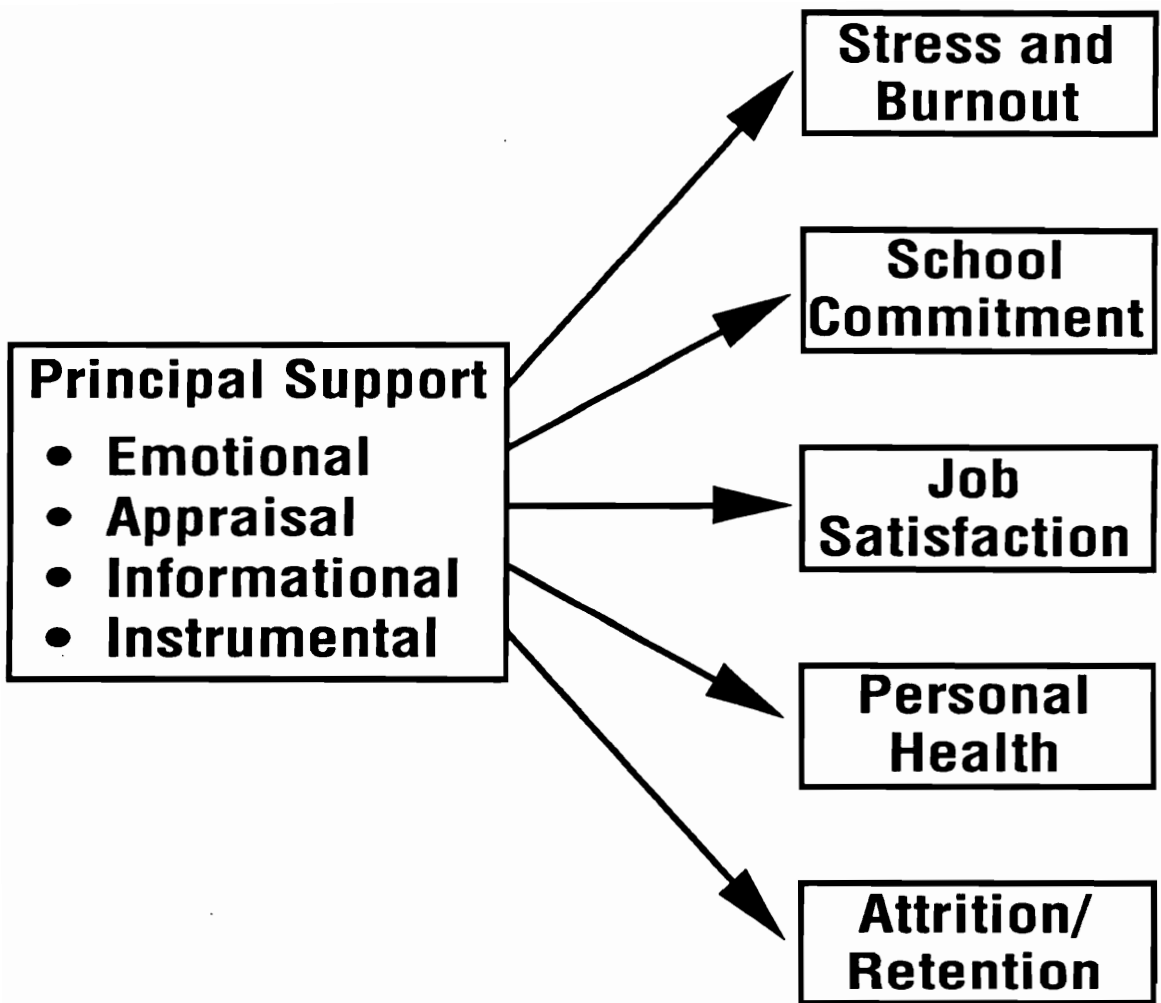
representation illustrating the four broad dimensions of principal support behaviors as they relate to House's theoretical framework of support and the important effects of this support. An overview of the effects of principal support as suggested in the literature follows.

### Effects of Principal Support

Principals have a great deal of power and control over their staff (Dworkin, 1987). Supportive behavior from principals can be a source of reward and an effective form of professional development (Dworkin, 1987; Rosenholtz, 1989; Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, & Bernstein, 1985); on the other hand, non-supportive behaviors can lead teachers to feel frustrated and unimportant (Dworkin, 1987; Rosenholtz, 1989). The consistent finding communicated here is that principal support (sometimes referred to as administrative support) is powerful enough to establish either a productive or non-productive environment for teachers. The following section outlines more specific effects of principal support.

1. Principal support decreases stress and burnout.

Principal support is crucial in breaking the link between stress and burnout (Blase, 1982; Dworkin, 1987) and it is the most promising approach to the problems of stress and burnout (Lawrenson & McKinnon 1982; Maslach & Jackson, 1981).



**Figure 1.** House's (1981) typology of the four dimensions of support and their effects on selected dependent variables.

Teachers who receive more support experience less stress and burnout (Fimian, 1987) and they are better able to cope with stressful events (Blase, 1982).

Support reduces stress through communication and mutual obligation (Cobb, 1978). By exercising recognition and approval, providing constructive feedback, and encouraging professional growth, principals communicate to teachers that their work is meaningful and that they are valued. Teachers who believe they make a difference contribute more to the organizational network, increase their participation in activities and work harder to succeed (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982).

High levels of principal support also help teachers' performance in the classroom (Blase, Dedrick, & Strathe, 1986) by lowering their level of stress. Lower stress levels generate a more positive working environment that encourages cooperation and consideration (Cohen, 1980), whereas, stressful working conditions sap time and energy needed for task performance (Cohen, 1980).

2. Supportive principals increase the commitment of general and special educators and are more likely to retain teachers.

Research indicates a positive relationship between leadership support or consideration and commitment (Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Glisson & Durick, 1988; Morris &

Sherman, 1981). In schools, the control that principals have over their staff allows them to shape the organizational conditions under which teachers work and the definitions of teaching they come to acquire (Rosenholtz, 1989). Teachers are more committed when principals offer feedback, encouragement, acknowledgement, collective decision making and collaboration (Rosenholtz, 1989).

Principal support is considered as a factor in teacher retention and attrition. For example, Billingsley and Cross (1992) report that intent to stay in teaching was higher among teachers who received higher levels of administrative support. Several other studies found that lack of administrative support was one of the strongest and most frequently cited sources of attrition among special educators (Billingsley & Cross, 1991; Fimian, 1986a, 1986b). Without support, teachers are easily overwhelmed by their job demands, become frustrated, and feel alone (George et al., in press). These negative experiences cause many of the best and most academically talented teachers to leave teaching (Akin, 1988; Darling-Hammond, 1984; Lyson & Falk, 1984; Rosenholtz, 1989); many others who stay often lose their effectiveness and on the job commitment (Dworkin, 1987; Murnane, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1989).

3. Principal support positively affects teachers' job satisfaction.

Many of the same variables that predict commitment also predict job satisfaction. For example, principals who are considerate (Blase et al., 1986); encourage participation in decision making (Knoop, 1981); provide recognition and approval (Bredeson, Fruth & Kasten, 1983; Chapman & Lowther, 1982); trust teachers to work in a responsible way (McGregor, 1960); and encourage interpersonal relationships in the school environment (Sparks, 1979), have teachers who are more satisfied with their jobs.

4. Educators' personal health can be adversely affected by non-supportive behaviors.

Management policies and regulations contribute to stress which contributes to illness behaviors (Cichon & Koff, 1980) such as heart disease, ulcers, mental illnesses and alcoholism, (Sales & House, 1971), as well as headaches, fatigue, sleeplessness, depression, anxiety and irritability (Needle, Griffin, Svendsen, & Berney, 1980). Teachers receiving principal support function better both mentally and physically in schools where principals communicate to the teachers that they are valued colleagues (Dworkin, et al., 1990).

#### Rationale for Study

Although professional literature indicates that principal/administrative support is important (Dworkin, 1987; Fimian & Santoro, 1983; Lawrenson & McKinnon, 1982; Needle et

al., 1980; Zabel & Zabel 1983), they offer only a general account of the nature of support principals may provide special and general education teachers. This writer was able to find only a few studies dealing directly with what educators believe constitute principal/administrative support (Schetz & Billingsley, in press; Tyler, 1987). Tyler (1987) analyzed special educator's perceptions of building level and central office support. However, Tyler did not use a comprehensive framework to guide her study and she did not look at the effects of support on important dependent variables (e.g., job satisfaction, stress and health, and school commitment) or address support needs of special educators teaching different disability groups. In addition, her study did not address differences in support needs between general and special educators. The qualitative report by Schetz & Billingsley (in press) provides a comprehensive description of speech-language pathologists' views of support, but it includes only a small sample of one group of special educators.

The study of principal support is important because it gives principals information about what might be done to help attract and maintain the best and most qualified teachers, enhance the workplace so that teachers do their jobs better, and reduce stressful experiences that may lead to burnout and high absenteeism. Exploring the types of supportive behaviors

that teachers consider important verses the support they currently receive might ultimately help establish examples of what kind of leadership qualities teachers consider important in creating a more satisfied and committed workforce.

#### Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to identify teachers' perceptions of principal support by identifying the types of principal support that both general and special education teachers report receiving and determine which of these types of support are considered most important. This study also investigated the effects of overall support on teacher stress, job satisfaction, school commitment, personal health, and intent to stay in teaching. House's (1981) social support framework, findings from a comprehensive literature review, and open ended interviews with teachers in elementary and secondary schools were used to generate the support items used in this study.

The research questions that guided this study include:

1. What areas of principal support are considered the most important to special and general education teachers?
2. To what extent do general and special educators report receiving principal support?
3. What relationship does gender, age, race, experience, levels and types of students taught, and other work

related variables have with perceived extent and importance of support?

4. What is the relative importance of the different types of perceived support in predicting teacher stress, personal health, job satisfaction, school commitment and intent to stay in teaching?

#### Definitions of Terms

To have a better understanding of the context of this study some of the commonly used terms are identified.

##### Students with mild disabilities:

This includes students identified as having learning disabilities (LD), emotional disturbance (ED), or educable mentally handicapping (EMH) conditions based on Virginia regulations. The Virginia State Department of Education codes EMH students EMR (educable mentally retarded) but many local education associations in Virginia use the term EMH. For this study EMH is used when referring to EMR students or programs.

##### General educators (GE):

Virginia public school teachers who are teaching in general elementary and secondary classrooms.

##### Special educators (SPED) :

Virginia public school teachers who only teach students with mild disabilities such as; emotionally disturbed (ED), learning disabled (LD), and educable mentally retarded (EMH).

Administrative/Principal support:

Support provided by the principal that includes four broad types of behaviors: 1) emotional support (liking, love, and empathy) 2) appraisal support (providing information relevant to self esteem, affirmation, feedback and social comparison) 3) instrumental support (providing goods and services, money, labor, time, or modification of the environment), and 4) informational support (providing advice, suggestions, directions, and information about the environment), (House, 1981).

School Commitment:

School commitment is a motivation, a willingness to work, and a dedication to the school (Price, 1977).

Personal Health:

The extent of physical and mental well-being experienced by teachers.

Job Satisfaction:

A positive emotional state formed by working in an environment that provides appropriate working conditions such as opportunities for promotion and advancement, adequate salaries and benefits, decision making opportunities, as well as security and permanence. Additionally, it includes positive interactions with the principal and colleagues, wherein, teachers gain a sense of contribution and importance, that they make a difference.

Stress:

An emotional experience associated with elements of fear, dread, anxiety, irritation, annoyance, anger, sadness, grief, and depression (Motowidlo, Manning & Packard, 1986).

Burnout:

A negative reaction to prolonged stress; feeling inconsequential, no matter how hard one works, the payoffs are not there (Zabel & Zabel, 1983).

Outline of the Study

Chapter two provides a review of related research literature on support and related variables. Descriptions of both supportive and non supportive administrative behaviors are discussed to provide a framework for effective principal support.

Chapter three describes the methodology for this study. It includes the design of the study, the procedures for developing and field testing the instrument, respondent selections, and questionnaire distribution.

Chapter four presents the statistical techniques and the results of the study. A discussion of the study findings and implications for educational agencies are presented in chapter five.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

In recent years, attention has been given to understanding the stress and burnout teachers experience (Dworkin, Haney, Dworkin, Telschow, 1990). Researchers point out that stress and its consequences are nationwide problems facing the American educational system (Haris, Halpin, and Halpin, 1985; McGuire, 1979; Weiskopf, 1980). Researchers have identified some of the sources of stress and the kinds of consequences these stressful events create for teachers (Blase, 1982). These sources are referred to as stressors. Stressors, defined by Blase are work-related variables which tend to interfere with teacher work effort, deplete valuable time and energy, and cause tension in teachers.

One leading cause of stress for both general and special education teachers is lack of administrative support (Blase, 1984b, 1985, 1987; Cichon & Koff, 1980; Farber, 1982; Fimian, 1987; Fimian & Blanton, 1986; Fullan, 1985; Needle et al., 1980; Rosenholtz, 1989; Zabel & Zabel, 1982). Teachers not receiving supervisory or administrative support experience significantly stronger and more frequent work related stress, low morale, and higher attrition (Fimian 1986a, 1986b; Zabel & Zabel, 1982). These stressful situations cause teachers to

experience emotional and physical exhaustion which the literature calls burnout (Cook & Leffingwell, 1982).

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research studies identifying stressors that lead to burnout in human service professions, particularly in the teaching profession, and the connection that administrative and supervisory support plays in alleviating work related stress and burnout. Research is presented linking principal support as a key moderator to teachers' job attitudes and the amount of stress and burnout they experience.

The following review is organized into five major sections that include: 1) definitions and descriptions of stress and burnout; 2) research on occupational stress in human services with a focus on the stress encountered by both general and special educators; 3) research findings related to administrative support; 4) teachers' perceptions of support and non support and 5) finally, needs for further study.

#### Stress and Burnout

Stress and burnout are experienced in all professions but especially by individuals employed in human service professions. Work attitudes and feelings are influenced by the amount of stress and burnout individuals experience. Stress and burnout are important since they may affect the

quality of care and treatment that professionals give their clients (Cherniss, 1980) and the satisfaction they find in their work.

The following sections include discussions about the definitions of stress and burnout, and stressors associated with the human service profession. Further, since stress is linked to teaching, a review of the literature will look at teachers' perceptions of stress and the type of stressors that are problems for them.

### Stress Defined

Formulating a clear and comprehensive concept of stress is difficult because it is somewhat like the elusive concept of love: everyone knows what it means but no one would define it exactly the same way (Rice, 1987). It is considered a situation-specific word that assumes various meanings according to the situation or context in which it is used (Dobson, 1982). Therefore, stress is enshrouded by a thick veil of conceptual confusion and divergence of opinion (Motowidlo, Manning, Packard (1986). This is confirmed by the multiple meanings, varied causes and effects attributed to stress in the literature.

A search of the literature reveals that there are over three hundred definitions of stress and words which are similar to it (Dobson, 1982). Among those definitions of stress are those proposed by Lazarus, Deese, and Osler (1952),

who view stress as an intervening variable with antecedent causes and behavioral consequences. Lazarus (1976) reports that stress is concerned with the way a person perceives and evaluates his/her situation within the environment. Lazarus provides us with an interactional definition of stress claiming that "stress is experienced when there are demands on the person which tax or exceed his adjustive resources" (p. 22). Woolfolk and Richardson (1979) join with Lazarus in proposing that stress is dictated according to the way we perceive and interpret things. Motowidlo et al., (1986) define stress as an "unpleasant emotional experience associated with elements of fear, dread, anxiety, irritation, annoyance, anger, sadness, grief, and depression" (p. 618). King, Stanley, and Burrows (1987) state that "stress arises from doubts about coping" (p. 3).

It is obvious that stress is an umbrella term that could be used for other concepts such as strain, conflict, frustration, anxiety, pressure and so on (Dobson, 1982; Rice, 1987). As a matter of fact, the Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary defines stress as "strain; pressure; especially....force exerted upon a body, that tends to strain or deform its shape".

Stress is a natural and unavoidable process of life because as Skinner (1980) puts it, stress is the friction that results when an individual interacts with his environment.

Whether positive or negative, stress causes a reaction within the body (Greenberg & Valletutti, 1980). It affects a person's ability to cope with the normal anxieties of life and is a primary cause of physical, mental and psychosomatic illnesses (Dworkin, 1987; Greenberg & Valletutti, 1980; House, 1981). Most individuals learn to meet the demands of stressful situations by reorganizing their behaviors in a competent and creative fashion thus alleviating debilitating stress. However, as Skinner (1980) states, when stressful situations become elevated and exceed our coping abilities, an imbalance occurs. Emotional disturbance, illness, or even death may result (Skinner, 1980).

When this imbalance of stressful experiences occurs, workers' attitudes suffer. They develop negative patterns of behavior, become angry and exhibit feelings of depression. Stress, then, becomes a debilitating force (Tyler, 1987) with the potential to disrupt or limit a person's day to day functioning. It is this force that causes people to exhibit signs of burnout.

#### Burnout Defined

Burnout is a negative reaction to prolonged stress; a coping mechanism used by people to deal with stress and strain. It has captured the attention of those involved in human services because it is considered to be a major cause of

job dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization of those whom one serves, and psychological disengagement from the job (Cherniss, 1980; Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Burnout is the result of being stressed and "having no 'out', no buffers, no support system, no adequate rewards" (Farber, 1984, p.326). It is a response to an intolerable work/life situation and it begins when a worker experiences stress and strain that cannot be alleviated through active problem solving (Cherniss, 1980). Swogger (1985) defines burnout as a special form of stress that is a result of the reaction of a person to organizational or work pressures. Cherniss (1980), and Maslach and Jackson (1981) suggest that burnout is a slow-moving process consisting of three stages. The first stage is increased feelings of emotional exhaustion in which workers feel they are no longer able to give of themselves. The second stage is the development of detachment mechanisms such as negative, cynical attitudes and feelings (loss of caring) about work and their clients. A third stage of the burnout syndrome is the tendency to evaluate one's self negatively. Workers feel unhappy about themselves and dissatisfied with their accomplishments on the job. In general, burnout is a function of feeling inconsequential, that no matter how hard one works, the payoffs are not there.

Such feelings are believed to have serious side effects for professionals, for clients, and the institutions in which they work (Zabel & Zabel, 1982).

### Stress and Burnout in Human Services ✓

The stress and burnout experienced by human service professionals is not unlike the stress and burnout experienced in many other professions; however, the degree of stress or the greater number of stressors experienced within a given period may set the human service field apart from other professions (Greenburg & Valletutti, 1980). As a result, human service professionals find that their ability to cope diminishes rather quickly and they begin to experience burnout as well as mental and physical illnesses. These individuals' day to day functioning is affected as well as the clients' treatments. Because stress and burnout have this potential, it is important to understand the stressors that are associated with work in the human service profession.

### Stressors

Many factors influence why individuals in the various helping professions (those who 'do people work' such as doctors, nurses, social workers, lawyers, counselors, teachers, police officers, women, and ministers) are more affected by burnout. For example, these individuals are more intensely involved with the problems of others. Also, the

solutions to their problems are not obvious or easily obtained. Such chronic stress can be emotionally draining and pose a greater risk of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

In addition, those in the human services and helping professions are expected to serve too many people with too few resources at their disposal (Greenberg & Valetutti, 1980; Pratt, 1978): including excessive or irregular work hours (Greenberg & Valetutti, 1980; Zabel & Zabel, 1983), excessive paperwork (Billingsley & Cross, 1991), and a shortage of available support staff. The consequences of this overload can lead to a deterioration in the quality and care of services, absenteeism, low morale, job turnover, physical exhaustion, insomnia, increased use of alcohol and drugs, and marital and family problems (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). In short, too much work is expected in too short a time.

Client attitudes may contribute to burnout for human service professionals because clients are reluctant participants in some situations (Blase, 1984b; Greenberg & Valetutti, 1980) and often do not appreciate professionals' responsibilities. For example relationships such as: doctor to patient, social worker to client, teacher to student and police officer to citizen may result in unpleasant circumstances that cause stress for everyone. Human service professionals may also experience stress when working with people against whom he or she is biased (Greenberg &

Valletutti, 1980). Eventually these unpleasant situations lead to burnout for many human service professionals because they experience these situations daily.

Stressors are experienced by human service professionals through their interactions with supervisors and administrators. For example, studies have identified role ambiguity (Crane & Iwanicki, 1986) as particularly stressful. Many of the tasks to be performed by human service professionals are poorly defined leaving a discrepancy between what an individual thinks he or she should be doing and the intent of his or her superiors. The management style of administrators and supervisors (Farber, 1982, 1984) contribute to stress: such as directives that are not clear, not allowing professionals to exert control over their job (Dworkin, 1987), lack of recognition and concern (Fimian & Blanton, 1986; Fimian & Santoro, 1983), and being given little authority to control or make major decisions concerning long range planning and follow-up activities (Greenberg & Valletutti, 1980).

Lack of promotional opportunities and inadequate salaries, as well as inadequate fringe benefits and job security (Needle et al., 1981) also contribute to burnout. Working long hours with little pay and only cost of living increases along with involuntary transfers cause these professionals to become very frustrated.

Other dimensions of stress center around job content or

the challenge of the task itself (Needle et al., 1981). Bureaucratization may result in increased routinization and mundaneness of work activities. Professionals feel unchallenged.

Public criticism (Lortie, 1975) causes stress for human service workers. Trying to serve the public and at the same time being criticized by the public causes human service workers to feel bad about their work. Ignoring the impact of stress and the signs that the body and mind are reacting to stressors can be a mild and slow form of suicide (Greenberg & Valletutti, 1980).

#### Teachers' Perceptions of Stress/Burnout ✓

Teachers experience many of the same stressors outlined above. This section presents a discussion of stress and burnout specific to teachers and what factors cause burnout for both general and special education teachers.

Occupational stress among teachers has been researched since the 1930's. Most of this research identified burnout as any negative response to work stress; however, this fails to provide a total picture of the many factors important to teacher stress and burnout.

Recently, Blase (1982) proposed that teachers experience a 'burning out cycle' because stress appears in two forms, short and long term. Short term stress is experienced by new teachers who face the initial problems of teaching. These

problems involve inadequacies in their knowledge of subject matter and techniques of instruction, time management skills, discipline, and social relationships with students (Blase, 1982); in essence the fundamental skills needed for teaching. Experienced teachers have survived these initial problems and gone on to develop technical, psychological, and social coping resources to work effectively with students (Blase, 1982).

It is these resources that are exhausted as a result of excessive exposure to the burning out cycle. For example, when the failure to achieve valued outcomes with students persist, a degenerative consequence occurs. Teachers "become less motivated, and will expend less effort in student directed activity" (Blase, 1982 p. 109). This ineffective interaction continues until the teacher begins to exhibit low levels of work involvement. These teachers lose their enthusiasm, creativity, and concerns about their students.

Blase (1982) suggests that this burnout occurs "when teachers can no longer cope with student apathy, student discipline, poor student attendance, paperwork, preparation work, irresponsible teachers, obtrusive supervisors, and non-supportive parents" (Blase, 1982 p. 103). "The absence of equitable rewards in relation to the demands of work-related stressors," (Blase, 1982, p.109) add more fuel to the burning out cycle. These teachers succumb to the stressors that permeate the teaching environment itself (Cook & Leffingwell,

1982). As a result, degenerative consequences occur, the teacher becomes less involved, less motivated, and dissatisfied with his/her work (Blase, 1982; Blase et al., 1986).

In summary, it is the day to day exposure to harassing experiences that causes teachers to burnout. This burnout is slow and leaves indelible marks on the individual (Greenberg & Valletutti, 1980).

#### Factors Associated with Stress and Burnout Among General and Special Educators

Although stress and burnout are situation specific and are viewed differently by each individual due to personal characteristics such as personality or home environment, researchers have still been able to identify some common stressors experienced by general and special educators. The following section provides examples of what general educators and special educators consider stressful situations.

Students. The home background of the children taught may play an influential role in creating stress. Teachers dealing with children who come from areas where there are large numbers of financially deprived homes were found to experience more stress (Pratt, 1978). As these children grow older they also become more non-cooperative and aggressive. Such situations make teachers feel that they are policing rather than teaching (Conley, Bacharach, & Bauer, 1989).

High on the list of 'priority concerns' reported by general education teachers are classroom related concerns such as, discipline problems and student violence (Cichon & Koff, 1980), high classroom enrollment (Lortie, 1975), being expected to meet the needs of every student (Lortie, 1975), lack of student efforts and being responsible for their students' future (Milstein & Golaszewski, 1985). Many of these concerns are out of the teachers' control but yet in the end they feel responsible.

General educators sometimes view special education students as obstacles to their professional goals rather than challenges (Blase, 1987). Special education students are sometimes slower learners and/or exhibit discipline problems that take up class time. In such instances, general educators feel that special education students take too much time from their other classroom duties and responsibilities, thus causing stress.

Discipline problems are also concerns of special educators because the discipline policies in their schools are often inadequate and make few allowances for special education students (Fimian & Santoro, 1983). When special education students are blamed for rule infractions they are often treated too harshly. Special educators are left with the responsibility of remediating the behavior and trying to improve the image of their students.

The size and variety of disabilities among the caseloads of each special education teacher is increasing because of a shortage of certified special educators (Helge, 1984; A Free Appropriate Education, 1989). Teachers leave for a variety of reasons, but many special educators leave because they feel the cost of continuing is too high (Singer, in press). As a result, special educators who stay, serve many different roles due to a lack of additional support personnel. These extra duties cause specialists to feel guilty because they do not have time to meet the individual needs of their students (Fimian & Santoro, 1983). These circumstances may lead to exhaustion and burnout among special educators.

Due to the students' lower abilities and lack of motivation, special educators often experience minimal and infrequent pupil progress (Beck & Gargiulo, 1983; Fimian & Santoro, 1983); whereas, general educators are more likely to hear about the successes and accomplishments of their students (Chandler, 1983). This is particularly stressful for specialists because teachers tend to measure their own effectiveness according to their students' growth.

Specialists must also provide custodial and managerial tasks that require excessive amounts of direct contact with their children. These responsibilities limit interpersonal relationships with other teachers and may contribute to burnout (Beck & Gargiulo, 1983).

✓ Autonomy. Teachers view themselves as professionals and therefore expect a high level of autonomy: they expect to be trusted and able to make their own judgments, and to be involved in decision making. However, the bureaucracy within a school system often conflicts with the role teachers feel they should have. Teachers experience 'management tension' (Cichon & Koff, 1980) because they are subject to involuntary transfers, program reorganization and disagreements with administrators. The profession requires high performance and accountability from teachers, but seldom gives the authority to the teachers to do what they believe appropriate to provide quality services (Cichon & Koff, 1980). Too much direction and control reduces teachers into believing they are not important, their job is routinized and lacks challenge (Conley et al., 1989; Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982). This lack of control also undermines the relationships they have with students (Lortie, 1975).

Lack of Rewards and Opportunities. A study conducted by Sarros and Sarros (1987) found that teachers experience more 'Personal Accomplishment' burnout than other helping professions. For example, both general and special educators feel schools provide few opportunities for professional growth and advancement for those in teaching (Carnegie Forum, 1986; Fimian, Pierson, & McHardy, 1986). Promotions are scarce so teachers feel blocked into their careers (Dworkin, 1987).

Often too, the promotion process is viewed as non-rational. Promotions to administrative positions are often granted unfairly and are not based on competence (Conley et al., 1989).

Inadequate salaries are another stressor (Fimian et al., 1986). Many educators, both general and special, have advanced degrees but receive less money than those in other occupations with the same amount of education. Salaries for teachers are also front loaded to attract newcomers into the profession but provide fewer monetary incentives for experienced teachers (Lortie, 1975).

Lack of interaction and communication among teachers and supervisors isolates teachers and prohibits professional growth. They do not have the opportunity to exchange information needed to perform their jobs (Zielinske & Hoy, 1983). Without opportunities to share their concerns, teachers fail to gain the confidence and bondage to their work (Becker, 1960) that results in commitment and satisfaction. This type of professional isolation is particularly debilitating for beginning teachers who need to learn valuable information from their principals as well as their peers (Lortie, 1975).

Teachers are often held accountable for the academic performance and behavior of the students they teach. At the same time, teachers maintain a high amount of concern about

their own performance (Cichon & Koff, 1980). Teachers want to do a good job and have a positive effect on their students (Cichon & Koff, 1980) but they do not always see themselves accomplishing this. It is difficult to maintain self-control, deal with below average students, effectively manage discipline problems, understand apathetic students and parents and at the same time handle professional responsibilities. In their efforts to fulfill their own role expectations, teachers often experience shame and guilt about their behavior at work.

Poor public opinion about the teaching profession (Lortie, 1975) contributes to the unsuccessful feelings of teachers. Teachers are blamed for the shortcomings of students. Often, the public suggests that the poorest college students go into teaching (Dworkin, 1987); therefore, students are not prepared for the future because they are not exposed to quality teaching.

Time Demands. General education teachers experience stress in dealing with daily time pressures (Leach, 1984). It is difficult to get everything done with the students each day and find the time to prepare lessons and materials and attend professional meetings. Clerical activities, extracurricular responsibilities, and class interruptions (National Education Association, 1967) all contribute to the time management problems of teachers.

The fast pace of the school day is also considered a stressor by specialists (Fimian & Santoro, 1983). Special educators usually have to work around the general education teachers' schedules and other school programs. As a result, the pace of their work-day is confusing and stressful, grouping is difficult, there is little time to prepare for the various individual needs of the students, and often there is an uneven dispersion of students throughout the day.

Fimian and Santoro (1983) surveyed 365 special education teachers and found that special educators felt that their profession was taking precedence over their personal priorities. Too often, the demands of work mean having little time left for their families or themselves because they must stay late each day and even carry work home with them to get everything done.

State and federal mandates, like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, formerly Education of the Handicapped Act), have placed time consuming responsibilities on special education teachers (Beck & Gargiulo, 1983). Finding the time to teach, complete the necessary paperwork, hold annual conferences and reviews, along with attending the professional meetings is very stressful. Specialists find they have little time for adequate preparation.

Role Ambiguity. Billingsley and Cross (1992) found that special educators experience greater role ambiguity than

general educators. Special educators often find themselves working under a variety of administrators each with a different idea of their role and responsibilities (Fimian & Blanton, 1986; Reetz, 1987). Traditionally, special educators work under a building principal and a special education administrator or coordinator. In some settings, special educators are itinerant teachers and spend their days among many schools answering to several administrators and functioning in a variety of school programs. Because special educators often perform multiple roles (student advocate, consultant, testing specialist and teacher) and usually under more than one leader, their job is sometimes unclear and confusing. These ambiguous circumstances are prone to make specialists feel unsatisfied, isolated and unsuccessful in their jobs (Reetz, 1987).

✓ Administrative Support. Support from principals is of paramount importance to special and general educators (Dworkin, 1987; Farber, 1984; Fimian, 1986a, 1986b; Fimian & Santoro, 1983; Fimian et al. 1986; McManus & Kauffman, 1991) yet it is one of the strongest and most frequently cited sources of stress. Poor attitudes and behaviors on the part of administrators (Fimian & Santoro, 1983), hassles with administrators, receiving very little feedback and recognition regarding their work, and poor follow up in their request for assistance (Cherniss, 1980; Lawrenson & McKinnon, 1982)

generate stressful situations. These on-the-job stressors cause special and general educators to develop negative attitudes toward their profession. Specialists even begin to feel that others think their students and programs are unimportant because they do not receive administrative support (Fimian et al., 1986).

#### Studies Comparing General and Special Educators

While researchers have surveyed both special and general education teachers to see if they felt the same amount of stress, research findings have been mixed. Some researchers report higher levels of stress among special educators (Cook and Leffingwell, 1982; Weiskopf, 1980; Wilson, 1979) because of the task of caring for deprived or difficult children, planning and implementing an individualized education program (IEP), conferring with each child's parents, attending meetings, counseling parents, holding discussions with general classroom teachers and the lack of space designated for them in the school building. However this is a subject for debate because other authors disagree. Some researchers report higher levels of stress among general education teachers (Bensky et al., 1980; Billingsley & Cross, 1992). Beck and Gargiulo (1983) surveyed 462 general and special education teachers. Contrary to their expectations, the results indicated that special education teachers experienced both fewer and weaker symptoms of stress and burnout. Another study by Beasley

(1983) compared responses for both general and special education teachers regarding the amount of stress and burnout they experienced. Both groups scored within the moderate ranges of stress and burnout indicating they felt similar amounts of stress and burnout.

From the research reviewed it seems that special education teachers experience similar job stressors as general education teachers but they also have a few of their own set of added responsibilities that may cause role overload. Important added responsibilities include: assessment and diagnostic duties, parent counseling, extra paper-work other than that for just teaching, attending child study and eligibility meetings, attending a double set of staff meetings one for their own special interest and one for the school faculty, and IEP preparations.

#### Social Support

The preceding studies indicate that stress and burnout are critical problems in the work environment for both general and special education teachers. However, stress need not be overwhelming, nor should burnout be automatic in public schools (Dworkin, 1987). Social support and social support systems (networks) have often been cited as buffers between stressors and the expected outcomes of stress, including burnout and illnesses (Dworkin, 1987; Fimian, 1986a, 1986b; House, 1981; Larocco, House, & French, 1980).

Numerous terms have been used to identify support: adjustive resources, psychosocial networks, and social networks. Currently, the term used in this review is social support. Like stress, support is easily understood and recognized by everyone but it generates many definitions and ideas. This section includes information about support and the important link administrative support plays in buffering stress for teachers. Also included is a discussion about the outcomes of support.

#### Support Defined

Everyone receives support of some kind all their life. Social support begins in utero and is communicated by the mother, then as life progresses it is derived from the family, peers at work, the community, colleagues and in some situations from professionals (Cobb, 1976) such as counselors and psychologists. Social support is an important process in life because it is used in coping with crises, resisting stress, and tolerating increased levels of stress (Sarason and Sarason, 1985).

Most researchers agree that social support is a multidimensional concept that embraces a wide range of types and sources of support (Caplan, 1974; Gottlieb, 1978; House, 1981; Kahn & Antonucci, 1980; Pinneau, 1976). One general definition of support is offered by Kaplan, Cassel, and Gore (1977). They suggest that social support is the degree to

which a person's basic social needs are gratified through interactions with others. These needs may be met through socio-emotional aid such as affection, sympathy, acceptance and esteem from significant others or the provision of instrumental aid such as advice, information, help with family or work responsibilities, and financial aid. Kahn and Antonucci (1980) defined social support as interpersonal transactions which include affect, affirmation and aid. Pinneau (1976) suggests that social support involves tangible, appraisal and emotional types of support. House (1981), suggests that support is an interpersonal transaction involving one or more of the following types of support: 1) emotional support (providing empathy, caring, love, and trust) 2) instrumental support (providing goods and services, money, labor, time, or modification of the environment) 3) informational support (providing advice, suggestions, directions, and information about the environment) and 4) appraisal support (providing information relevant to self esteem, affirmation, feedback and social comparison).

Sidney Cobb (1976) in summarizing social support said that:

Social support is defined as information leading the subject to believe that he is cared for and loved, esteemed, and a member of a network of mutual obligations (p.300).

In a more recent study of speech language pathologists (SLP), Schetz and Billingsley (in press) also found that social support has many dimensions. These dimensions can range from providing adequate working conditions and resources, advocating for the program to helping with program activities (Schetz & Billingsley, in press). Further, these researchers noted that the daily situations encountered by the SLP influenced their perceptions of the types of support they needed.

#### Importance of Social Support

Support has often been investigated in the medical (adaptation to illness) and counseling communities (crisis) (Fimian, 1986a). For example, the results of proper support have often been found to improve patients' reactions as they recover from illness and hospitalization (Cobb, 1976; Haggarty, 1980). Sarason and Sarason (1985) maintain that interpersonal ties sustain and enhance mental and physical health. Those receiving support experience less stress and more satisfaction in their lives, show less depression, and have better morale and reduced complaints.

Researchers have hypothesized that an individuals' social support network may help moderate, or buffer the effects of life events upon his or her psychological state (Cobb, 1976; Kaplan et al., 1977; Kaplan, Cobb & French, 1975). They suggest that those receiving strong support should be better

able to cope with life's events and the events themselves should cause less stress.

House (1981) proposes that social support is a major resource for reducing the consequences of stress and reducing the impact of stressors on generating strain. Cobb (1976) also believes that social support can protect the individual from negative outcomes of high stress. Thoits (1982) suggests that even those individuals who experience high levels of stress are impacted less by life's changes when they have high levels of support.

#### ✓ Administrators/Principals: A Source of Support

For teachers, prolonged and intensive interaction in the classroom and the school environment provide breeding grounds for stress. Principal support is crucial in breaking this link between teacher stress and burnout (Dworkin, 1987). The greater the support, the lower the stress and burnout levels (Fimian, 1987).

In fact, Dworkin et al. (1990) report that supportive principals who are not effective in other areas, but support their teachers, can break the functional connection between stress and burnout. Principal support is so powerful that it seems inconsequential to teachers if principals have little influence at the central office or even if they have difficulty solving problems. As long as the principal makes an effort to let the teachers know they consider their work

important, then this is sufficient in mitigating burnout (Dworkin, 1987).

Some researchers have even suggested a three way stress-buffering social support system for workers, made up of supervisory support, co-worker support, and family/friend support (LaRocco et al., 1980). They suggest that co-workers may be as strong a buffer against burnout as the supervisor. However, many studies refute this evidence (Conley et al., 1989; Dworkin, 1987; Dworkin, et al., 1990; Hearn, 1971, 1974; Stapleton et al., 1979). These researchers maintain that the principals are such dominant figures within each school that their influence on faculty morale outweighs all other types of support.

Other studies found that lack of support on the part of administrators, fellow teachers and parents were positively significantly related to burnout measures (Zabel & Zabel, 1981). Fimian (1986a, 1986b) found that those special education teachers not receiving supervisory support also experienced "stronger personal/professional stressors, professional distress, discipline and motivation problems, emotional, biobehavioral, and physiological fatigue manifestations, and more overall stress than did the recipients of such support" (p.441).

Chase (1985) found that even those teachers who were pleased with their circumstances felt that they needed more

administrative support. In this large survey of 2,223 teachers across 29 states, most teachers felt happy with their work but indicated they wanted more effective and supportive leadership from their principals (Chase, 1985).

✓ Outcomes of Support

While stress and burnout are outcomes of the non-supportive behaviors of administrators, there are many other important outcomes of both support and non-support. The following list provides additional empirical evidence suggesting that administrative support may be a key factor in improving many aspects of a teachers career.

✓ Attrition. There are many reasons why teachers leave the teaching profession but one of the most important is associated with administrative support or nonsupport. Billingsley and Cross (1991) reported that some special educators transfer to general education or another field because of lack of support and cooperation from administrators. They report that these teachers feel a sense of powerlessness concerning paperwork and district policies. Other investigators support their findings. Fimian (1983) reported that only 23% of the sampled special education teachers felt they received administrative support. Lawrenson and McKinnon (1981) found that fatigue resulting from 'hassles' with their administrators was a leading cause of behavior adjustment teachers' resignations. Minner and Beane

(1983) report that special education teachers often jeopardize their careers or suffer serious verbal reprimands from their administrators because they act as advocates for the disabled.

The high attrition rate of novice teachers (over 30%) has been blamed on the lack of administrative and collegial support (Rosenholtz, 1989). New teachers are often given the most difficult and challenging classes for their first year of teaching (Glickman, 1990). To make matters worse, neophytes arrive in a setting in which the classroom is filled with discarded furniture and instructional materials no one else wanted (Glickman, 1990). As a result, these early years are a time of stress, anxiety, frustration and isolation (Grant & Zeichner, 1990; Heyns, 1988). Lortie (1975) states that teaching is the only profession where "the beginner becomes fully responsible from the first working day and performs the same tasks as twenty-five year veterans" (Lortie, 1975, p.85). The message here is that teaching offers little support in the early years, so many young people leave rather than face the hardships they are dealt.

Experienced teachers also suffer from high attrition rates. By their fifth or sixth year, 20% or 30% have defected (Mark & Anderson, 1985; Schlechty & Vance 1983). Many of those who do defect are the most academically talented, or the ones who are most likely to help students learn (Mark & Anderson, 1985). Those who stay often lose

their teaching effectiveness (Murnane, 1975), they exert little productive effort and settle for less achievement (Rosenholtz, 1989). Supportive principals have the power to change this environment by reducing the negative consequences of stress (Dworkin, 1987).

Health. House (1981) along with others (Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison, & Pinneau, 1975; House & Jackman, 1979; LeRocco et al., 1980; Needle et al., 1980) believe that social support is a potential means of reducing health problems and buffering people against the deleterious effects of stress and health. House (1981) feels that social support can counteract the harmful effects of stress on health in three ways:

First, social support can directly enhance health and well being because it meets important human needs for security, social contact, and approval, belonging and affection. Secondly, support from people at work can directly reduce levels of occupational stress in a variety of ways and indirectly improve health. For example, supportive supervisors can minimize interpersonal pressures or tensions: the experience of support can satisfy work-related motivations for affiliation, approval, and accurate appraisal of the self and environment, generally leaving workers more satisfied with themselves and their jobs. Third, and perhaps most

importantly, social support can be used to buffer the impact of occupational stress (p.31).

Here social support does not directly effect stress or health but "modifies the relationship between them" (House, 1981, p.32). As social support increases the impact of stress on health is relieved for those under stress. However, for people not under stress social support may have little or no benefit.

Dworkin et al. (1990) found that stressors and stress induced illnesses are reduced in schools where principals communicate to the teachers that they are valued colleagues. These researchers questioned two groups of teachers, those with supportive-nonsupportive coworkers and those with supportive-nonsupportive principals. They found that teachers with supportive principals were less likely to report stress-induced illnesses than those with non-supportive principals. This was interpreted to mean that the principal is central in reducing stress-induced illness among teachers, whereas the supportiveness of co-workers plays no significant role.

Just as administrators/supervisors can manifest stress they can also lower stress levels. An early survey (Instructor, 1977) found that those teachers receiving administrative support functioned better both mentally and physically. Supporting this concept, Needle et al., (1981) found that teachers who felt that their principals were

competent and supportive also tended to report greater well-being and experienced fewer stress symptoms.

✓ Work Motivation. Teachers are strongly motivated by the recognition and approval offered by supportive principals (Dworkin, 1987; Rosenholtz, 1987). When principals work for the benefit of teachers and show respect for their efforts they are telling teachers that their work is meaningful. Teachers interpret this show of concern as supportive behavior. Any negative qualities of a principal are often overlooked by teachers if they believe their principal is supportive (Dworkin, 1987).

Cherniss (1980) suggests that principals may be one of the key factors in encouraging the staff to work together. Cherniss (1980) studied two special education school settings - one with high and one with low burnout. He observed that the principal who spent more time planning and interacting with the staff on work related problems and concerns created a more productive environment.

✓ Commitment and Satisfaction. Supportive principals enhance the probability of having a satisfied and committed staff (Rosenholtz, 1987). Teachers become more committed to their work as principals support teachers (Billingsley & Cross, 1992). Committed teachers are good for the system

because they strongly believe in the system's goals and values, comply with requirements and exert efforts beyond minimal expectations.

Lawrenson and McKinnon (1982) interviewed 33 teachers of emotionally disturbed students. The interviews were designed to develop an understanding of job satisfactions and dissatisfactions. Teachers reported that lack of administrative support was the number one job dissatisfaction.

Self Worth and Professionalism. It seems that school principals hold more power and control in the operation of their schools than other supervisors (Dworkin, 1987). The principals' dominant roles make teachers feel wanted or unwanted because they have so much influence over the work activities assigned to teachers (Dworkin, 1987). In fact, school settings have been compared to little fiefdoms controlled by the principal (Dworkin, 1987). Researchers suggest that given the power and control that principals have, their support is important in buffering stress and its negative consequences (LaRocco et al., 1980).

Administrators are also in a position to conduct business with their teachers in such a way that their self worth and importance is enhanced (Likert, 1961) while environmental stress and stressors are reduced (Dworkin, et al. 1990; Greenberg & Valletutti, 1980). The core element in supervisory success or failure is the concept of support.

Principals who encourage independence and seek out the expertise of their staff (Hackman & Oldman, 1981; Kanter, 1968; Rosenholtz, 1989) encourage a sense of professionalism and importance in teachers; they begin to believe that they are valued employees (Conley et al., 1989).

Chapman and Hutcheson (1982) report that the skills, abilities and values of those who remained in teaching are more oriented toward interpersonal relationships. The positive value and recognition that they received from administrators, teachers, and friends were a more important measure of career success than the salary and job autonomy criteria valued by those in other fields. This is a precarious situation that calls for very creative and supportive principal behaviors because teachers are isolated in their classrooms largely out of the administrator's sight (Chapman, 1983; Chapman & Lowther, 1982).

Student-Teacher Relationships. Relationships between teachers and students are often shaped by the kind of support a teacher receives. Those administrators who see their teachers regularly, evaluate their teaching and give feedback based on a shared criteria, inspire teachers to improve their teaching strategies, both individually and collectively. As a result, student mastery is increased (Gersten, Carnine, Zoref & Cronin, 1986).

Change. Schools will always be bombarded with change

efforts from emerging legal issues, newly developed teaching strategies, creative management styles to curriculum changes and philosophies of best practices for school personnel. Of course it is hoped that behind all change efforts are improvements. Strategies for bringing about these changes are often left up to principals. Principals who work with their staff and provide their teachers with clear and continuous direction, develop models for observation, give teachers time for practice and allow group participation in the change process are practicing the kinds of supportive behaviors that will facilitate change (Loucks & Zacchei, 1983).

✓ Teachers' Perceptions of Administrative Support/Non-Support

~~The research has suggested that~~  
As the literature indicates, support is a very important part of a principal's job because it affects the feelings teachers have about their work (Fimian, 1983, 1986a, 1986b; Halpin and Croft, 1963; Lortie, 1975). However, support is a complex concept including a wide range of behaviors. What constitutes support to some is not viewed as supportive to others. In this section, teachers' perceptions of support and non-support are reviewed.

Supportive Behavior

A principal who collaborates with the staff to develop goals, takes time to be involved, follows through with projects, and continues to offer feedback usually generates organizational cohesion and strong feelings of support (Blase,

1987). These actions make teachers feel that their principal cares about what they are doing.

An early study by Lortie (1975) indicated that teachers want support. One of the things teachers considered supportive was fairness. They felt that principals who equally distributed resources and unpopular chores among the staff were showing support because everyone received fair treatment.

Supportive principals are also considered easy to approach, and are warm and helpful (Lortie, 1975). They make themselves available to their teachers by circulating through the building every day. They are at work early and stay late (Lortie, 1975). Supportive principals are careful not to reduce the authority a teacher has in making academic decisions (Lortie, 1975; Blase, 1987). If parents complain, the principal helps the teacher prepare for a conference with the parents and stands behind what the teacher decides. Disagreements are handled privately and settled quickly.

Often support is viewed as the willingness of principals to 'stand behind' teachers when problems with students and/or parents arise (Lortie, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1987). Teachers believe that principals should respect their ideas about discipline and follow through with their suggestions, rather than allowing a short time out for the student only to have them return to class with a grin indicating nothing was done.

Teachers also view principals as supportive when they encourage their staff's professional development through workshops and conferences and university courses (Blase, 1987; Rosenholtz, 1987; Schetz & Billingsley, in press). Teachers complain of boredom and monotony if they use the same instructional procedures year after year. By encouraging teachers to broaden their horizons, administrators are being supportive as well as expanding the teachers' professional skills and eliciting feelings of personal meaningfulness.

#### ✓ Non-Supportive Behavior

Just as supportive principals generate a more positive environment and encourage teachers to do their best, nonsupportive principals create an atmosphere of ill will and helplessness. Such an atmosphere reduces the ability of workers to perform effectively.

Farber (1984) surveyed a large number of teachers (n=365) in New York to investigate the stressors of teachers in suburban schools. Almost 87% of those teachers surveyed felt that administrative meetings never proved helpful in solving the problems teachers faced. Another 63% thought they rarely received support or encouragement from their principals.

These findings corroborate Fibkins (1983) report that the school organization does not respond to the complicated and increasingly pressured aspects of their teachers' work. Teachers perceive administrators as not being on the 'same

side', and being more interested in their own images rather than improving school conditions for either teachers or students.

Teachers also feel that non-supportive principals prefer working with teachers who do not bring problems to them because they do not want to have any hassles. They see principals as being too far in the background to support the daily work of teachers (Fibkins, 1983).

Blase (1987) reports that ineffective school principals create cultures in which the interactions of teachers and principals are distant, uncaring, non-supportive and usually nonproductive. These principals tend to stay in the background without encouraging new research based approaches to teaching. They do not promote innovative classroom techniques and processes. Teachers indicate too that non-supportive principals fail to supply the appropriate materials needed for classroom maintenance (Blase, 1985; Lortie, 1975).

Most occupations (some more than others) are characterized by a substantial amount of stress. Given the amount of time that people spend at work and the possibility that social support can reduce or buffer stress, increase job satisfaction and commitment, it seems fitting for organizations, especially human service professionals, to

focus their efforts on understanding the outcomes of support and non-support and then develop a strong social support system.

### Summary

Stress is a serious occupational phenomenon because when it occurs a person may lose his/her ability to cope with the situations of life, develop negative attitudes, become angry, or display symptoms of depression (Skinner, 1980; Tyler, 1987). Research results tell us that teachers, both general and special, often experience a variety of stressful situations daily. While many teachers learn to successfully cope with the stressors of their work many others do not.

Burnout is the reaction to prolonged stress. It occurs when a person has no 'outs', or buffers, no support system and inadequate rewards. Although the literature is filled with examples of outcomes of stress and burnout on teachers, few actually indicate specific factors that cause stress and burnout to occur. Recently researchers have pointed out that the supportive behavior of principals can buffer the expected outcomes of stress and burnout (Blase, 1984, 1987; Cichon & Koff, 1980; Farber, 1982; Fimian, 1987; Fimian & Blanton, 1986; Fullan, 1985; Needle et al., 1980; Rosenholtz, 1989; Zabel & Zabel, 1982).

We already know that the buffering effect of support is important to the stress and burnout cycle because studies

indicate that teachers who define their administrators as supportive experience less stress and burnout (Zabel & Zabel, 1982), have fewer illnesses, more positive work related attitudes, and a lower attrition rate (Dworkin, 1987). They also experience more career success (Chapman & Lowther, 1982), work motivation and satisfaction (Rosenholtz, 1989) as well as school commitment and intentions to stay in teaching (Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Rosenholtz, 1989).

We also know that the literature defines support as a multidimensional concept (Schetz & Billingsley, in press) and involves the day to day behaviors of the principal. Support involves providing feedback and psychic rewards (Lortie, 1975), offering opportunities for autonomy (Kanter, 1977), providing teachers with opportunities for professional growth and development (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), and "administering the building with a loving and caring attitude that makes it clear that such caring applies to teachers as much as students" (Firestone & Rosenblum, 1988, p.292).

#### Needs for Further Study

Professional literature provides global terms that do not specifically state what types of behaviors principals should exhibit in order to be supportive. There is a lack of empirically based evidence in this area. This writer was able to find only two studies dealing directly with teachers' perceptions of administrative support. Tyler (1987) analyzed

special educator's perceptions of building level and central office support. However, Tyler did not use a comprehensive framework to guide her study, nor did she look at the effects of support on important dependent variables (e.g. job satisfaction, stress, personal health, school commitment, and intent to stay in teaching). In addition, she did not address support needs of different student disability groups. Further, her study did not address differences in support needs between general and special educators. Schetz and Billingsley (in press) studied the support needs of only speech-language pathologists (SLP). This qualitative study did provide specific information about speech-language pathologists perceptions of support, however, it involved a small sample confined to one group of special educators.

We still know little about the specific dimensions of principal support that general and special education teachers currently receive or the relative importance of these varied dimensions of support. Fimian (1986) suggests that research has not uncovered the dimensions of support variables teachers consider most important. Further, additional research needs to determine the effects support might have on job satisfaction, school commitment, stress, intent to stay in teaching, and personal health. Gaining a better understanding of support should ultimately help us understand what

administrators can do to enhance the teaching profession and provide a more committed and satisfied workforce.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Purpose and Research Questions

The primary purpose of this study was to identify the support dimensions that both general and special education teachers perceive they receive from their principals and determine which dimensions they consider most important. A secondary purpose of this study investigates the effects of perceived principal support on teacher stress and personal health, job satisfaction, school commitment, and intent to stay in teaching. A Principal Support Questionnaire was developed to measure support items for this study. Extant measures for stress, job satisfaction, school commitment, personal health and intent to stay in teaching were adopted or modified from other investigators and included in the questionnaire for this study.

#### Research Questions

The following questions guided the investigation of this study:

1. What areas of principal support are considered the most important to special and general education teachers?
2. To what extent do general and special educators report receiving principal support?
3. What relationship does gender, age, race, experience, levels and types of students taught, and other work

related variables have with perceived extent and importance of support?

4. What is the relative importance of the different types of perceived support in predicting teacher stress, personal health, job satisfaction, school commitment and intent to stay in teaching?

### Procedure

#### Questionnaire Method and Rationale

A self-administered mailed questionnaire was chosen as the method of data collection. Since the population to be surveyed was teachers, the mailed survey offered the following advantages. It works well in situations where scheduling an interview is difficult. It allows participants to complete the survey at their leisure. It is easy to complete for people with "pen and paper" experience needed to interpret the questions as intended (Dillman, 1978). According to Fowler (1984), the self administered mailed survey could be used with reasonable assurance of a fairly high response rate because teachers are a highly literate group which are likely to be interested in the research topic. In addition, since the nature of this questionnaire requires a very personal attitude response it was felt that the mailed questionnaire was more likely to generate honest answers than they would in a face to face interview (Dillman, 1978). The mailed questionnaire is

also the least expensive method of gathering information from this large sample of general and special education teachers.

### Sample

The Virginia Department of Education personnel data tape for the 1990-91 school year was used to draw the sample of special educators ( $N=613$ ) for this study. This sample was the second sample in a series of studies funded by the Virginia Department of Education (DOE) drawn from the Master Personnel File. A simple random sample of 750 special educators was drawn for the first study, thus eliminating these teachers from the population sampled for this study. A stratified random sample was drawn that included: 201 teachers of emotionally disturbed students (ED), 206 teachers of learning disabled students (LD), and 206 teachers of educable mentally handicapped (EMH) students.

The sample of general educators for this study was obtained by asking each participating special educator to invite a general education teacher in their building to participate in the study by completing another questionnaire. Instructions hi-lighted in the cover letter to the special education teacher made the following request: "In addition to your completion of the questionnaire we would like for you to pass the second questionnaire to a general classroom teacher who is typical of the teachers in your school." Thus, the plan called for a sample of 613 special education teachers

along with the 613 general education teachers nominated by the special educators (total  $N=1226$ ).

The initial mailing was on April 19, 1991, with a follow-up letter sent to non-respondents on May 10, 1991. A small sample of non-respondents (14%) were randomly selected and interviewed by phone to have them answer a selected number of items. This was done to see if the non-respondents responses were different from those who responded. For these items, the extent and importance mean scores were slightly higher on each selected item across the four dimensions of support, as well as on items in job satisfaction, stress, commitment, and personal health. Lower scores were noticed on two demographic items: total number of years special educators have taught ( $M=6.5$ ) and socioeconomic level of the students in the schools in which special educators teach (53% low, 34% middle, 12% high).

#### Description of the Instrument

An eight page questionnaire (see Appendix A) was developed for this study. The questionnaire was the same for general and special education groups; however, special educators were asked to answer three additional demographic items. The first forty seven items were designed to measure aspects of principal support. Other measures included the following extant scales: 1) job satisfaction, 2) job stress, 3) school commitment, 4) intent to stay, 5) personal health,

and 6) demographics items. Each section of the instrument is described in detail below.

### Support Measures

Four dimensions of support were developed, grounded in House's theory of support (1981). The first twelve items assess emotional support and consist of such items as "acts friendly towards me," "notices what I do," and "shows appreciation for my work." Seven appraisal support items (items 13-19) address evaluation and autonomy issues, such as "offers constructive feedback after observing my teaching," "gives clear guidelines regarding job responsibilities," "helps me evaluate my needs," and "trusts my judgment in making decisions." The third dimension of support, informational support is assessed using eight items (items 20-27) such as "encourages professional growth," "provides information on up to date instructional techniques," and "provides suggestions for me to improve instruction." Instrumental support is measured using thirteen items (items 28-40), and includes items such as "helps me with classroom discipline," "equally distributes resources and unpopular chores," and "provides adequate planning time."

Respondents were asked to make two judgments about each support item. The responses were recorded on an opscan sheet having a ten point response format. The first judgment was recorded on the first four response choices. Using a response

scale from (1) "no extent" to (4) "great extent" respondents were asked to describe the extent of support they felt they received from their principal. Response choices six through nine were used to record the second judgment. Using a response scale (6) "not important" to (9) "very important," respondents were asked to indicate the importance of receiving this support in their current position. All importance items 6 through 9 were recoded so that 6 was equal to 1, 7 equaled 2, 8 equaled 3, and 9 equaled 4, for analysis purposes. The scanner had to be specially programmed to read the two response fields from the 1 to 10 field shown on the response sheet.

#### Additional Support Items

Seven additional support-related items were included on the questionnaire. The respondents were asked to "identify the gender of the principal for whom their responses on support relate." Another question asked the respondents to indicate "how often they interact with the principal with whom their responses on support relate." Their choices were: (1) seldom (2) occasionally (3) frequently. The next five questions required two responses each, first to identify the extent of support received from central office, the principal, assistant principal, special education teachers, and general education teachers and next the importance of receiving support from each of these individuals. Respondents rated

extent of support from (1) no extent to (4) great extent, and importance of support from (6) not important to (9) very important (later responses were recoded as discussed above).

#### Job Satisfaction Measure

Job satisfaction was measured by asking teachers to indicate how satisfied they were with various aspects of their job. Ten items were used. These items included questions about job security, opportunity for advancement, salary and benefits, to issues of pride and respect in their profession. Respondents rated their satisfaction using a four point scale from (1) very dissatisfied to (4) very satisfied.

#### Job Stress Measure

The questionnaire assessed "felt stress" using a 9-item scale developed by Parasuaman (1982). Individuals were asked to indicate the extent to which they experienced feelings such as frustration, nervousness, tension, and being upset in relation to their job. A five point response scale ranging from (1) almost never to (5) almost always was used.

#### School Commitment Measure

School commitment was measured using twelve "attitudinal" items developed by Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974). Wording was changed slightly so that the items would relate to the teaching profession and school assignment. The scale contains items such as: "I feel very little loyalty to this school" and "for me this is the best of all schools in which

to work." The response scale ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree.

#### Intent to Stay Measure

Intention to stay in teaching was measured by asking respondents to indicate how long they planned to teach. Response choices ranged from (1) "definitely plan to leave teaching as soon as I can" to (5) "until forced to retire due to age."

#### Personal Health Measure

Eight items were used to assess personal health. These items developed by House (1986), asked individuals to indicate the extent to which they experience problems such as headaches, sleeplessness, eating problems, how often they seek medical care and if they are bothered with high blood pressure. A five point response scale ranging from (1) "almost never" to (5) "almost always" was used.

#### Demographic and Miscellaneous

The last part of the questionnaire gathered demographic information and job environment related information about the respondents. Information such as gender, age, race, total years in current position, total years in education, endorsement(s), and grade level taught were requested. Other questions addressed the socioeconomic level of students, level of parent support, and if their school could be characterized by a feeling of camaraderie.

## Development, Field-testing, and Distribution of Instrument Item Selection

Administrative support descriptors were generated from: 1) information from interviews with general and special educators, 2) the literature review on administrative support, 3) House's theoretical framework defining the domains of social support, and 4) suggestions from expert reviewers. A specification chart based on the above sources was used to develop the support items. Extant instruments were used to measure job satisfaction, commitment, stress, personal health, and intent to stay in teaching. This combined set of descriptors was used as the basis for formulating the items to be used on the questionnaire.

Initial Interviews. Prior to developing the questionnaire, interviews were conducted with thirteen teachers: one teacher of gifted students, one general educator, and eleven special educators. These teachers represented all educational levels: 3 high school teachers, 3 junior high teachers and 7 from elementary settings. One focus group interview was conducted with eight educators, a mixture of general and special educators. The purpose of the interviews were explained to the interviewees. Open ended questions were used (see Appendix B) and the answers were either written or taped during the interviews.

Support Descriptors. Support descriptors cited in the literature concerning the role functions of principals were used to develop a conceptual framework for administrative support (e.g., Blase, 1982, 1987; Fimian 1986; Glickman, 1990; Lortie, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1989; Tyler, 1987). This information was organized according to the broad categories of support proposed by House (included in Appendix C).

House's Theoretical Framework. The theoretical framework for this study is based upon House's (1981) framework of social support. He felt that the multidimensional domains of support made it difficult for researchers when they tried to define and measure support. House (1982) proposed that support can be divided into four broad classes or dimensions of behaviors: emotional support, appraisal support, informational support, and instrumental support. Dr. House reviewed the chart to determine if items were properly categorized. The final draft of the chart was made after his review and suggestions. Appendix D contains letters of correspondence with Dr. House and the specification chart.

Expert and Teacher Review. The wording, directions, information requested and overall format of a questionnaire are important. Experts and teachers provided feedback and advice throughout the development of the questionnaire. One

committee member provided almost daily input. These suggestions were used to revise the questionnaire several times.

Following these suggestions and revisions the questionnaire was submitted to two committee members who were asked to review the questionnaire and make further suggestions. A final draft followed.

### Field Testing

The purpose of field testing is to locate inadequacies and defects in the instrument and to determine the time required to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaires were mailed to six elementary teachers (three general and three special educators), four junior high school teachers (two general and three special educators), and four high school teachers (two general and two special educators). Ten questionnaires were returned (71%). After the questionnaires were returned, respondents were contacted for comments, suggestions and asked to indicate how long it took them to complete the questionnaire.

### Mailing the Questionnaire

Dillman's (1978) techniques for mailing questionnaires were used as a guide. The questionnaires were color coded, yellow for special education teachers and pink for general education teachers to make it easier to check the contents of the packet as they were being prepared and to attract the

attention of the respondents. The mailing packet contained two packets, one for the special educator to whom the envelope was addressed and one to be passed to the general educator. Two questionnaires with cover letters, opscan sheets, and return envelopes were mailed to each special educator selected for this sample (see Appendix E for illustrations of the cover letters). Reminder letters were sent to the non-respondents approximately three weeks after the initial mailing. A reminder letter could not be sent directly to the general educator because the special educator distributed the questionnaire, therefore, several drafts of reminder letters were needed to cover various situations. Three possible situations existed in which special educators might receive a follow-up letter: 1) if they had not returned the opscan sheet, 2) if they returned the opscan sheet but the general educator had not, and 3) if neither had returned the opscan sheet. Follow-up letters were sent to 406 special education teachers; 136 ED teachers, 130 LD teachers and 140 EMH teachers (see Appendix F).

#### Data Analysis

As the opscan sheets returned they were reviewed by the researcher for stray marks and to determine completeness. The data were then scanned into the computer file.

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and frequencies) were tabulated for each variable. Frequency

distributions were used to check for outliers that were either recoded or assigned missing values. The forty support items were grouped into the four dimensions of support and for each respondent extent and importance scores were computed for each item, each dimension, and across all items for a total score. Composite means and standard deviation scores were found by summing the scores across the scale and dividing by the number of valid responses. Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was computed for composite variables.

Table 1 shows the reliability coefficients for each of the composite scales along with the number of cases, the number of items and the mean and standard deviation on which each coefficient is based. The reliability coefficients range from .48 to .93. Lower reliabilities were found when respondents were asked to rate the overall support and importance of support they received from five co-workers. These lower reliabilities were not surprising since this section of the questionnaire contained only five questions (numbers 43 to 47). Reliability coefficients for personal health and job commitment were slightly low, but the remainder of reliability coefficients were impressively high.

#### Methodological Limitations and Problems that Occurred

Often problems develop with large surveys due to sampling or other unforeseen difficulties. This survey was no exception.

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient for Composite Scales

Scale	<u>n</u> of Cases	<u>n</u> of Items	M	SD	$r_{xx}$
Ext Emot Sup	666	12	3.078	.670	.9304
Imp Emot Sup	658	12	3.634	.353	.8366
Ext Aprz Sup	666	7	2.900	.673	.8614
Imp Aprz Sup	665	7	3.430	.507	.8016
Ext Info Sup	656	8	2.656	.713	.8578
Imp Info Sup	647	8	3.095	.653	.8632
Ext Instr Sup	662	13	2.623	.634	.8794
Imp Instr Sup	647	13	3.284	.478	.8305
Tot Ext Support	581	5	2.925	.536	.4897
Tot Imp Support	567	5	3.476	.522	.6424
Job Satisfaction	657	10	2.906	.433	.7629
Stress	674	9	2.470	.885	.9260
Commitment	658	13	4.296	.687	.5396
Health	675	8	1.673	.501	.6922

The sampling for special education teachers was drawn from the Virginia Department of Education's computerized data tape files for the 1990 - 1991 school year. Although current, some of the questionnaires were returned because the teachers were not at the school identified on the tape.

The sampling frame for general education teachers was selected by special education teachers. This method of distributing the questionnaire caused some of the following problems. Some special educators may have simply chosen not to pass the questionnaire to the general education teachers. Other problem situations were explained by notes attached to opscan forms returned by special educators. For example, some special educators indicated this method of distributing the questionnaire placed them in an uncomfortable situation. They did not feel comfortable giving the questionnaire to a general educator in their building. Also, many special educators filled out their questionnaires but did not pass on the general education questionnaire until several weeks later. Several forms returned by the general education teachers had notes attached that said they did not receive the questionnaire until very late in the year. Some special educators returned the general educators forms because they were teaching in special schools that did not have general education teachers. This may explain the reason for the lower return rate for general educators.

Distribution of follow-up letters was difficult for some of the same reasons as listed above. Even though several forms of return letters were written to cover different situations those intended for general education teachers were still controlled by the special education teachers. Consequently, some may not have reached the general education teacher. Telephone contact of non-respondents was also limited to special education teachers because the researcher was not able to contact the general educator.

Response rates were complicated because one school district requested that their teachers get prior approval from the school division's central office before answering questionnaires. This communication problem between the district and their teachers caused several teachers to put off answering the questionnaire. Delays of this nature reduce the probability of respondents answering the questionnaire.

Timing and length of the questionnaire were reported as problems for the respondents. Since the questionnaire was mailed in April, many of the special education teachers were busy writing IEP's and testing students along with their regular teaching duties. Some felt they did not have the time to respond to a questionnaire of this length.

#### Summary

In this chapter, specific procedures used in developing this study were discussed. First, the purpose and research

questions were stated. This was followed by explaining the questionnaire method and rationale, the procedures for selecting the stratified random sampling of special educators and their role in selecting the general education teachers. Next, the instrument was described along with the procedures used to develop the research questions including distribution and follow-up. A summary of the method of data analysis for answering the research questions was provided. Finally, limitations and problems that occurred were listed.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The primary purpose of this study was to identify the support dimensions that both general and special education teachers perceive to have received from their principal and determine which dimensions they consider most important. A secondary purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of perceived principal support on teacher stress and personal health, job satisfaction, school commitment and intent to stay in teaching. Four major sections are included in this chapter: (1) summary of distribution and return rate; (2) demographic characteristics of the respondents; (3) findings associated with the four research questions; and (4) comparative results of general and special educators' intent to stay, job satisfaction, school commitment, stress, and personal health.

#### Summary of Response Rates

The questionnaires were mailed on April 19, 1991. By May 10, 1991, responses were received from 86 ED teachers, 111 LD teachers, 98 EMH teachers and 228 general education teachers. These represented a 43% return rate overall. Follow-up letters were mailed (May 10, 1991) to non-respondents.

By June 1, 1991, there were 377 usable returns received from special education teachers which included: 110 (55%) from ED teachers, 140 (68%) from LD teachers, 127 (62%) from EMH teachers. From general education teachers 304 (50%) usable

forms were received. Only eighteen (18) returns were incomplete or not useable. A summary of the survey distribution and return rate is contained in Table 2.

### Demographic and Miscellaneous Information

#### Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of general and special education teachers are presented in the following section and descriptive statistics are given in Tables 3 and 4. Females comprise the majority of both groups, 83% for the general educators and 87% for the special educators. Respondents are predominantly white with only 16% non-whites among the general educators and 22% non-whites among the special educators. Both groups were similar in age; the mean age for general educators was 39.08 and 38.17 years for special educators. Special educators had less experience in their present positions ( $\bar{M}=6.96$ ) than did the general educators ( $\bar{M}=8.79$ ) and less total teaching experience ( $\bar{M}=11.94$ ) than the general educators ( $\bar{M}=13.84$ ).<sup>1</sup> A small number of respondents reported that they were not endorsed in their current position; 3% for general educators and 6% for special educators.

Of those general educators responding to the questionnaire, 47% were elementary teachers serving children

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<sup>1</sup> Means for age, years in present position, and total years taught were compiled using the mid-point of the interval for grouped data in order to provide more meaningful numbers.

Table 2

Summary of Distribution and Return Rate

Subjects	Number Mailed	Number Returned	% Returned	Number of Usable Returns	% Usable Returns
ED Teachers	201	117	58%	110	55%
LD Teachers	206	141	68%	140	68%
EMH Teachers	206	128	62%	127	62%
Total Special Educators	613	385	62%	377	62%
Total General Educators	613	313	51%	304	50%
Total	1226	699	56%	681	56%

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Variables	Total General Educators $n = 304$		Total Special Educators $n = 377$	
	Frequencies	Percent	Frequencies	Percent
Gender				
Male	51	17	47	13
Female	252	83	329	87
Race				
White	254	84	294	78
Black	39	13	76	20
Other	11	3	4	2
Endorsed/Licensed				
Yes	292	96	353	94
No	8	3	22	6
Grade Level Teaching				
Elementary (K-5)	142	47	172	46
Middle (6-9)	89	29	109	29
Secondary	67	22	91	24
Other	3	1	4	1
Exceptionality *				
ED			87	23
EMH			114	30
LD			115	31
LD/ED			27	10
Other			11	3
Program(s) in which you teach *				
Itinerant			3	1
Resource			50	13
Combined			122	33
Resource/ Self-Contained			178	47
Self-Contained			8	2
Special Setting			15	4
Other				

\* Answered only by Special Educators

Table 4

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Variables	Response choice range	Total General Educators n = 304		Total Special Educators n = 377	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Age	25 or less to 60+	39.08	8.74	38.17	8.49
Years in Pres. Position	1 to 26+	8.79	6.57	6.96	6.28
Total Years Experience in Education	1 to 26+	13.84	7.90	11.94	7.57

from kindergarten to fifth grade, 29% teach junior high students (grades 6-9), 22% teach high school, and 1% teach in situations other than those listed ( $\underline{M}=1.76$ ). Of the special educator groups, 46% were elementary teachers, 29% were junior high teachers, 24% were high schools teachers and 1% teach in other situations ( $\underline{M}=1.78$ ).

Special educators teach in programs labeled self contained (47%) and combined resource/self-contained settings (33%). A lower percentage of teachers teach in the following settings: itinerant 1%, resource 13%, special settings 2% and other 4%.

#### Characteristics of School Environment

General and special educators were asked to respond to items about their school settings, the parents they work with and children they teach. These environmental characteristics are presented in Tables 5 and 6 and discussed in the following paragraphs.

Respondents were asked to identify the socioeconomic level of the students attending their school. Their choices ranged from 1 = low level, 2 = middle level, and 3 = high level. Teachers indicated that the majority of their students were from middle class families, general educators reporting 60% ( $\underline{M}=1.70$ ) and special educators 55% ( $\underline{M}=1.66$ ). Additionally, using scales from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always), general educators ( $\underline{M}=2.92$ ) indicate their parents support

school goals and projects more than the parents of special educators ( $\underline{M}=2.76$ ). When asked to describe their school setting, special educators rated "optimism and camaraderie characterize my school" higher ( $\underline{M}=3.00$ ) than general educators ( $\underline{M}=2.95$ ).

Special educators were asked how many special education teachers work in their school; choices ranged from (1) one to (10) ten. Responses to this question indicated that schools employ an average of approximately 6 ( $\underline{M}=5.72$ ;  $SD=2.43$ ) special education teachers.

Teachers were asked the gender (1=male and 2=female) of the principal for whom their responses applied (1=male, 2=female). Responses indicated that 70% ( $\underline{M}=1.30$ ) of the general educators and 64% ( $\underline{M}=1.36$ ) of the special educators reported to male principals. In a follow-up question about their principals, teachers were asked to indicate how frequently they interacted with the principal to whom their responses applied. The scale was 1=seldom, 2=occasionally, and 3=frequently. General education teachers indicated that they interacted less frequently ( $\underline{M}=2.44$ ) than special education teachers ( $\underline{M}=2.52$ ) although the difference is not great.

Table 5

Frequency and Percent of Socioeconomic Level of Students Taught by the Sample

Variable	Total General Educators n = 304		Total Special Educators n = 377	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Students' Socioeconomic Level				
Low	105	35	146	39
Middle	181	60	209	55
High	18	5	22	6

Table 6

## Means, Standard Deviations and Ranges of School Environment Items Among the Sample

Variables	Range	Total General Educators N - 304		Total Special Educators N - 377	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Parents support school goals and projects	1 - almost never to 5 - almost always	2.92	1.13	2.76	1.18
Optimism and camaraderie characterize my school	1 - almost never to 5 - almost always	2.95	1.05	3.00	1.20
Freq. of interaction with principal to whom responses relate	1-seldom 2-occ. 3-freq.	2.44	0.67	2.52	0.63
Special Education teachers in your school*	1 to 10			5.72	2.43

\* Answered only by special educators

## Research Questions and Results

Research Question One: What areas of principal support are considered the most important to general and special education teachers?

Research Question Two: To what extent do general and special educators report receiving principal support?

Table 7 shows the means and standard deviations for the "extent" and "importance" of support ratings across the four dimensions of support for the three groups of special educators and the general educators. The means shown in Table 7 were tested for significance by: 1) an ANOVA across all four groups, 2) an ANOVA across the 3 special educator groups, and 3) a t-test comparing the mean of general educators to the mean for special educators (ignoring area of exceptionality). Of all these statistical tests, the only significant result was associated with importance ratings for emotional support across the three special educator groups. Inspection of the means shows that EMH teachers reported higher mean ratings (3.70) than the other special teachers, with ED teachers having the lowest importance ratings (3.58).

Aside from differences between groups, two observations regarding the data in Table 7 are noteworthy. First, without exception ratings of importance were higher than ratings of extent, suggesting that there is a gap between the importance teachers associate with these dimensions of support and the

amount of support that they perceive receiving from their principals. Second, of the four dimensions, emotional support tends to be rated as more important and more received than the three other dimensions. Of note, is the ordering of the importance dimensions; teachers view instrumental support more important than informational support but they report receiving more informational than instrumental support.

Although not directly related to question 1, it was of interest to see whether there was a difference in the amount of perceived support between teachers having male and female principals. A test of the mean "extent" ratings revealed a significant difference only for the informational dimensions ( $t=3.10$ ,  $p < .002$ ). The mean rating for teachers having male principals was 2.60 verses 2.78 for those having female teachers.

The mean scores reported in Table 7 were obtained by averaging the responses to individual items constituting each scale. The high internal consistency reliability estimates attest to the reasonableness of combining the item responses to form these composite scales. Appendix G provides the item level data, however, some of the more relevant item-level findings are discussed below.

Emotional Support Items. Teachers of EMH ( $M=3.84$ ) students responding to importance of emotional support indicated that it was significantly more important to receive

Table 7

## Extent and Importance of Support Subscales: Emotional, Appraisal, Informational, and Instrumental

Variables	SPECIAL EDUCATORS				GENERAL EDUCATORS					
	Emotionally Disturbed	Learning Disabled	Educable Mentally Handicapped	All Special Educators	All General Educators	All Special Educators	All General Educators	All Special Educators	All General Educators	
Total Scores	Mean (SD)	n	Mean (SD)	n	Mean (SD)	n	Mean (SD)	n	Mean (SD)	n
Emotional										
Extent	3.11 (0.65)	109	3.10 (0.64)	139	3.09 (0.72)	127	3.10 (0.67)	375	3.05 (0.67)	304
Importance*	3.58 (0.35)	109	3.62 (0.34)	139	*3.70 (0.33)	127	3.63 (0.35)	375	3.63 (0.36)	302
Appraisal										
Extent	2.87 (0.67)	110	2.89 (0.63)	136	2.99 (0.72)	127	2.92 (0.67)	373	2.88 (0.68)	303
Importance	3.38 (0.54)	109	3.38 (0.51)	137	3.50 (0.49)	127	3.42 (0.51)	378	3.44 (0.50)	301
Informational										
Extent	2.61 (0.77)	110	2.63 (0.70)	139	2.67 (0.74)	127	2.64 (0.73)	376	2.68 (0.69)	302
Importance	3.04 (0.67)	109	3.08 (0.61)	140	3.17 (0.70)	127	3.10 (0.66)	376	3.09 (0.65)	299
Instrumental										
Extent	2.64 (0.66)	110	2.60 (0.59)	139	2.63 (0.67)	127	2.62 (0.64)	376	2.62 (0.63)	302
Importance	3.29 (0.47)	109	3.26 (0.46)	139	3.35 (0.49)	127	3.30 (0.47)	375	3.27 (0.49)	300

\*F (2,372) = 3.729 (p &lt; .05) comparing three groups of special educators

from their principals 'undivided attention when they talked to them,' than for general educators ( $\underline{M}$ =3.68) or ED ( $\underline{M}$ =3.61) teachers ( $\underline{F}$ =4.25,  $p < .05$ ). EMH teachers ( $\underline{M}$ =3.59) also felt it more important for principals to show 'appreciation for their work,' than did ED ( $\underline{M}$ =3.38) teachers ( $\underline{F}$ =3.16,  $p < .05$ ). General educators ( $\underline{M}$ =3.41) indicated that 'being noticed' by their principal was significantly more important for them than special educators ( $\underline{M}$ =3.28,  $\underline{F}$ =2.41,  $p < .05$ ).

Only one significant mean difference was observed with regard to extent of perceived emotional support, this was item 4, ( $\underline{t}$  -3.50;  $\underline{F}$  3.50;  $p < .05$ ), '(My principal) Is honest and straight forward with the staff.' Special educators ( $\underline{M}$ =3.17) had higher mean ratings about their principals' behavior on this item than did the general educators ( $\underline{M}$ =2.94), particularly teachers who teach ED students ( $\underline{M}$ =3.22).

Informational Support Items. The mean ratings for the eight importance items comprising the dimensions of informational support are also shown in Appendix G. Analysis of variance applied to these mean ratings across groups showed significant mean differences for only two items with regard to the importance ratings and one item with regard to extent of perceived support. Specifically, on the item 'provides information on up to date instructional techniques' general educators had a higher mean rating (3.04) than the average rating across all special educators (2.89,  $\underline{F}$ =2.08,  $p < .05$ ) and

on the item 'provides knowledge of current legal policies' EMH teachers (3.36) had a significantly higher mean than general educators (3.11,  $F=3.24$ ,  $p=.05$ ). The extent item of significant difference was item 23, ( $t$  2.45,  $F$  2.60), special educators (3.04) indicated the least support on 'opportunities to attend workshops' compared to the general educator group (3.23), ( $F$  2.60,  $p < .05$ ).

Instrumental Support Items. Greater diversity was evident among the thirteen items used to encompass the dimension of instrumental support (Appendix G).  $F$  ratios and  $t$  scores computed for both extent and importance of support showed four significant mean differences within the importance ratings and five with regard to extent ratings.

For importance items, special educators ( $M=3.36$ ), especially LD ( $M=3.35$ ) and ED ( $M=3.41$ ) teachers, indicated that it was significantly more important for principals to 'establish channels of communication between general and special education teachers,' [ $t=(-3.70)$ ,  $F=(4.70)$ ]. Special educators ( $M=3.59$ ) also indicated it was more important for principals to 'provide time for various non-teaching responsibilities,' [ $t=(-5.00)$ ,  $F=(9.26)$ ], and 'provide extra assistance when overloaded' (SPED,  $M=3.19$ ), [ $t=(-1.99)$ ,  $F=(2,74)$ ], EMH teachers ( $M=3.65$ ) had significantly higher mean score here. For general educators ( $M=2.68$ ) it was significantly more important for principals to 'work with them

to plan specific goals and objectives for my program and students,' ( $t=2.98$ ,  $F=4.20$ ).

For extent of perceived support items, special educators reported more often than general educators that their principals were 'available to help when needed' [ $t$  (3.03),  $F$  (3.26)]; and 'equally distributes resources and unpopular chores,' [ $t$ (-2.19),  $F$ (1.67)]. On the other hand, general educators reported significantly more principal support than special educators on the following items: 'helps me establish my schedule,'  $t$ (2.18),  $F$ (3.60); 'provides adequate planning time'  $t$ (2.41),  $F$ (3.60); and 'works with me to plan specific goals and objectives' ( $t$ (2.84),  $F$ (3.03)).

Composite scale scores are based on the average of the items within each type of support and suggest only the measure of central tendency of all scores. Some scores are above the mean and some are below. As the composite mean gets lower, more teachers are responding to individual items with 1 (no extent) or 2 and as mean scores go up a larger percent of teachers are answering with 3 or 4 (great extent).

Across both groups of teachers, mean scores for extent of emotional support were above 2.5 (see Appendix G). However, on a few items at least 30% of the teachers felt that their principals' support was less than average. These items seem to relate to recognition such as: 'gives me a sense of importance that I make a difference,' 'notices what I do,' and 'shows

appreciation for my work.' At least 80% ( $M > 3.50$ ) of the teachers responded that their principals provided a high amount of emotional support in 'treats me as one of the faculty.'

At least 50% ( $M < 2.50$ ) of both general and special educators felt that their principals provided inadequate support in several appraisal items: 'provides frequent feedback about my performance,' and 'helps me evaluate my needs.' On the other hand, they agreed that most principals provide plenty of support in 'trusts my judgment in making classroom decisions,' ( $M > 3.50$ ).

Those items of informational support that at least 50% of the respondents felt little principal support ( $M < 2.50$ ) were 'provides helpful information for improving personal coping skills,' 'provides information on up to date instructional techniques,' and 'provides suggestions for me to improve instruction.' No informational items had mean scores of 3.50 or greater.

Three items in instrumental support had 50% of the teachers scoring an average of 2.5 or below. These items were: 'helps me establish my schedule,' 'works with me to plan specific goals and objectives,' and 'provides extra assistance when I become overloaded.' There were no instrumental items with mean scores of 3.50 or greater.

All but one of the forty items across the four dimensions of importance of support had a mean scores of 2.5 or above for both general and special educators. The lower mean scores for special educators on item 29 indicated it was less important for principals to help them establish their schedule.

Rank Ordering of Extent and Importance Item Ratings within the Dimensions of Support. It was of interest to compare the special and general educators' rank orderings of the item means across the items constituting each of the four support dimensions. Tables 8 through 11 show, for each of the four support dimensions, the item means and associated rank ordering as calculated for special and general educators.

Inspection of Table 8 shows remarkable similarity in rank ordering of both extent and importance item means across the special and general educator samples [ $r_s$  (extent)=.97;  $r_s$  (importance)=.98]. By contrast there is considerably less agreement in the rank ordering between item means for extent and importance within respondent groups (SPED,  $r_s$ =.32; GENED,  $r_s$ =.20). Indeed, the item "acts friendly towards me," ranked near the top for extent by both groups, but ranked at or near the bottom (11 and 12) for importance. To further illustrate this, "being honest and straight-forward" was ranked as one of the important item of emotional support by both groups of respondents but in terms of perceived support teachers ranked this same item lower (6 SPED and 8 GE). The extent item

Table 8

Means, Standard Deviations, and Rankings for Extent and Importance of Emotional Support Items Among Special and General Educators

Variables	Special Educators $n = 377$				General Educators $n = 304$			
	Extent	Rank	Importance	Rank	Extent	Rank	Importance	Rank
	Mean (SD)		Mean (SD)		Mean (SD)		Mean (SD)	
1. Acts friendly	3.33 (0.77)	2	3.33 (0.80)	11	3.34 (0.79)	2	3.40 (0.69)	12
2. Easy to approach	3.17 (0.88)	5	3.73 (0.52)	5	3.05 (0.93)	5	3.72 (0.52)	4
3. Gives attention when I talk	3.18 (0.83)	4	3.72 (0.52)	6	3.13 (0.89)	3	3.68 (0.54)	6
4. Honest and straightforward	3.16 (0.91)	6	3.86 (0.39)	1	2.94 (0.97)	8	3.83 (0.47)	1
5. Gives sense of importance	2.95 (0.99)	10	3.63 (0.63)	8	2.92 (0.99)	11	3.66 (0.59)	7
6. Considers ideas	3.01 (0.90)	8	3.58 (0.59)	9	2.96 (0.87)	7	3.58 (0.59)	9
7. Allows me input	2.97 (0.96)	9	3.78 (0.47)	4	2.90 (0.92)	9	3.70 (0.57)	5
8. Supports me on decisions	3.19 (0.86)	3	3.82 (0.45)	2	3.12 (0.81)	4	3.75 (0.48)	2
9. Shows genuine concern	3.05 (0.94)	7	3.80 (0.45)	3	3.01 (0.94)	6	3.73 (0.53)	3
10. Notices	2.80 (0.89)	12	3.30 (0.79)	12	2.82 (0.93)	12	3.41 (0.71)	11
11. Appreciates my work	2.84 (0.97)	11	3.46 (0.68)	10	2.88 (0.95)	10	3.53 (0.66)	10
12. Treat me like one of faculty	3.60 (0.68)	1	3.65 (0.69)	7	3.58 (0.68)	1	3.62 (0.65)	8

\* Variables are written in abbreviated form

$M = 3.10$   
(0.67)

$M = 3.05$   
(0.67)

$M = 3.63$   
(0.36)

"shows genuine concern for my program and students" was ranked low by both special (7) and general educators (6) but ranked higher in importance (3). This suggest that although principals are providing emotional support it may not be the type of emotional support that the general and special educators in this study need.

The appraisal support items in Table 9 indicate exceptional agreement in the rank ordering of all item means, both across the general and special educator groups and within group samples. For example, general and special educators ranked extent items exactly the same ( $r_s=1.00$ ) and importance items very similar ( $r_s=.96$ ). In addition, agreement was high within each respondent group for extent and importance items [(SPED),  $r_s=.89$ ; (GE),  $r_s=.86$ ]. For all respondents, "trusts my judgment in making classroom decisions" and "shows confidence in my actions" were perceived to be the most received and most important items of appraisal support. Only a few items were ranked differently. Item 14, "provides standards for performance," was the third most provided item of appraisal support but both groups rated it less important (5) and item 15, "offers constructive feedback after observing my teaching," was rated fifth in extent of support received but both groups rated it higher in importance (SPED 4, GE 3). Special educators indicated in item 13 that principals should provide clearer guidelines for them. It appears (with only

Table 9

Means, Standard Deviations, and Rankings for Extent and Importance of Appraisal Support Items Among Special and General Educators

Variables	Special Educators $n = 377$				General Educators $n = 304$			
	Extent	Rank	Importance	Rank	Extent	Rank	Importance	Rank
	Mean (SD)		Mean (SD)		Mean (SD)		Mean (SD)	
13. Clear guidelines regarding job	2.95 (0.94)	4	3.53 (0.78)	3	2.95 (0.87)	4	3.51 (0.72)	4
14. Provides standards	2.99 (0.92)	3	3.37 (0.82)	5	2.95 (0.86)	3	3.45 (0.77)	5
15. Offers constructive feedback	2.92 (1.01)	5	3.48 (0.79)	4	2.91 (1.01)	5	3.52 (0.73)	3
16. Frequent feedback	2.35 (0.98)	6	3.11 (0.94)	6	2.29 (0.98)	6	3.19 (0.88)	6
17. Helps me evaluate my needs	2.30 (0.98)	7	2.87 (1.00)	7	2.26 (0.99)	7	2.90 (0.93)	7
18. Trusts my judgment for decisions	3.55 (0.74)	1	3.85 (0.42)	1	3.49 (0.77)	1	3.80 (0.45)	1
19. Shows confidence in my actions	3.33 (0.82)	2	3.75 (0.55)	2	3.35 (0.79)	2	3.75 (0.52)	2
* Variables are written in abbreviated form	$\bar{M} = 2.92$ (0.67)		$\bar{M} = 3.42$ (0.57)		$\bar{M} = 2.88$ (0.68)		$\bar{M} = 3.44$ (0.50)	

the few exceptions listed above) that respondents are relatively satisfied with the appraisal support they receive.

Rank order correlation coefficients indicate informational items (see Table 10) were also ranked with remarkable similarity across the special and general educator samples [ $r_s$  (extent)=.95;  $r_s$  (importance)=.90], as well as within each sample group [(SPED)  $r_s$ =.90; (GE)  $r_s$ =.93]. Both general and special educators agreed their principal "encourages professional growth," "provides opportunities to attend workshops, conferences, and take courses," and "provides knowledge of legal policies." Only general educators ranked "assists with proper ID of special education student" more important than knowledge of legal policies. This is noteworthy because it indicates an area in which principals can offer more support to general educators. All respondents felt that principals provided the least amount of support with 'improving coping skills' but they also believed it to be less important.

Inspection of table 11 shows moderately high similarity in rank ordering of both extent and importance item means across the special and general educator samples [ $r_s$ (extent)=.88;  $r_s$ (importance)=.79] for instrumental support. Only two items indicated noticeable differences in extent item ranking across the general and special educator groups; special educators perceive they receive less planning time

Table 10

## Means, Standard Deviations, and Rankings for Extent and Importance of Informational Support Items Among Special and General Educators

Variables	Special Educators $n = 377$				General Educators $n = 304$			
	Extent	Rank	Importance	Rank	Extent	Rank	Importance	Rank
	Mean (SD)		Mean (SD)		Mean (SD)		Mean (SD)	
20. Provides helpful information for improving coping skills	2.23 (1.00)	8	2.68 (1.07)	8	2.12 (0.99)	8	2.64 (1.04)	8
21. Provides information on up to date techniques	2.36 (1.06)	6	2.89 (0.99)	7	2.52 (1.04)	6	3.04 (0.89)	6
22. Provides knowledge of legal policies and administrative regulations	2.73 (1.07)	3	3.26 (0.89)	2	2.77 (1.03)	3	3.11 (0.88)	4
23. Opportunities to attend workshops and take courses	3.06 (0.99)	2	3.39 (0.80)	1	3.23 (0.89)	1	3.38 (0.79)	1
24. Encourages professional growth	3.08 (0.92)	1	3.25 (0.83)	3	3.12 (0.87)	2	3.27 (0.81)	2
25. Provides suggestions for me to improve	2.32 (0.98)	7	2.91 (0.97)	6	2.40 (0.98)	7	3.03 (0.92)	7
26. Provides resource personnel	2.67 (1.02)	5	3.20 (0.88)	5	2.66 (1.04)	4	3.07 (0.88)	5
27. Assists with proper ID of special ed students	2.70 (1.13)	4	3.22 (1.00)	4	2.62 (1.07)	5	3.20 (0.93)	3

\* Variables are written in abbreviated form

$M = 2.64$  (0.73)       $M = 3.10$  (0.66)       $M = 2.68$  (0.69)       $M = 3.09$  (0.65)

Table 11

Means, Standard Deviations, and Rankings for Extent and Importance of Instrumental Support Items Among Special and General Educators

Variables	Special Educators $N = 377$			General Educators $N = 304$		
	Extent Mean (SD)	Rank	Importance Mean (SD)	Extent Mean (SD)	Rank	Importance Mean (SD)
28. Available to help	3.00 (0.92)	2	3.61 (0.68)	2.77 (0.93)	5	3.61 (0.62)
29. Help with schedule	2.08 (1.02)	11	2.37 (1.17)	2.26 (1.03)	11	2.52 (1.09)
30. Helps solve problems	2.88 (0.91)	5	3.31 (0.82)	2.77 (0.94)	6	3.32 (0.83)
31. Establishes communication between teachers	2.44 (1.01)	10	3.36 (0.83)	2.55 (0.98)	9	3.12 (0.87)
32. Helps with class discipline	2.76 (1.00)	7	3.39 (0.92)	2.65 (1.00)	8	3.41 (0.80)
33. Helps with parent confrontations	3.21 (0.97)	1	3.68 (0.62)	3.11 (0.96)	1	3.63 (0.65)
34. Time for non teaching jobs	2.44 (1.13)	9	3.59 (0.70)	2.52 (1.01)	10	3.28 (0.85)
35. Planning time	2.74 (1.07)	8	3.69 (0.63)	2.93 (0.97)	3	3.67 (0.59)
36. Provides materials	2.90 (0.93)	4	3.63 (0.65)	2.90 (0.94)	4	3.55 (0.65)
37. Participates in child study	2.95 (1.05)	3	3.36 (0.90)	2.95 (1.04)	2	3.27 (0.89)
38. Helps me plan goals	1.90 (0.92)	13	2.44 (1.10)	2.12 (1.05)	12	2.68 (1.00)
39. Extra assistance when overloaded	2.03 (1.01)	12	3.19 (0.91)	1.97 (1.00)	13	3.05 (0.95)
40. Equally distributes resources	2.84 (1.04)	6	2.32 (0.84)	2.65 (1.02)	7	3.39 (0.75)

\* Variables are written in abbreviated form

$M = 2.62$   
(0.64)

$M = 3.30$   
(0.47)

$M = 2.62$   
(0.63)

$M = 3.27$   
(0.49)

than general educators (SPED 8 verses 3 GE), and general educators perceive their principal less "available to help when needed," (GE 5 verses SPED 2). General and special educators ranked four items noticeably different in importance. It was more important to special educators for principals to "establish communication between teachers" (SPED 7 verses 10 GE) and allow more "time for non teaching jobs" (SPED 5 verses 8 GE). General educators on the other hand felt it more important for principals to "help them solve problems" (GE 7 verses 9 SPED) and "equally distribute resources and unpopular chores," (GE 6 verses SPED 13). There was less agreement in rank ordering between item means for extent and importance within respondent groups [(SPED)  $r_s=.51$ ; (GE)  $r_s=.77$ ]. Special educators ranked "provides adequate planning time," "provides time for various non teaching jobs," and "establish channels of communication between general and special education teachers and other professionals," near the bottom for extent (rankings were 8, 9 and 10 respectively) but higher in importance (1,5,7 respectively). General educators ranked the item "participates in child study" close to the top for extent (2) but ranked close to the bottom for importance (9); "helps with class discipline" and "time for non teaching jobs" were ranked low for extent (8 and 10) but higher in importance (5 and 8). These responses imply that principals should restructure some of their methods of instrumental

support to accommodate specific needs of special and general educators.

Research Question Three: What relationship does gender, age, race, experience, levels and types of students taught, and other work related variables have with perceived extent and importance of support?

Regression analyses were used to examine the relationship between respondents' demographic and work-related variables and the perceived extent and importance of support. For these analyses, the extent and importance scores were obtained by averaging the ratings across all forty items, ignoring the four dimensions discussed heretofore. The scores thus obtained are referred to as total extent and total importance scores. The correlations between each independent variable (demographic variable and work-related variables) and the dependent variables of total extent and importance of principal support are presented in Table 12 for special educators and Table 13 for general educators.

The SPSS forward selection regression procedure (1988) was used for these analyses. This procedure builds a regression equation by sequentially selecting independent variables that explain a significant ( $p < .05$ ) amount of variance in the criterion variable, over and above the variance explained by variables already in the equation.

Table 12

## Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations Among Variables for Descriptive Statistics Among Special Educators (n = 342)

Variable	Mean	SD	Tot Ext Sup	Tot Imp Sup	Respon. Gender	Age	Race	Years Pres. Pos.	Total Years Exp	Endorsed	Grade Level	Socio Econ	Parent Sup	Comrad	Type Prog	Princ Gender	Interaction
Tot Ext Sup	2.82	0.60	1.00	0.33	-0.05	0.06	0.03	0.05	-0.01	0.00	-0.16	-0.01	0.16	0.48	-0.03	-0.01	0.37
Tot Imp Sup	3.37	0.40	1.00	1.00	-0.05	-0.02	0.17	0.01	-0.10	0.05	-0.03	-0.03	0.14	0.14	-0.03	0.06	0.16
Respondent Gender	1.13	0.34	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.06	0.04	0.00	0.09	-0.03	0.24	-0.01	-0.09	-0.07	-0.08	-0.12	-0.11
Age	3.90	1.67	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.02	0.43	0.62	-0.09	0.06	-0.07	-0.01	0.01	-0.01	-0.03	-0.08
Race	1.21	0.45	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.17	0.13	0.07	0.07	0.00	0.09	-0.09	0.08	-0.08	-0.18
Years Pres Pos	6.55	5.92	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.58	-0.20	0.03	-0.03	0.00	-0.06	0.10	-0.07	-0.02
Tot Yrs Exp.	6.28	2.15	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-0.21	0.10	-0.02	-0.01	0.00	-0.06	-0.06	-0.03
Endorsed	1.06	0.24	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-0.08	0.08	0.05	0.04	-0.04	0.02	0.05
Grade Level	1.78	0.81	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.16	-0.13	-0.22	-0.21	-0.12	-0.21
Socio Econ	1.64	0.37	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.42	0.08	-0.06	0.06	-0.08
Parent Sup	2.74	1.16	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.29	-0.07	-0.02	0.08
Comrad	3.01	1.20	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.05	-0.02	0.24
Type Prog.	3.40	0.84	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-0.02	-0.13
Princ. Gender	1.35	0.49	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.07
Interaction	2.54	0.63	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Significant at the .10 level

Table 13

Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations Among Variables for Descriptive Statistics Among General Educators (n = 285)

Variable	Mean	SD	Tot Ext Sup	Tot Imp Sup	Respond. Gender	Age	Race	Years Pres. Pos.	Total Years Exp	Endorsed	Grade Level	Socio Econ	Parent Sup	Camarad	Princ Gender	Inter- action
Tot Ext Sup	2.80	0.60	1.00	0.24	-0.05	-0.01	0.00	-0.06	-0.02	0.00	-0.18	-0.04	0.14	0.42	0.10	0.45
Tot Imp Sup	3.38	0.41		1.00	-0.11	-0.05	0.13	0.00	-0.03	0.02	-0.23	0.03	0.07	0.12	-0.04	0.07
Respondent Gender	1.16	0.37			1.00	0.05	0.01	0.09	0.08	0.02	0.25	-0.05	-0.22	-0.04	-0.09	0.04
Age	4.20	1.76				1.00	-0.01	0.45	0.76	-0.01	0.11	0.03	0.06	-0.07	-0.07	-0.06
Race	1.14	0.35					1.00	0.10	-0.01	0.13	0.08	-0.06	-0.14	-0.06	-0.08	-0.09
Years Pres Pos	8.69	6.50						1.00	0.56	-0.11	0.07	-0.03	-0.02	0.01	-0.16	0.01
Tot Yrs Exp.	6.87	2.02							1.00	-0.06	0.03	0.07	0.10	-0.06	-0.11	-0.06
Endorsed	1.04	0.20								1.00	0.07	-0.03	-0.09	-0.06	0.00	-0.09
Grade Level	1.77	0.80									1.00	0.04	-0.15	-0.15	-0.25	-0.16
Socio Econ	1.69	0.55										1.00	-0.46	0.16	-0.11	0.01
Parent Sup	2.92	1.14											1.00	0.37	-0.08	0.09
Camarad	2.98	1.04												1.00	-0.02	0.20
Princ. Gender	1.31	0.46													1.00	-0.06
Interaction	2.44	0.67														1.00

Significant at the .10 level

Because this selection procedure is data dependent, it is necessary to cross-validate the results. At issue is whether the same variables, and a similar percentage of criterion variance would be explained if the procedure were to be applied to another sample from the same population. Rather than draw a new sample, it is common practice to split the available sample into two equal subsamples (odd and even numbered cases). The regression is then applied to both subsamples and the equation obtained from one subsample (even numbered cases) is applied to the data in the other sample (odd numbered cases) and vice versa. The correlation between observed scores and scores predicted using the equation from the other sample are interpreted as the cross-validated regression coefficients.

The regression results are presented in Table 14 and Table 15 for the special education sample and the general education samples, respectively. Metric (b) coefficients are shown in these tables only for variables that make a significant (.05 level) contribution to the prediction of the dependent variables. In both samples, the squared multiple correlation was higher for predicting extent of support ( $R^2 = .314$  for SPED and  $R^2 = .334$  for GENED). Only a few of the demographic and work related variables entering the equation appear in both crossvalidation samples. Two exceptions to this were, 'camaraderie and optimism characterize my school' and

Table 14

Cross Validation Results of Forward Selection Regression Showing Metric Equations for Predicting Extent and Importance of Support Expressed by Special Education Teachers

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables					
	Extent of Support Sample		Importance of Support Sample			
	Total	Odd	Even	Total	Odd	Even
Frequency of Interaction with Principal	.278	.307	.282	.107	.108	.111
Air of Camaraderie	.210	.214	.182	.038	.054	
Principal Gender		-.155				
Total Years Experience		-.078	.046	-.024	-.057	
Grade Level						
Race	.161		.179	.202	.260	.148
Age		.068			.048	
Gender						
Socio Economic Level of Students					.116	
Constant	1.287	1.822	1.032	2.898	2.985	2.909
Cumulative R <sup>2</sup>	.314	.440	.273	.094	.191	.053
C.V.R. <sup>2</sup>		.295	.171		.074	.024
$\Sigma$	342	169	172	342	169	172

Table 15

Cross Validation Results of Forward Selection Regression Showing Metric Equations for Predicting Extent and Importance of Support Expressed by General Education Teachers

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables					
	Extent of Support Sample			Importance of Support Sample		
	Total	Odd	Even	Total	Odd	Even
Frequency of Interaction with Principal	.353	.355	.370			
Air of Camaraderie	.201	.238	.163			
Principal Gender	.167	.202			-.173	
Total Yrs. Exp.						
Grade Level				-.126	-.132	-.085
Race				.175		.240
Age		.054				-.046
Gender						-.195
Socio Economic Level of Students						
Constant	1.123	.703	1.438	3.403	3.808	3.703
Cumulative R <sup>2</sup>	.334	.352	.329	.077	.070	.211
C.V.R. <sup>2</sup>		.291	.308		.040	.013
n	285	144	141	285	144	141

'frequency of interaction with my principal,' which contributed significantly to the prediction of extent of principal support in both subsamples. The magnitude of these regression coefficients for extent of support tended to be larger for general educators but for importance of support the regression coefficients were larger for special educators. The signs were positive.

The equation for the importance of support not only had the lowest squared multiple correlation (GENED,  $R^2=.077$ ; SPED,  $R^2=.094$ ), it also did not have any independent variables to survive the crossvalidation test of being selected in both half-samples for both groups. As illustrated in Tables 14 and 15 some of the independent variables survived crossvalidation for one group but not the other.

Research Question Four: What is the relative importance of the different types of perceived support in predicting teacher stress, personal health, job satisfaction, school commitment and intent to stay in teaching?

Regression analyses were used to examine the relationship between teacher type (special or general education teacher), the four dimensions of support, and teacher stress, personal health, job satisfaction, school commitment and intent to stay in teaching. The correlations between the composite variables of received principal support and the five criterion variables are presented in Table 16. The coefficients are based on the

total sample (N=663). The intercorrelations reported in this table are used as input for the regression analyses that follow. It should be noticed that several correlations between these variables are significant exceeding .09 in absolute value.

The regression results are presented in Table 17 for the total sample. Metric (b) coefficients are shown in these tables only for variables that make a significant (.05 level) contribution to the prediction of the dependent variables. The squared multiple correlation was highest for predicting job satisfaction ( $R^2=.212$ ) and lowest for predicting intent to stay in teaching ( $R^2=.028$ ). All five independent variables (extent of emotional, appraisal, informational and instrumental principal support and an additional variable for teacher type) contribute to the regression equations. Only a few of the principal support variables entering the equation appear in the cross validation subsample. Although not all five variables entered the equations for all five criterion variables, those that entered had the same sign and the magnitude of the regression coefficients were similar. Extent of emotional support contributed significantly to three criterion variables, job satisfaction, school commitment and personal health. As expected, job satisfaction and school commitment show positive coefficients whereas personal health reveals negative coefficients. In addition, extent of

Table 16

Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations Among Variables for Descriptive Statistics Among General and Special Educators (n = 663)

Variable	Mean	SD	Job Sat	Stress	Commit	Health	Intent to Stay	Ext Emot Sup	Ext Aprz Sup	Ext Info Sup	Ext Instr Sup	Type
Job Sat	2.92	0.45	1.00	-0.30	0.38	-0.27	0.25	0.42	0.41	0.42	0.40	0.01
Stress	2.47	0.89		1.00	-0.12	0.60	-0.16	-0.17	-0.14	-0.08	-0.17	0.07
Commit	4.30	0.68			1.00	-0.06	0.20	0.37	0.34	0.35	0.37	0.09
Health	1.67	0.50				1.00	0.19	-0.16	-0.16	-0.11	-0.14	0.05
Intent to Stay	3.18	1.02					1.00	0.14	0.14	0.12	0.08	0.09
Ext Emot Sup	3.08	0.67						1.00	0.77	0.67	0.72	-0.04
Ext Aprz Sup	2.90	0.68							1.00	0.77	0.73	-0.02
Ext Info Sup	2.66	0.72								1.00	0.76	0.02
Ext Instr Sup	2.62	0.64									1.00	0.00
Type	1.45	0.50										1.00

Coefficients greater than .09 are significant at the .05 level

Table 17

Cross Validation Results of Forward Selected Regression Showing Metric Equations for Predicting Job Satisfaction, Stress, School Commitment, Personal Health and Intent to Stay Among General and Special Educators

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables													
	Job Satisfaction		Stress		School Commitment		Personal Health		Intent to Stay					
	Total	Odd	Even	Total	Odd	Even	Total	Odd	Even	Total	Odd	Even		
Ext Emot Sup	.163	.160	.162	-.218	-.172	.230	.264	.177	-.120	-.120	-.123	.214		
Ext Aprz Sup														.222
Ext Info Sup	.163	.200	.127											.239
Ext Instr Sup														
Type														.188
Constant	1.983	1.881	2.089	3.140	2.967	2.883	2.897	2.959	2.041	2.017	2.077	2.243	2.564	2.506
Cumulative R <sup>2</sup>	.212	.257	.170	.027	.016	.057	.171	.143	.026	.026	.028	.028	.027	.023
C . V . R . <sup>2</sup>		.252	.170		.014	.043	.190	.125	.025	.025	.029		.015	.007
D	663	333	329	663	333	329	663	333	663	333	329	663	333	329

instrumental support contributed significantly to the criterion variable school commitment. Also, extent of informational support contributed to the criterion variable job satisfaction. The equations for intent to stay and stress not only had the lowest squared multiple correlation, but also none of the independent variables survived the crossvalidation test.

#### Additional Findings

During the analysis of the four formal research questions additional questions were formulated and investigated.

Question: To what extent can demographic and other miscellaneous variables along with job satisfaction, stress, school commitment, personal health and extent of principal support predict how long a person intends to stay in teaching?

Demographic (gender, age, race, endorsement, grade level teaching), and other variables (socioeconomic level of students, principal gender) along with composite scores from job satisfaction, stress, commitment, health and extent of support were selected to investigate the extent they could predict how long a person intended to stay in teaching. Table 18 shows the question asked on the questionnaire dealing with intent to stay in teaching and the response options used to measure how long a person intends to stay in teaching, along with the response frequencies for the sample. The sample for this question includes all teachers (N=681) participating in

the study without separating the sample into groups. The results of regressing intent to stay in teaching on the variables specified are presented in Table 19. Forward selection results indicate three independent variables were significant in predicting intentions to stay in teaching; these include age, job satisfaction and personal health. A negative regression weight resulted from the composite personal health score but job satisfaction and age produced a positive regression weight. This is to be expected because those experiencing fewer health problems obtained lower scores thus they had higher intentions to stay in teaching. The extent of perceived principal support did not enter as a significant predictor variable for intent to stay in teaching.

Question: Do general and special education teachers experience significantly different feelings about job satisfaction, school commitment, stress, personal health and intent to stay in teaching?

Independent sample t-tests were used to test mean differences on the composite scales for job satisfaction, stress, school commitment, personal health, and intent to stay in teaching. Composite scores for school commitment were significantly different ( $p < .05$ ), with school commitment somewhat higher among general educators ( $\bar{M}=4.36$  verses  $\bar{M}=4.25$ ). Significant mean differences were observed also between general and special educators for intent to stay in

Table 18

Response Frequencies (Percentages) to Intention to Stay in Teaching  
Item #79

Question	Special Educators		General Educators	
	n	%	n	%
Stem: Which of the following comes closest to describing how long you plan to teach?				
Options: 1) Definitely plan to leave teaching as soon as I can.	18	4.8	14	4.6
2) Will probably continue until something better comes along.	101	26.8	49	16.1
3) Until eligible for early retirement.	109	28.9	102	33.6
4) Until normal retirement	118	31.3	113	37.2
5) Until forced to retire due to age	26	6.9	23	7.6

NOTE: % does not equal 100%.

Table 19

Double Cross Validated Results of Forward Selection Regression to Predict Intent to Stay in Teaching

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable		
	Intent to Stay Sample	Even	
	Total	Odd	
Age	.089	.079	.108
Type	.153		.230
Tot Job Sat	.350	.317	.414
Tot Health	-.302	-.259	-.314
Tot Commitment	.208	.203	
Camaraderie			.151
Constant	1.306	1.487	1.273
Cumulative R <sup>2</sup>	.133	.100	.169
C. V. R. <sup>2</sup>		.070	.167
$\bar{n}$	646	326	319

teaching ( $p < .05$ ), with higher mean scores associated with general educators ( $M=3.27$ ) versus special educators ( $M=3.10$ ). Although composite scores for job satisfaction, stress, and personal health were marginally higher for general educators, the mean differences were not significant (see Table 20).

Data from the composite scores were also subjected to a one way analysis of variance test to detect significant mean differences among the three groups of special educators. Post hoc analyses using the Tukey test procedure (Howell, 1987) were conducted on those variables having significant F-ratios. Among the composite mean scores, only the mean scores for stress were significantly different ( $F=4.96$ ). EMH teachers ( $M=2.22$ ) reported feeling significantly less stress than ED teachers. ED teachers felt the greatest stress ( $M=2.57$ ). Results are reported in table 20.

Question: Who usually provides the most support to general and special educators and is their support considered important?

Five items on the questionnaire were designed to identify who provides respondents with support and if respondent felt this support important. Choices included central office, the principal, assistant principal, special education teachers and general education teachers. The scale for extent of support

Table 20

Between Group Comparisons of Respondents' Expressions of Job Satisfaction, Stress, Commitment, Personal Health and Intent to Stay

TOTAL SCALE SCORES	SPECIAL EDUCATORS ONLY						ALL RESPONDENTS		
	ED	LD	EMH	F	Special Educators	General Educators	t		
Job Satisfaction	n	110	138	127		377	304		
	Mean	2.87	2.91	2.91	0.25	2.91	2.92		-0.27
	SD	0.45	0.44	0.41		0.46	0.43		
Stress	n	110	140	127		377	304		
	Mean	2.57*	2.46	2.22*	4.96*	2.41	2.54		-1.86
	SD	0.89	0.80	0.86		0.89	0.87		
Commitment	n	110	140	127		377	304		
	Mean	4.33	4.21	4.22	1.05	4.25	4.36		-2.11*
	SD	0.69	0.73	0.73		0.72	0.64		
Health	n	109	140	127		376	304		
	Mean	1.72	1.65	1.60	1.77	1.65	1.70		-1.19
	SD	0.57	0.48	0.46		0.50	0.50		
Intent to Stay	n	110	137	126		373	301		
	Mean	2.92	3.08	3.22	1.67	3.10	3.27		-2.21*
	SD	1.03	1.07	1.03		1.05	0.98		

\*Significant at the .05 level

ranged from (1) no extent to (4) a great extent and for importance was (6) not important to (9) very important; wherein, the later was recoded 1 to 4.

t-tests were used to determine whether differences existed between the group means for general and special educators (see Table 21). t-values indicated that special educators had significantly more support from central office ( $t=-4.209$ ) and from other special educators ( $t=-4.700$ ) but significantly less support from general education teachers ( $t=4.460$ ).

Data were also subjected to a one way analysis of variance. Post hoc analyses using the Tukey test procedure was conducted for those variables having significant F-ratios. Results indicated (see Table 21) that LD and EMH teachers reported receiving significantly more support from central office, and from other special education teachers than general educators. General educators indicated they received significantly more support from other general educators.

General educators responded that the greatest extent of their support came from special and general educators followed by principals and assistant principals. Special educators on the other hand, felt that the greatest extent of their support came from special educators, the assistant principal, and the principal.

Table 21

Extent and Importance of Support Ratings Received from Various Sources Across All Groups

Variable	Participants	EXTENT			IMPORTANCE		
		n	Mean (SD)	F/Contrasts	n	Mean (SD)	F/Contrasts
43. Central Office	Gen Ed	304	2.02 (1.00)	F = 6.52 a,c,d	300	2.71 (1.13)	F = 15.44 a,b,c,d
	ED	110	2.29 (1.07)		110	3.21 (1.01)	
	LD	137	2.31 (1.01)		131	3.28 (0.91)	
	EMH	126	2.44 (1.04)		126	3.29 (0.99)	
44. Principal	Gen Ed	304	3.04 (0.91)	F = 0.86	302	3.78 (0.53)	F = 2.36 e
	ED	110	3.08 (0.92)		110	3.65 (0.71)	
	LD	140	2.91 (1.01)		134	3.65 (0.63)	
	EMH	127	3.06 (0.88)		127	3.75 (0.59)	
45. Assistant Principal	Gen Ed	296	2.97 (1.00)	F = 1.84	261	3.52 (0.85)	F = 1.00
	ED	98	3.09 (1.06)		98	3.40 (0.98)	
	LD	124	3.23 (0.89)		119	3.57 (0.74)	
	EMH	110	3.07 (1.05)		112	3.48 (0.90)	
46. Special Education Teachers	Gen Ed	298	3.17 (0.91)	F = 8.08 a,c,d	300	3.40 (0.85)	F = 10.04 a,b,c,d
	ED	110	3.40 (0.83)		110	3.63 (0.66)	
	LD	138	3.51 (0.79)		133	3.76 (0.55)	
	EMH	126	3.52 (0.75)		126	3.71 (0.65)	
47. General Education Teachers	Gen Ed	299	3.17 (0.86)	F = 9.85 a,b,e	293	3.48 (0.77)	F = 2.67 a,c
	ED	109	2.65 (0.95)		109	3.59 (0.74)	
	LD	139	3.02 (0.82)		131	3.69 (0.54)	
	EMH	125	2.94 (0.92)		124	3.55 (0.74)	

Significant Contrasts at the .05 level of significance

- a = Gen Ed vs. All Special Educators
- b = Gen Ed vs. ED
- c = Gen Ed vs. LD
- d = Gen Ed vs. EMH
- e = ED vs. LD

$t$ -tests and one way analysis of variance were also used to see how important both general and special educators rated support from each group. Special educators indicate it was significantly more important to receive support from other special education teachers, general educators and central office; whereas, general educators rate support from the principal more important.

Special educators ranked support from other special educators most important, followed by their principal's support, then support from general educators and assistant principals and last central office. General educators reveal that principal support is more important, followed by support from the assistant principal, general education teachers, special education teachers and last central office.

#### Summary of Results

The findings of this study reveal a picture of the typical general and special education teacher, their program and school setting. The average age of the general educator in this sample was 39; whereas, the average age for special educators was 38. Most are white and female. Both groups are experienced teachers with appropriate endorsement to teach in their current position. The typical general education teacher has taught 14 years and has been in their current position for approximately 9 years; the typical special

education teacher has taught 12 years, working at their present position 7 years.

Most respondents are in an elementary school setting with a male principal. The model response to the question of how often do you interact with your principal was "occasionally." General educators reported that they get a great deal of their support from other general and special educators followed by principals then assistant principal but much less support from their central office administrators. Special educators feel that they receive more support from their assistant principal, and other special education teachers than from their principal and general education teachers. Their lowest source of support is the central office.

General and special education teachers' responses indicated that the most important dimension of principal support is emotional support, followed by appraisal, instrumental and informational. Higher mean scores indicate that principals provide more emotional and appraisal support. Differences do exist in the way teachers rated extent and importance of informational and instrumental support. Both groups of teachers indicate that emphasis should be placed on instrumental support rather than informational support but this is not the rank order in which teachers perceive

principals provide support. Additionally female principals provide significantly more informational support than male principals.

Teachers' scores across each level of support suggest that they are receiving a fair amount of support from their principals. But even though these scores are high, there was still a discrepancy between the support teachers received and the importance they placed on that support with importance items significantly higher than the actual extent of support received.

Rank ordering of both extent and importance item means within each support dimension across the general and special educator groups and within each sample group indicated different rankings between extent and importance of support by both groups. Different rankings were especially noticed for emotional and instrumental support items, whereas appraisal and informational support indicated relatively high correlations for both extent and importance items. For emotional support, there was more disagreement within the group samples rather than across the population samples. Indeed, within each group, respondents indicated that principals provided a great deal of emotional support on some items that they did not rank important. For example, all respondents ranked "being honest and straight-forward" and

"shows genuine concern for my program and students" as top in importance for emotional support but close to the bottom for extent of support they actually receive from principals.

Rank order correlation coefficients for instrumental support item means, although moderate, indicate even greater diversity in ranking than the emotional rankings. This was because there was more disagreement within and across the general and special educator group samples. Special educators ranked, "provides time for various non teaching jobs," "establish channels of communication between general and special education teachers and other professionals," near the bottom for extent of support but higher in importance. General educators ranked "participates in child study," high in extent but low in importance. Conversely, "help with class discipline" and "time for non teaching jobs," were ranked low for extent but high in importance. Comparing extent and importance items across the two groups, "planning time," "participates in child study," "equally distributes resources," "time for non teaching jobs," and "establish communication between teachers," were items with noticeable differences in extent and importance rankings.

This study found that work related and other variables were better predictors of principal support than demographic variables. Camaraderie and optimism in schools and the

frequency with which teachers interact with their principal are significant factors to predicting a high extent of principal support for both general and special educators.

For both general and special educators, it was found that emotional support was a common predictor of job satisfaction, school commitment and personal health. Teachers' job satisfaction is also associated with a high level of informational support from their principals. Additionally, school commitment is positively associated with high levels of emotional and instrumental support. There is a negative relationship between personal health and the extent of emotional support from their principal which means that teachers receiving a high level of support experience fewer personal health problems.

Age was the only demographic variable found to be associated with intent to stay in teaching across all groups of teachers. Intent to stay in teaching is also correlated with level of job satisfaction and level of personal health. General educators experience a significantly higher degree of school commitment and intent to stay in teaching than special educators. However overall, extent of support was not a significant predictor of intent to stay in teaching.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this study was to identify the support dimensions that both general and special education teachers currently perceived to have received from their principals and determine which dimensions they consider most important. A secondary purpose was to investigate the relationship of demographic variables and other work related variables to perceived extent and importance of support. Additionally, the effects of principal support on job satisfaction, school commitment, stress, personal health and intent to stay in teaching were explored. A discussion of these findings as well as implications for educational agencies are addressed in this chapter.

#### Importance of Support

This study has validated that the four types of support based on House's theory (1987) are important to teachers. Emotional, appraisal, informational, and instrumental support constitute a valid set of support behaviors for teachers.

It is clearly evident, from the results of this study, that both general and special education teachers feel that emotional support is the most important form of support. This type of support involves providing empathy, caring, love, and trust (House, 1987). House theorized that emotional support is most important and this study supports his hypothesis.

Both general and special educators indicate that the most important aspect of emotional support is being honest and straightforward, receiving support on decisions they make, and showing concern for their program and students. Although teachers view being friendly as supportive they indicated by their responses that this was considered the least important type of emotional support for them. Teachers may feel that friendliness, noticing what they do and showing appreciation for their work are shallow support behaviors. Teachers want principals to get more involved with their students and their program.

Strong emotional support is the most important type of support in any job and life situation because it involves a positive spontaneous interaction between people which leads them to believe they are cared about (House, 1981). For teachers, emotional support from principals may be particularly important because teaching is an 'unstaged' career (Lortie, 1975). Teachers have few opportunities for promotion and receive few overt honors for their achievements. Being noticed by their principals, having input into decisions about school matters, and feeling a sense of importance are especially gratifying to teachers.

As subordinates to principals, teachers feel that emotional support is important because it provides a friendly, helpful and democratic atmosphere with their leader, rather

than a hostile environment. Principals who are considerate, easy to approach and friendly create a favorable and cooperative environment for teachers (Fleishman & Harris, 1962).

Emotional support from principals may be important to teachers because teaching is difficult and often stressful work (Blase, 1986; Cichon & Koff, 1980; Dworkin, 1981; Fimian & Santoro, 1983). Teachers work under conditions unlike any other professional group. They work with reluctant learners who are forced to attend school (Lortie, 1975) and often have no say in how many or which students they teach. However, at the same time they are held accountable for the children they teach. The right kind of emotional support provided by their principal can reduce the occupational stress and strain felt by teachers, buffer the impact of stress on health, and even reduce the negative aspects of stress such as burn out (Cobb, 1976; House, 1981).

Appraisal support was the second most important type of support for both general and special educators. Appraisal support involves the transmission of information relevant to self-evaluation (House, 1981). That is, other people are sources of information that individuals use in evaluating themselves (House, 1981). This information can be communicated directly to the individual as feedback or by establishing examples and letting the workers decide for

themselves whether they are above or below average (House, 1981). Interestingly, the respondents in this study expressed almost identical responses to extent and importance items of appraisal support.

Appraisal support is important because it conveys the message that teaching is a collective enterprise. Principals who believe that teachers are capable professionals encourage teachers to make classroom decisions. In this study both general and special educators indicated that the two most important items of appraisal support were for principals to trust their judgment in making classroom decisions and for the principal to show confidence in their actions and their responses indicate that principals do this. As professionals, teachers expect to have high levels of autonomy, to serve as their own judges, and to be highly involved in decision making (Conley, Bacharach, Bauer, 1989). Exercising their own ability to control how work is to be done helps teachers to become more responsible for their own performance (Rosenholtz, 1989) and in turn committed to their work. Power deprivation on the other hand is a significant predictor of teacher stress (Conley, Bacharach, Bauer, 1986) and dissatisfaction (Glickman, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1989).

Although autonomy and responsibility are important, principals also need to provide feedback to teachers. Feedback is another example of appraisal support and was

ranked high in importance by the respondents in this study. Human service work such as teaching is incredibly ambiguous therefore it is important for principals to provide appraisal support (Cherniss, 1980) so that teachers can feel more competent and secure. Such feedback is not usually provided from the work itself because students are unlikely to provide teachers meaningful feedback. Without feedback, teachers may begin to feel uncertain about their performance and generate feelings of frustration and inadequacy (Ashton & Webb, 1986).

Although honest appraisal might cause stress and may sometimes be painful, it is beneficial in the long run (House, 1981) because it provides teachers with critical information and instructions needed to perform their jobs. Eventually, appraisal support will result in better teaching strategies that ultimately results in greater student mastery (Heck, Larson, & Marcoulides, 1990). Given the evidence that most teachers enter teaching because they are more interested in the psychic rewards of classroom events and the societal contributions that they can make as a teacher (Lortie, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1989; Yee, 1990), it is important for teachers to receive feedback, intensive monitoring and day-to day assistance (Wise et al., 1985). Teachers are not interested in global and infrequent feedback, such as 'you're doing a fine job,' instead they want 'meaningful evaluative feedback

on their teaching performance,' (George et al., 1991, p.16). Responses by special educators indicated they think it is important for principals to provide clear guideline for them. However, research continues to illustrate that principals do not take full responsibility as instructional leaders for their schools' special education programs (Weinstein (1989). This is alarming in view of recent trends toward more integration of regular and special education into a unified system (Valesky & Hirth, 1992).

Both general and special education teachers judged instrumental support the third most important type of principal support. Instrumental support involves dispensing goods and services, money, labor, time or modification of the environment. Principals give instrumental support when they help their teachers do their work. General and special education teachers prioritized the importance of instrumental variables differently, but both groups think it is important to have more planning time, have help with parent confrontations, have their principals available when needed, and be given adequate materials and resources. Both groups of teachers in this study also judged it less important to receive extra assistance when overloaded, help with schedules, and help in planning specific goals and objectives. Lowest priority ratings from these two groups of respondents were surprising given the information acquired in the open ended

interviews conducted for this study. In the interviews, special educators felt that it was difficult working around the schedules of general educators because it put too many students in their room at certain times and too few at other times. They suggested that principals should consult with the special educators in their building first, so that a master schedule could be created to prevent this overcrowding. Teachers in these interviews also felt that they should receive extra help during their busiest times, for example in the spring. Although these were the lowest rated appraisal variables, scores ranged from average to above average in importance.

The instrumental item of particular importance to special educators was for the principal to "establish channels of communication between general and special educators and other professionals." For special educators this communication is important if the delivery of educational programs for handicapped students is going to be in compliance with IDEA. More and more the trend is to improve the learning situations for handicapped students by suggesting that regular and special education programs develop a partnership (Valesky & Hirth, 1992). Generally the principals are empowered with the authority to develop strategies to make this work.

It could be that instrumental support is expected from principals because it provides the structure that teachers

need so that they can be free to teach. The directive and task oriented activities of principals are necessary for schools to attain their goals (House, Filley, & Kerr, 1971). For example, principal assistance with discipline problems, the allocation of materials, space and equipment, and time schedules can affect a teacher's work duties and staff involvement (Lortie, 1975).

In order to solve basic functional problems, as well as plan and attain organizational goals, a certain amount of instrumental support is necessary (House et al., 1971; Bolin, 1989, Heck et al., 1990). To be effective leaders, principals must demonstrate their ability to provide the structure and motivation to resolve the problems of teachers (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan & Lee, 1982), coordinate and control the instructional program and overall school climate (Bossert et al.), and bring together the organizational goals (Glickman, 1990). However, the actual strategies used in instrumental support should be approached in a democratic and collaborative manner rather than ordering teachers to comply (Bolin, 1989).

Informational support was ranked last in importance in this study, although the means for the two teacher groups were still high, ( $\bar{M}$ =3.10 special educators and  $\bar{M}$ =3.09 for general educators). It is not known exactly why this occurred, but one might question if it could be due to the career stage of

the respondents (Glickman, 1990). The respondents in this study are older and more experienced teachers (average age for general educators was 39 and for the special educator it was 38), and may not need as much informational support as novice teachers. These respondents may consider collegial exchange, opportunities to take on additional roles such as mentoring and participation in decisions more valuable because of their career stage (Glickman, 1990; Yee, 1990). Teachers may also view informational support as somewhat stressful because it often means an introduction to new ideas that lead teachers to develop new skills and alter their ways of thinking and doing (Fullan, 1985). Chapman and Lowther (1982) noted that new learning usually goes unnoticed and often brings few external rewards to teachers. Further, new learning is not considered an effective way to advance a teachers career (Chapman & Lowther, 1982) because of the cellular nature of the school (Lortie, 1975). Another reason for the lower ranking may be that they receive informational support from other sources such as central office, journals, graduate courses, other teachers and community resources and services. Special educators in this study, for example, indicated that support from other special education teachers, general educators and central office were more important to them. General educators on the other hand indicated that principal support was more important to them.

Principals provide informational support by giving advice, making suggestions, providing directions and information that teachers can use in coping with personal and environmental problems (House, 1981). Specific examples of important informational support for both general and special education teachers in this study are: (1) provides teachers with opportunities to attend workshops, conferences, and take courses, (2) encourages professional growth, (3) assists with proper identification of special education students, (4) provides knowledge of legal policies, and (5) provides resource personnel to help solve problems. General educators in this study indicated it was particularly important for principals to assist with identifying special education students.

Principals must encourage teachers to expand their knowledge to acquire new instructional procedures that will help them in the classroom (Blase, 1987; Rosenholtz, 1987). Any new approach that is even slightly successful is worthwhile to the teacher because it elicits personal meaningfulness, and a sense of professional pride. Informational support encourages teachers to learn alternative methods of dealing with classroom situations and at the same time enhances student learning. Even though informational support is considered the least important type of support those who actually learn new things have greater satisfaction

with their career (Chapman & Lowther, 1982) because they have a greater sense of success (Yee, 1990). Noted in this study, women principals provide more informational support than men. Since women are just beginning to climb the professional ladder and compete with men for higher positions, they may feel a greater obligation to spend time promoting professionalism and high quality teaching. Additionally, most of the women who are principals and supervisors were strong teachers, therefore, they may feel more comfortable establishing a leadership role in this area of support.

#### Extent of Support

Teachers indicate that principals provide more emotional support than any other kind of support. This is positive given that teachers rank emotional support as the most important of the four dimensions of support.

Even though this study indicates that the perceived level of principal support was average or above, an analysis of the importance and extent items suggest that principal support is not concentrated on the specific items that teachers felt most important. This finding is of concern because if teachers do not receive the support they believe important then they probably feel that they are not receiving support (House, 1981). Since lack of support is a leading cause of stress and burnout (Fimian, 1986; House, 1981; House, Wells, Kaplan & Landerman, 1979), it seems especially important that

principals provide the type of support teachers feel they need.

Individual items of support. Reporting only the mean of each item masks the variability in teacher perceptions across extent of support items. Approximately a third of the general and special education teachers felt only some or no support in 'gives me a sense of importance that I make a difference,' 'allows me input into decisions that effect me,' 'notices what I do,' and 'shows appreciation for what I do.' Three of these items are recognition type items suggesting that many of the respondents still seek support from the most fundamental of Maslow's, (1954) hierarchy of needs 'belonging'. Before teachers can become satisfied and contribute to the organization they must first feel they belong.

Both groups of teachers indicate that appraisal support was the second most provided support of principals. Again this is positive because teachers considered appraisal support the second most important type of support. Although special educators felt that they received slightly more appraisal support, the two groups of teachers prioritized these items almost the same. Being trusted to make classroom decisions, providing standards for performance and showing confidence in their actions are the most commonly received types of appraisal support. State mandates and research (Breton, & Donaldson, 1991; Glickman, 1990; Pajak, 1990) have made

principals more aware of the importance of providing feedback and setting standards for teachers to follow.

However, these mandates are often ritualized activities that do little to promote improvement (McLaughlin & Pfeifer, 1988; Yee, 1990). Lower mean scores for individual appraisal items emphasize this fact. For example, approximately half of both the general and special educators answering extent of appraisal support items suggested that their principals did not provide frequent feedback, or help teachers evaluate needs. Teachers often do not feel that they receive meaningful feedback on performance that allows them to be more effective or improve their teaching (Yee, 1990).

The third most provided dimension of support to both groups of teachers was informational support, however, when teachers considered its importance it was ranked fourth. Several items within informational support indicated that teachers feel little support. 'provides helpful information for improving personal coping skills,' 'provides information on up to date instructional techniques,' and 'provides suggestions for me to improve instruction,' all suggest that principals need to improve in this area.

In terms of support received, instrumental support was rated last. Principals need to concentrate more of their efforts on instrumental support because in terms of importance instrumental support was rated third. Rating the mean scores

on items within instrumental support also revealed that principals did not concentrate their energy in the same areas that teachers consider most important. Five items out of the thirteen items measuring instrumental support among special and general educators indicate that principals should take steps to improve: (1) providing time for various non-teaching jobs, and (2) establishing channels of communication, (3) establishing schedules, (4) providing extra assistance, and (5) helping plan specific goals and objectives.

On the whole research findings from this study suggest that while principals are providing a fair amount of emotional, appraisal, informational and instrumental support to teachers there are still a lot of teachers who indicate they do not receive enough support. This confirms previous research which has implied that principal support is a problem for some teachers ( Billingsley & Cross, 1991; Blase, 1984, 1986; Fimian, 1987, Needle et al. 1980, and Rosenholtz, 1989).

Comparison Between General and Special Education Teachers on Extent and Importance of Support

Although composite scores for extent and importance of support were similar for general and special educators, general and special educators ranked the types of support differently for extent and importance of support. All of the respondents reported receiving more informational support than

instrumental support from their principals. However, they believed that instrumental support was more important than informational support. It might be that the organizational structure that instrumental support provides helps teachers feel they can carry out their work activities better because of greater clarification of policies and rules (House et al. 1971). Another possible factor causing this change might be the overall age and level of experience of these respondents. Most of these teachers are around 38 years of age and have taught an average of 12 to 14 years. They have conquered the first stage of burnout that Blase (1982) indicates that teachers experience but they may be experiencing the second stage. After years of being constantly exposed to harassing experiences in which they have little control teachers begin to experience burn out. The structure and direction that instrumental support provides may give the direction that teachers need to carry out their work activities, especially when initiating change.

### Effects of Support

Although principal support does not alleviate all of the problems that teachers encounter, support represents one of the most effective means of alleviating the negative effects of job stress, improving personal health problems and buffering the impact of health on stress (Caplan et al., 1975; House, 1987; Pinneau, 1976). Further, support is related to

job satisfaction, (House, 1987), and commitment (Billingsley & Cross, 1992). By providing the dimensions of support, principals are modeling leadership through cooperation rather than control, thus building a better school environment.

Few demographic or work related variables were useful predictors of the extent of principals' support. In addition, no demographic or work related variables were useful predictors of importance of support. However, air of camaraderie and frequency of interaction with principals were significant predictors of the extent of principal support for both general and special educators. This means that teachers perceive higher levels of principal support when there is a high degree of camaraderie and optimism in their school and when teachers interact frequently with their principals. This interpretation is consistent with other studies. Principals who spend more time meeting and interacting with their teachers on work related problems and concerns create a more productive and stimulating environment (Cherniss, 1980; Yee, 1990). Further, House (1981) and Pajak (1990) feel that it is through communication and interaction that principals make their teachers feel valued. Teachers who are isolated from interacting with their principals are unable to command informal rewards from their colleagues and respect from their coworkers (Zielinski & Hoy, 1983).

This study investigated the extent to which perceived

support was useful in predicting job satisfaction, stress, commitment, health, and intent to stay in teaching. Higher levels of job satisfaction are associated with higher levels of both emotional and informational support. That is, principals who are 'emotionally supportive' are more likely to have teachers who are more satisfied with their work. Additionally, informational support is highly associated with teachers' job satisfaction. Several previous studies support these findings. Billingsley and Cross, (1992), found that leadership behaviors are associated with feelings of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is also associated with support behaviors at work that encourage interpersonal sensitivity and kindness (Motowidlo, 1984), consideration (Blase et al., 1986) and professional growth (Conley et al., 1989; Rosenholtz, 1989). Blase et al., (1986) suggest that consideration is important to teachers because they have people centered, humanistic orientations.

Another important finding was that both instrumental and emotional support were significant predictors of school commitment for special and general educators in this study, suggesting that the higher the instrumental or emotional support the greater the commitment to their school. Teachers have traditionally looked to principals as the leader of the school expecting them to keep things under control (Lortie, 1976). This control, when applied appropriately is considered

instrumental support. Teachers want principals to exert enough management skills to help them facilitate their work. Through appropriate exercise of authority principals bring control to chaos (Bolin, 1990). Additionally, emotional support provides teachers with a sense of belonging that motivates them to high performance and involvement.

Extent of emotional support showed significant negative coefficients for the criterion variable personal health, indicating that those teachers who experience fewer personal health problems receive more emotional support from their principals. House (1987), in his wide range of studies concluded that social support can improve health (House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988). Cassel (1976) and Cobb (1976) also found social support protective of health. Cohen and Hoberman (1983) indicate that the support that one receives can bolster a persons self esteem and lower the effects of high levels of stress such as depression. It seems that when people are provided with support that promotes their self esteem (emotional support) physical and psychological symptoms decrease (Cohen and Hoberman, 1983). Needle et al., 1981 also report that social support can mitigate the effects of stress, and overall well being.

Extent of emotional, appraisal, informational, or instrumental support were not significant predictors of stress, or intent to stay in teaching. This contradicts some

previous research findings. For example, Cobb (1978) indicates that social support facilitates stress reduction through communication and mutual obligation. House (1987) in his studies concluded that social support can reduce work stress. One possible explanation for the discrepancies might be a Type II error. Even though the sample population was randomly selected from the special and general education population (ED, LD, EMH) of Virginia teachers, it could be that the samples are not representative of their corresponding populations. In addition, the items measuring stress may not be appropriate for these respondents. Another possible explanation might be that teachers have several other sources of support. This study indicates that both general and special educators get support from each other as well as the assistant principal. These other sources of support may help eliminate the stress that teachers would normally feel if their only source of support was their principal.

#### Intent to Stay in Teaching

General educators experience significantly more school commitment and significantly higher intentions to stay in teaching than special educators. Meaninglessness, isolation and powerlessness are feelings linked to commitment and intent to stay (Dworkin, 1987) and these are feelings that special educators experience (Crane, & Iwanicki, 1986; Youngs, 1978). Teachers sense of meaninglessness occurs from working with

lower achieving children who do not demonstrate significant progress (Firestone & Rosenblum, 1988). Isolation is manifested when lack of opportunities for having interpersonal relationships with adults and other teachers occur (Youngs, 1978). Some sense of powerlessness is felt from the demands placed on special and general educators by mandates in IDEA, formerly EAHCA (Bensky et al., 1980). Special educators are required to communicate with general educators, however, this situation is often sensitive because of the nature of special education students (George et al., 1991). Other requirements of IDEA such as mainstreaming, coping with IEP's, and placement team meetings may be even more stressful for general educators but also create stress for special educators. Requirements by local and state agencies add extra work on special educators that often inhibits the ability of special educators to cope.

For all respondents, the older the teacher the higher the level of job satisfaction, and teachers who enjoy better health tend to stay in teaching. With the passage of time, teachers' change their attitudes toward quitting because of the side bets or investments (Becker, 1960) they have made to teaching. Older teachers stay in teaching because they might lose their benefits or security. Further, many of these older teachers do not have marketable skills. Most of the general and special educators in this study are in their late thirties

and have taught approximately ten years, thus it is not surprising their mobility is low. Some teachers stay because of entrapment rather than job satisfaction (Dworkin, 1987). Although extent of support was not predictive of intent to stay in teaching it is important to note that job satisfaction was a predictor of intent to stay in teaching. Since job satisfaction is dependent on workplace conditions (Dworkin, 1986; Yee, 1990) in which administrative policies and practices play a key role (Yee, 1990), it seems logical to assume that extent of support is indirectly involved.

#### Implications for Educational Agencies

This study indicates that although some general and special education teachers believe that principals are providing support, many teachers do not enjoy this support. Their responses indicate that principals do not always provide the support that teachers feel most important or the amount of support that teachers believe they should have. Therefore, consideration should be given to examining ways of increasing the kind of support that both general and special education teachers believe to be most important.

1. General and special education teachers in this study believe that emotional support is the most important type of support that administrators can provide. Therefore, principals should emphasize emotional support in their daily work activities.

They may do so by frequently interacting with teachers. However, accessibility is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the establishment of supportive relationships. Once people are accessible, they must behave toward each other in ways that produce feelings of social support (House, 1981).

2. University personnel that provide inservice programs for administrators should be cognizant of the variety of support that teachers find helpful; emotional, appraisal, instrumental and informational and help administrators develop the skills to provide these varied types of support.
3. As suggested in this study, most principals do offer support to both their general and special education teachers but it may not be the kind of support that they feel important. Consequently, both groups of teachers should be involved in identifying the kind of support they deem important. Principals should assess their behaviors to see if they are actually modeling the support that their faculty believes the most important. The support items used in the questionnaire for this study may be used as an assessment instrument to identify the types of support teachers perceive

as most important.

4. This study indicates that teachers who experience higher levels of principal support are more likely to experience job satisfaction, and building commitment and less likely to experience personal health problems. Strategies that principals should use to increase support are to provide an atmosphere of optimism and camaraderie rather than an environment of competition and confrontation. Uniting the staff through a 'we' approach rather than a superordinate-subordinate interaction will help teachers feel esteemed and respected as well as committed and satisfied with their job.

#### Suggestions for Future Research

The present study should be viewed as a starting point in understanding administrative support in Virginia. Additional research should be expanded to include a national sample of general and special education teachers perceptions of principal support. Further research is also needed to investigate what types of support are valued and provided by central office, fellow teachers (both general and special education), assistant principals, parents, and paraprofessionals.

Site based management has become a trend in many school systems today. It would be interesting to apply this study to

both the traditional environment, in which the principal has the ultimate authority, to site based management situations where teachers have a stronger voice in school matters. Such a study could determine if teachers rate the dimensions of support the same and whether support has the same effect on stress, job satisfaction, school commitment, personal health, and intent to stay in teaching.

Qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews and observations that could explore the teacher's perspective, would be worthwhile. This method allows questions and theories to emerge during and after data collection rather than being posed before the study begins (Jacob, 1988). It also allows the researcher to gather information on a more personal basis so that individual viewpoints as well as in-depth explanations are captured. The lengthy notes and letters attached to the returned questionnaires in this study illustrate that teachers have more to say and feel the need to explain what lies behind their responses.

Additionally, no study of principal support has measured support in the following three ways and compared the results: (1) measuring teacher's perceptions of support from their principal (2) measuring principal's perceptions of support they believe they are providing to their teachers, and (3) data from observations of interactions between teachers and principals. Another possible study might involve studying

the specific types of support needs of teachers experiencing high levels of stress. Such a study might give insight into specific behaviors that principals should exhibit when teachers are confronted with stressful situations.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**Questionnaire**

Virginia Department of Education

Principal Support Questionnaire

**\*IMPORTANT: An opscan answer sheet is provided for recording responses to each item. A separate blank sheet is provided for additional comments. Item numbers listed on the left side of each question must match the item number on the opscan sheet. Use a #2 pencil to record your answers on the answer sheet. Blacken the circle that corresponds to your answer. Please carefully follow all directions regarding the use of the answer sheet. The recording format is somewhat different for Parts I, II, III, IV, V and VI.**

Part I. Administrative Support

**IN THIS SECTION WE ARE ASKING YOU TO MAKE TWO JUDGMENTS ABOUT EACH STATEMENT. WE ARE INTERESTED IN KNOWING THE EXTENT OF SUPPORT YOU RECEIVE FROM YOUR BUILDING PRINCIPAL AND HOW IMPORTANT EACH TYPE OF SUPPORT IS TO YOU AND YOUR JOB.**

**FIRST, PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU RECEIVE THE TYPE OF SUPPORT DESCRIBED IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS BY USING THE SCALE 1 - NO EXTENT TO 4 - GREAT EXTENT. RECORD YOUR RESPONSES IN THE SPACES NUMBERED 1 - 4 ON THE OPSCAN SHEET. SECOND PLEASE INDICATE HOW IMPORTANT EACH ITEM OF SUPPORT IS FOR YOU IN YOUR CURRENT POSITION BY USING THE SCALE 6 - NO IMPORTANCE TO 9 - GREAT IMPORTANCE. RECORD YOUR RESPONSES IN SPACES NUMBERED 6 - 9 ON THE OPSCAN SHEET. FOR EXAMPLE, IF THE ITEM REPRESENTS AN AREA IN YOUR JOB IN WHICH YOU RECEIVE SUPPORT TO A GREAT EXTENT BUT YOU DO NOT FEEL THAT THIS SUPPORT IS IMPORTANT, BLACKEN CIRCLE "4" AND CIRCLE "6" ON THE OPSCAN SHEET.**

**IF THERE ARE TWO OR MORE PRINCIPALS IN YOUR BUILDING, CONSIDER THE ONE TO WHOM YOU USUALLY REPORT OR THE ONE WITH WHOM YOU HAVE THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF CONTACT.**

**BE SURE TO USE OPTION SPACES 1 - 4 FOR THE FIRST JUDGMENT AND OPTION SPACES 6 - 9 FOR THE SECOND JUDGMENT.**

	Extent of Support				Importance of Support			
	No Extent 1	2	3	Great Extent 4	Not Important 6	7	Very Important 8	9
1.	Acts friendly towards me							
2.	Is easy to approach							
3.	Gives me undivided attention when I am talking							
4.	Is honest and straightforward with the staff							
5.	Gives me a sense of importance that I make a difference							
6.	Considers my ideas							
7.	Allows me input into decisions that affect me							
8.	Supports me on decisions							
9.	Shows genuine concern for my program and students							
10.	Notices what I do							
11.	Shows appreciation for my work							
12.	Treats me as one of the faculty							
13.	Gives clear guidelines regarding job responsibilities							
14.	Provides standards for performance							
15.	Offers constructive feedback after observing my teaching							
16.	Provides frequent feedback about my performance							
17.	Helps me evaluate my needs							
18.	Trusts my judgment in making classroom decisions							
19.	Shows confidence in my actions							
20.	Provides helpful information for improving personal coping skills							
21.	Provides information on up to date instructional techniques							
22.	Provides knowledge of current legal policies and administrative regulations							
23.	Provides opportunities for me to attend workshops, conferences and to take courses							

Extent of Support				Importance of Support			
No Extent			Great Extent	Not Important			Very Important
1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9

24. Encourages professional growth
25. Provides suggestions for me to improve instruction
26. Identifies resource personnel to contact for specific problems he/she is unable to solve
27. Assists with proper identification of special education students
28. Is available to help when needed
29. Helps me establish my schedule
30. Helps me solve problems and conflicts that occur
31. Establishes channels of communication between general and special education teachers and other professionals
32. Helps me with classroom discipline problems
33. Helps me during parent confrontations, when needed
34. Provides time for various non-teaching responsibilities (e.g. IEPs, conferences, test students)
35. Provides adequate planning time
36. Provides material, space and resource needs
37. Participates in child study/eligibility/IEP meetings/parent conferences
38. Works with me to plan specific goals and objectives for my program and students
39. Provides extra assistance when I become overloaded
40. Equally distributes resources and unpopular chores
41. Please identify the gender of the principal for whom your responses relate.  
(1) male           (2) female
42. Please indicate how often you interact with the principal with whom your responses relate:  
(1) seldom       (2) occasionally       (3) frequently

Please describe the extent to which you receive support from each of the following using 1=no extent to 4=great extent. Also indicate how important it is to receive this person's support using 6=not important to 9=very important.

Extent of Support				Importance of Support			
No Extent		Great Extent		Not Important		Very Important	
1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9

43. Central Office Supervisor
44. Principal
45. Assistant Principal
46. Special Education Teachers
47. General Education Teachers

**PART II:**

IN THIS SECTION PLEASE CONSIDER HOW SATISFIED YOU ARE WITH VARIOUS ASPECTS OF YOUR JOB. ON THE ANSWER SHEET USE RESPONSE ITEMS 1-4 ONLY.

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
1	2	3	4

48. Salary and fringe benefits
49. Importance and challenge
50. Working conditions
51. Opportunity for promotion and advancement
52. Opportunity to use past training and education
53. Job security and permanence
54. Supervisor(s)
55. Opportunity for developing new skills
56. The pride and respect I receive from my family and friends by being in this profession
57. Relationships with colleagues

**PART III:**

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS EXPRESS VARIOUS "FEELINGS" THAT PEOPLE EXPERIENCE CONCERNING THEIR JOBS. INDICATE HOW OFTEN YOU EXPERIENCE THE FEELINGS DESCRIBED IN EACH STATEMENT BY BLACKENING THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE. FOR THIS SECTION USE THE FIRST FIVE OPTIONS ON THE RESPONSE SHEET ONLY.

Almost Never 1	Occasionally 2	Fairly Often 3	Frequently 4	Almost Always 5
----------------------	-------------------	----------------------	-----------------	-----------------------

58. You carry your school problems home with you
59. Your work makes you upset
60. Your work makes you frustrated
61. You are under strain in your work
62. Your work makes you tense
63. The amount of work you have to get done interferes with how well it gets done
64. Your work places you under a great deal of stress
65. Your work makes you jumpy and nervous
66. Your work puts you under a lot of pressure

**PART IV:**

IN THIS SECTION PLEASE INDICATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS REFLECT YOUR VIEWS ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL. PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU AGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.

Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly Agree 7
---------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------------------

67. I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected
68. I talk up this school to my friends as a great school to work in
69. I feel very little loyalty to this school
70. I find that my values and the school's values are very similar

Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

71. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this school
72. This school really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance
73. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this school
74. I am extremely glad that I was assigned this school to work in, over others
75. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this school's policies on important matters
76. I really care about this school
77. For me, this is the best of all possible schools in which to work
78. Deciding to work in this school was a definite mistake on my part
79. Please indicate which of the following comes closest to describing how long you plan to teach.
- (1) definitely plan to leave teaching as soon as I can
  - (2) will probably continue until something better comes along
  - (3) until eligible for early retirement
  - (4) until normal retirement
  - (5) until forced to retire due to age

**PART V:**

IN THIS SECTION PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MIGHT DESCRIBE YOU. ON THE ANSWER SHEET USE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5.

Almost Never	Occasionally	Fairly Often	Frequently	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5

80. I often get upset and cannot eat
81. I do not sleep well
82. I have a lot of headaches
83. I feel tired
84. I find myself seeking medical care often

Almost Never 1	Occasionally 2	Fairly Often 3	Frequently 4	Almost Always 5
----------------------	-------------------	----------------------	-----------------	-----------------------

85. I have sought counseling or psychological help

86. I have high blood pressure

87. I miss a lot of time from work

**PART VI:**

**IN PART VI THE NUMBER OF RESPONSE OPTIONS VARIES FOR EACH ITEM. PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF BY BLACKENING THE CORRESPONDING CIRCLE ON THE ANSWER SHEET.**

88. Gender (1) Female  
(2) Male

89. Age:

(1) 25 or less (2) 26-29 (3) 30-35 (4) 36-40 (5) 41-45 (6) 46-50 (7) 51-55  
(8) 56-60 (9) 60+

90. Which best describes you

(1) white (2) black (3) other

91. How many years have you been in your present position?

(1) 1 (2) 2 (3) 3 (4) 4 (5) 5 (6) 6-10 (7) 11-14 (8) 15-19 (9) 20-25 (10) 26+

92. How many years experience have you had in education all together?

(1) 1 (2) 2 (3) 3 (4) 4 (5) 5 (6) 6-10 (7) 11-14 (8) 15-19 (9) 20-25 (10) 26+

93. Are you endorsed/licensed in the area you are currently teaching?

(1) yes (2) no

94. Please indicate which grade level you teach:

(1) Elementary  
(2) Middle School/ Junior High (grades 6-9)  
(3) Secondary/ High School (grades 10-12)  
(4) Not Applicable

95. The average socioeconomic level of the students attending my school is:

(1) Low (2) Middle (3) High

96. Parents support school goals and projects  
(1) Almost Never (2) Occasionally (3) Fairly Often (4) Frequently (5) Almost Always
97. An air of optimism and camaraderie characterizes my school  
(1) Almost Never (2) Occasionally (3) Fairly Often (4) Frequently (5) Almost Always

**ONLY SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS NEED TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS**

98. How many special education teachers are in your school:  
(1) 1 (2) 2 (3) 3 (4) 4 (5) 5 (6) 6 (7) 7 (8) 8 (9) 9 (10) 10
99. Please indicate the area of exceptionality in which you are teaching.  
(1) Emotionally Disturbed  
(2) Educable Mentally Handicapped  
(3) Learning Disabled  
(4) Learning disabled/emotionally disturbed  
(5) Other
100. Type(s) of program(s) in which you are currently teaching  
(1) Itinerant  
(2) Resource  
(3) Combined Resource/Self-contained  
(4) Self-contained  
(5) Special Setting  
(6) Other

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.**  
**PLEASE RETURN ONLY THE OPSCAN SHEET TO:**

Peggy C. Littrell  
Virginia Tech  
College of Education  
233 UCOB  
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0302

**APPENDIX B**  
**Interview Questions**

The following represents the script used by the researcher to gather data for the questionnaire.

### Interview Questions

#### I. Gather demographic questions

I am \_\_\_\_\_ and am working on a project at Virginia Teach. This project is part of a project funded by the Virginia Department of Education. The purpose of this interview is to better understand how special education teachers view administrative support.

- a. Present position \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Total years in present position \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Total years taught \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Masters yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Age range \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_ 30 \_\_\_\_\_ 40 \_\_\_\_\_ 50 \_\_\_\_\_  
over 50
- f. Level currently teaching  
\_\_\_\_\_ pre \_\_\_\_\_ elementary \_\_\_\_\_ middle \_\_\_\_\_ high
- g. Name of division \_\_\_\_\_
- h. How many schools do you serve \_\_\_\_\_
- i. Number of students on caseload \_\_\_\_\_
- j. Male \_\_\_\_\_ female \_\_\_\_\_
- k. Endorsed in area you teach \_\_\_\_\_
- l. Name \_\_\_\_\_
- m. Is your principal a male \_\_\_\_\_ female \_\_\_\_\_

TURN ON TAPE AND SAY:

I am interested in understanding administrative support from the perspective of the teacher. When you are answering these questions, you may provide past and present experiences with administrators. Please be assured that your responses are confidential and will remain so. Tapes will be transcribed and your name will not be attached to the transcription.

I. What are some examples of support that you have received from administrators? (Keep probing until they have exhausted their ideas, (e.g. "Can you think of any other examples?" or if they say the administrator is thoughtful, say "Can you tell me more about that?").

II. Please give me some examples when you have not received support from administrators.

Probe until they have exhausted their ideas.

III. Assume you were an administrator, what would you do to help special education teachers or general education teachers improve their programs?

IV. What are two or three major frustration or problems that you currently experience in your work? (List each as you listen to them, for example, problems with scheduling, lack of resources, student discipline).

V. For each item listed in four, ask "How could the administrator help you with (e.g. discipline)?"

VI. Is there anything else you can add that will help me understand what administrative support means to you?

**APPENDIX C**  
**Support Descriptors**

## RESEARCH CHART OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

### EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- attends to my feelings and needs Rosenholtz (1989)
- promotes my morale Rosenholtz (1989)  
Tyler (1987)
- talks with me Blase (1982, 1987)
- seeks my advice Blase (1982, 1987)
- shows appreciation for my work Blase (1982)
- trusts my judgment in making classroom decisions Blase (1982, 1987)  
Nidich & Nidich (1986)
- gives me a sense of importance, that I make a difference Rosenholtz (1989)
- notices what I do Blase (1987)  
Lortie (1975)
- considers my ideas Blase (1982, 1987)  
Lortie (1975)
- shows confidence in my actions Blase (1987)
- gives me undivided attention when I am talking Glickman (1990)  
Fimian (1986)
- recognizes special projects or programs I initiated in my classroom Tyler (1987)
- shows genuine concern for my program and students Glickman (1990)
- respects me as a professional Nidich & Nidich (1986)  
Tyler (1987)
- treats me as one of the faculty Lortie (1975)  
Blase (1987)

- acts friendly towards me House (1981)  
Fimian (1986)
- is easy to approach Lortie (1975)  
Fimian (1986)
- is honest and straight forward with the staff Fimian (1986)

#### **APPRAISAL SUPPORT**

- praises me for a job well done Rosenholtz (1989)  
Blase (1982)  
Tyler (1987)
- offers constructive feedback after observing my teaching Glickman (1990)  
Blase (1982)  
Pajak (1990)  
LaRocco, Jones (1978)  
Tyler (1987)
- provides frequent feedback about my performance Blase (1982)  
Pajak (1990)  
Needle, Griffin, Swandsen  
Berney (1980)
- helps me evaluate my needs Glickman (1990)  
Tyler (1987)  
Pajak (1990)
- provides standards for performance Pajak (1990)  
Rosenholtz (1989)

#### **INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT**

- provides helpful information for improving personal coping skills Cichon & Koff (1980)  
Werner (1980)
- provides information on up to date and empirically based instructional techniques Pajak (1990)  
Glickman (1990)  
Alfonso, Frith, & Neville (1984)  
Rosenholtz (1989)  
Tyler (1987)  
cichon & Koff (1980)
- provides knowledge of current legal policies and administrative regulations Blase (1987)

- provides opportunities for me to attend workshops, conferences and to take courses  
Cichon & Koff (1980)  
Rosenholtz (1989)  
Hackman & Oldham (1980)  
Kanter (1977)
- provides suggestions for me to improve teaching  
Blase (1982)  
Glickman (1990)  
Pajak (1990)
- provides instructional ideas  
Lortie (1975)  
Glickman (1990)  
Pajak (1990)  
Alfonso, Firth & Neville (1984)
- encourages professional growth  
Hackman & Oldham (1990)  
Pajak (1990)  
Cichon & Koff (1980)  
Fimian (1986)
- identifies resource personnel to contact for specific problems he/she is unable to solve  
Tyler (1987)
- assists with proper identification of special education students  
interview

**INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT**

- is available to help when needed  
Blase (1987)  
Lortie (1975)
- helps me establish my schedule  
(interview)  
Fimian, Pierson, Mchardy (1989)
- helps me solve problems and conflicts that occur  
Rosenholtz (1989)  
Werner (1980)
- establishes channels of communication between regular and special education teachers  
(interview)
- helps me with classroom discipline problems  
Lortie (1975)  
Blase (1987)  
Tyler (1987)

- helps me during parent confrontations, when needed Lortie (1975)  
Blase (1987)  
Tyler (1987)
- provides time to write IEP's, conduct conferences and test students Blase (1987)
- provides adequate planning time Tyler (1987)
- provides material, space and resource needs Lortie (1975)  
Pajak (1990)
- participates in child study meetings (interview)
- works with me to plan specific goals and objectives for my program and students Rosenholtz (1989)
- gives clear guidelines regarding job responsibilities Blase, Dedrick, Strathe (1986)
- provides extra assistance when I become overloaded (interview)
- equally distributes resources and unpopular chores Lortie (1975)

**OTHER**

- allows me input into decisions that affect me Nidich & Nidich (1986)
- supports me on decisions Blase (1987)

Can you think of any other kinds of administrative support that are important to you?

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**APPENDIX D**

**Correspondences with Dr. House and  
Resulting Specification Chart**

To: Dr. James S. House  
University of Michigan

Peggy Littrell  
2126 Catlett Dr.  
Salem, VA 24153

March 4, 1991

Dear Dr. House,

I am currently involved in developing an instrument to send to special education teachers in order to determine what kind of administrative support they feel is important. Your book led me to group all the support items into the four categories - emotional, informational, appraisal, and instrumental.

As you mentioned in your book, some of the categories are difficult to define therefore it would be most helpful if you would review the information that I am sending you to be sure I have interpreted your categories correctly. Please feel free to make any suggestions you believe would improve my instrument.

I am also interested in recent research that you may be aware of.

Your assistance with these matters is greatly appreciated.

If it is convenient for you to return the information by FAX my number is 1-703-381-2243.

Sincerely,



Peggy Littrell  
Graduate Student,  
Virginia Tech

# ISR

SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER / INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH / THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48106-1248  
FAX: (313) 747-4575  
TELEX: 4320815

March 8, 1991

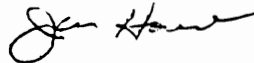
Peggy Littrell  
2126 Catlett Drive  
Salem, VA 24153

Dear Ms. Littrell:

In response to your FAX of March 4, I have reviewed your support items and indicated by a check (✓) those that seem to me face valid indicators of the four types of support. Otherwise, I've indicated how an item might be reclassified or cross-classified. I assume you will do some pretesting and item analysis to arrive at your final scales. Let me note that it is usually easier to distinguish different types of support conceptually than empirically, since supportive people, coworkers, or supervisors tend to be supportive in multiple ways. Thus, you should expect positive intercorrelations among types of support; and in the situation you are studying I'm not confident you will be able to distinguish informational and instrumental support, since information is a concrete form of assistance to teachers.

Your measures of other concepts are sketchier, but look reasonable. You ought to do more with health (our ACL survey available from ICPSR provides some items as do many other studies) and also ask about stressors more specific to your population. I enclose a few additional papers that may be of use to you. Good luck with your work.

Sincerely,



James S. House  
Director, and  
Professor of Sociology

JSH:mk  
Enc.

March 28, 1991

Dr. James S. House  
Director, and  
Professor of Sociology  
Institute For Social Research  
University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1248

Dear Dr. House:

I was so excited to receive your letter and to get your expert opinion regarding my request in classifying the social support items I sent you. Since hearing from you we have made a rough draft of a survey instrument that I hope will be completed and ready for field testing the first week in April. It is my hope to develop a study that will look at the perceived support both general and special education teachers currently receive from their building principals, determine which type of support the teachers believe is the most important and finally to analyze the relationship this support has on work stress and illnesses, job commitment, and intent to stay in teaching. Your assistance at the beginning stages of this project has been most helpful and greatly appreciated.

The papers you enclosed were also helpful. I have used some of the information in my literature review and the references have provided further information for my study.

Currently I am in the process of securing the survey information concerning health which you recommended (ACL survey from ICPSR). This has proven to be a real run around. However, hopefully the information will be in my hands by next week. Really cutting it close.

It has been a pleasure corresponding with you. Thank you again for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Peggy C. Littrell  
Graduate Student,  
Virginia Tech

**FORMS OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT**

**POSSIBLE SCALE**

scale = strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree  
or  
excellent, adequate, somewhat inadequate, totally inadequate  
or  
1 = no extent . . . . . 4 = a great extent

**IMPORTANCE SCALE**

scale = not important, somewhat important, important, very important

**EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**

- attends to my feelings and needs
- promotes my moral
- talks with me
- seeks my advice
- shows appreciation for my work
- trust my judgment in making classroom decisions and controlling classroom activities
- gives as a sense of importance, that I make a difference
- considers my ideas
- gives me undivided attention when I am talking
- recognizes special projects or program I initiated in my classroom
- shows genuine concern for my program and students
- respects me as a professional
- treats me as one of the faculty
- acts friendly toward me
- is easy to approach
- is honest and straight forward with the faculty

**APPRAISAL SUPPORT**

- praises me for a job well done
- offers constructive feedback after observing my teaching
- provides frequent feedback about my performance
- helps me evaluate my needs
- provides standards for performance

**INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT**

- provides helpful inservices for improving personal coping skills
- demonstrates up to date and empirically based instructional techniques
- provides knowledge of current legal policies and administrative regulations

- provides opportunities for me to attend workshops, conferences and to take course
- provides suggestions for me to improve teaching
- provides instructional ideas
- encourages professional growth
- identifies resource personnel to contact for specific problems he/she is unable to solve
- assists with proper identification of special education students

**INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT**

- available to help when needed
- helps me establish my schedule
- helps me with problems and conflicts that occur
- establishes channels of communication between regular and special education teachers
- helps me with classroom discipline problems
- helps me during parent confrontations, when needed
- provides time to write IEP's, conduct conferences and test students
- provides adequate planning time
- provides space, material and resource needs
- participates in child study meetings
- works with me to plan specific goals and objectives for my program and students
- gives clear guidelines regarding job responsibilities
- provides extra assistance when I become overloaded
- equally distributes resources and unpopular chores

**OTHER**

- allows me input into decisions that affect me
- supports you on decisions

Can you think of any other kinds of administrative support that you would like to mention?

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT BASED ON HOUSE'S SOCIAL SUPPORT CLASSIFICATION AND THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| -attends to my feelings and needs                                    | Rosenholtz (1989)                   |
| -promotes my morale  | Rosenholtz (1989)<br>Tyler (1987)   |
| -talks with me   | Blase (1982, 1987)                  |
| -seeks my advice   | Blase (1982, 1987)                  |
| -shows appreciation for my work                                      | Blase (1982)                        |
| -gives me a sense of importance, that I make a difference            | Rosenholtz (1989)                   |
| -notices what I do   | Blase (1987)<br>Lortie (1975)       |
| -considers my ideas  | Blase (1982, 1987)<br>Lortie (1975) |
| -gives me undivided attention when I am talking                      | Glickman (1990)<br>Fimian (1986)    |
| -recognizes special projects or programs I initiated in my classroom | Tyler (1987)                        |
| -shows genuine concern for my program and students                   | Glickman (1990)                     |
| -treats me as one of the faculty                                     | Lortie (1975)<br>Blase (1987)       |
| -acts friendly towards me  | House (1981)<br>Fimian (1986)       |
| -is easy to approach   | Lortie (1975)<br>Fimian (1986)      |

- is honest and straight forward with the staff Fimian (1986)
- praises me for a job well done Rosenholtz (1989)  
Blase (1982)  
Tyler (1987)
- allows me input into decisions that affect me Nidich & Nidich (1986)
- supports me on decisions Blase (1987)

### APPRAISAL SUPPORT

- offers constructive feedback after observing my teaching Glickman (1990)  
Blase (1982)  
Pajak (1990)  
LaRocco, Jones (1978)  
Tyler (1987)
- provides frequent feedback about my performance Blase (1982)  
Pajak, (1990)  
Needle, Griffin, Swandsen, Berney (1980)  
Glickman (1990)
- helps me evaluate my needs Glickman (1990)  
Tyler (1987)  
Pajak (1990)
- provides standards for performance Pajak (1990)  
Rosenholtz (1989)
- trusts my judgment in making classroom decisions Blase (1982, 1987)  
Nidich & Nidich (1986)
- shows confidence in my actions Blase (1987)
- respects me as a professional Nidich & Nidich (1986)  
Tyler (1987)
- gives clear guidelines regarding job responsibilities Blase, Dedrick, Strathe (1986)

## INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| -provides helpful information for improving personal coping skills                        | Cichon & Koff (1980)<br>Werner (1980)  |
| -provides information on up-to-date and empirically based instructional techniques        | Pajak (1990)<br>Glickman (1990)<br>Alfonso, Frith, & Neville (1984)<br>Rosenholtz (1989)<br>Tyler (1987)<br>Cichon & Koff (1980) |
| -provides knowledge of current legal policies and administrative regulations              | Blase (1987)   |
| -provides opportunities for me to attend workshops, conferences and to take courses       | Cichon & Koff (1980)<br>Rosenholtz (1989)<br>Hackman & Oldham (1980)<br>Kanter (1977)  |
| -provides suggestions for me to improve teaching  | Blase (1982)<br>Glickman (1990)<br>Pajak (1990)  |
| -provides instructional ideas   | Lortie (1975)<br>Glickman (1990)<br>Pajak (1990)<br>Alfonso, Frith & Neville (1984)  |
| -encourages professional growth   | Hackman & Oldham (1980)<br>Pajak (1990)<br>Cichon & Koff (1980)<br>Fimian (1986)   |
| -identifies resource personnel to contact for specific problems he/she is unable to solve | Tyler (1987)   |

-assists with proper identification of special education students (interview)

### INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT

- is available to help when needed Blase (1987)  
Lortie (1975)
- helps me establish my schedule (interview)  
Fimian, Pierson, Mchardy (1989)
- helps me solve problems and conflicts that occur Rosenholtz (1989)  
Werner (1980)
- establishes channels of communication between regular and special education teachers (interview)
- helps me with classroom discipline problems Lortie (1975)  
Blase (1987)  
Tyler (1987)
- helps me during parent confrontations, when needed Lortie (1975)  
Blase (1987)  
Tyler (1987)
- provides time to write IEP'S, conduct conferences and test students Blase, (1987)
- provides adequate planning time Tyler (1987)
- provides material, space and resource needs Lortie (1975)  
Pajak (1990)
- participates in child study meetings (interview)

-works with me to plan  
specific goals and  
objectives for my  
program and students

Rosenholtz (1989)

-provides extra assistance  
when I become overloaded

(interview)

-equally distributes  
resources and unpopular  
chores

Lortie (1975)

**APPENDIX E**

**Cover Letters Contained in the Mailing Packet**

# VIRGINIA TECH

Division of Administrative  
and Educational Services

April 19, 1991

Dear Special Educator,

The Virginia Department of Education has contracted with Virginia Tech to perform several studies regarding the needs of teachers in Virginia. In this study we are investigating teachers' perceptions of support provided by principals and the effects of that support. This information will help in planning ways to provide support to teachers.

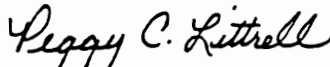
Your name was selected randomly from the population of special education teachers in the state of Virginia. In order for us to fully understand your perceptions, we are also asking for the perceptions of general education teachers for comparison. Therefore, in addition to your completion of the questionnaire we would like for you to pass the second questionnaire to a general classroom teacher who is typical of the teachers in your school.

Your individual responses will be treated confidentially and only group data will be shared with others. The code number on the opscan sheet will be used only to aid in contacting nonrespondents. Should you have any questions or comments regarding this survey, please call Peggy Littrell (703-231-5925).

We know that your schedule is very busy, but this is your opportunity to make your needs known. Please take a few minutes now and register your views on this most important topic. It should take no longer than 20 minutes of your time.

Thank you for your assistance. Please return only the completed opscan sheet in the enclosed addressed, stamped envelope by May 3, 1991.

Sincerely,



Peggy C. Littrell  
Virginia Tech  
College of Education  
233 UCOB  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061 - 0302

# VIRGINIA TECH

Division of Administrative  
and Educational Services

April 19, 1991

Dear General Educator,

The Virginia Department of Education has contracted with Virginia Tech to perform several studies regarding the needs of teachers in Virginia. In this study we are investigating teachers perceptions of support provided by principals and the effects of that support. This information will help in planning ways to provide support to teachers.

In order for us to fully understand your perceptions of support we are asking you to complete the enclosed questionnaire. Please read the directions carefully and record your answers on the opscan sheet.

Your individual responses will be treated confidentially and only group data will be shared with others. The code number on the opscan sheet will be used only to aid in contacting nonrespondents. Should you have any questions or comments regarding this survey, please call Peggy Littrell (703-231-5925).

We know that your schedule is very busy, but this is your opportunity to make your needs known on this most important topic. It should take no longer than 20 minutes of your time.

Thank you for your assistance. Please return only the completed opscan sheet in the enclosed addressed, stamped envelope by May 3, 1991.

Sincerely,



Peggy C. Littrell  
Virginia Tech  
College of Education  
233 UCOB  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061-0302

**APPENDIX F**  
**Reminder Letters**

# VIRGINIA TECH

Division of Administrative  
and Educational Services

May 10, 1991

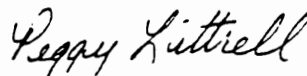
Dear Special Educator,

Recently we sent you two questionnaires. One seeks your perceptions about the support provided by your principal and the other seeks the perceptions of a general classroom teacher regarding principal support. Your name was drawn from a random sample of special educators in Virginia. The general classroom teacher was to be chosen by you.

If you have already completed and returned your questionnaire, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. Your responses will be a valuable contribution for identifying the supportive behaviors of principals and planning ways to provide support for special education teachers. Because you are a part of a small sample of special educators who have been asked to complete this questionnaire it is extremely important that your responses are included in this study.

If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaires, or they got misplaced, please call me right now (703-231-5925) and I will get them in the mail to you today.

Sincerely,



Peggy Littrell  
233 UCOB  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0302

# VIRGINIA TECH

Division of Administrative  
and Educational Services

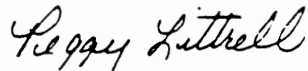
May 10, 1991

Dear Special Educator,

Thank you for returning the questionnaire regarding principal support. However, we have not received the questionnaire that you passed to the general educator. Would you please give the enclosed reminder letter to the general classroom teacher that you chose to complete the second questionnaire. It is extremely important that we receive their responses, too, so that we may clearly identify those behaviors that both special and general educators consider supportive.

Thank you again for your promptness and cooperative spirit.

Sincerely,



Peggy Littrell  
233 UCOB  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksbury, VA 24061-0302

# VIRGINIA TECH

Division of Administrative  
and Educational Services

May 10, 1991

Dear Special Educator,

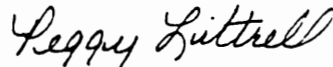
Recently we sent you two questionnaires. One seeks your perceptions about the support provided by your principal and the other seeks the perceptions of a general classroom teacher regarding principal support. Your name was drawn from a random sample of special educators in Virginia. The general classroom teacher was to be chosen by you.

If you have already completed and returned your questionnaire, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. Your responses will be a valuable contribution for identifying the supportive behaviors of principals and planning ways to provide support for special education teachers. Because you are a part of a small sample of special educators who have been asked to complete this questionnaire it is extremely important that your responses are included in this study.

Additionally, we have not received the questionnaire from the general education teacher that you selected. Please pass the enclosed letter entitled general educator to this classroom teacher.

If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaires, or they got misplaced, please call me right now (703-231-5925) and I will get them in the mail to you today.

Sincerely,



Peggy Littrell  
233 UCOB  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0302

# VIRGINIA TECH

Division of Administrative  
and Educational Services

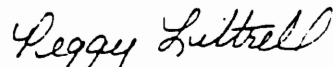
May 10, 1991

Dear General Educator,

Hopefully, you received a questionnaire seeking your perceptions about support provided by your principal. If you have already completed and returned your questionnaire to us please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. Your responses will be a valuable contribution in identifying the supportive behaviors of principals and planning ways to provide support for general classroom teachers. Since you are a part of a small sample of general classroom teachers who have been asked to complete this questionnaire it is extremely important that your responses are included in this study.

If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaire, or it got misplaced, please call me right now (703-231-5925) and I will get another one in the mail to you today.

Sincerely,



Peggy Littrell  
233 UCOB  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0302

**APPENDIX G**

**Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations of the Respondents'  
Perceptions of the Extent and Importance of Principal's  
Support Behaviors**

Appendix G  
Table 22

Frequencies, Means, and SD of the Respondents' Perceptions of the Extent and Importance of Principal's Supportive Behaviors

Emotional Variables	EXTENT OF SUPPORT			IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT		
	Participants n	Mean (SD)	C <sup>a</sup> Comparison	Participants n	Mean (SD)	C <sup>a</sup> Comparison
1. Acts friendly towards me	GE 304	3.33 (0.79)	F = 0.58	GE 302	3.40 (0.69)	F = 1.65
	ED 110	3.29 (0.79)		ED 109	3.25 (0.88)	
	LD 140	3.40 (0.73)		LD 140	3.31 (0.72)	
	EMH 127	3.29 (0.80)	EMH 127	3.43 (0.78)		
2. Is easy to approach	GE 302	3.05 (0.93)	F = 1.04	GE 301	3.72 (0.52)	F = 0.25
	ED 110	3.17 (0.93)		ED 109	3.71 (0.52)	
	LD 140	3.19 (0.82)		LD 140	3.71 (0.53)	
	EMH 127	3.13 (0.89)	EMH 127	3.76 (0.52)		
3. Gives me undivided attention when I am talking	GE 303	3.13 (0.89)	F = 0.49	GE 302	3.68 (0.54)	*F = 4.25 d,e
	ED 110	3.15 (0.85)		ED 109	3.61 (0.59)	
	LD 140	3.24 (0.77)		LD 140	3.68 (0.52)	
	EMH 127	3.16 (0.88)	EMH 126	3.84 (0.41)		
4. Is honest and straightforward with the staff	GE 303	2.94 (0.97)	*F = 3.50 a,b	GE 300	3.83 (0.47)	F = 0.89
	ED 110	3.22 (0.89)		ED 109	3.84 (0.39)	
	LD 140	3.18 (0.82)		LD 140	3.83 (0.43)	
	EMH 127	3.10 (1.00)	EMH 126	3.90 (0.31)		
5. Gives me a sense of importance that I make a difference	GE 303	2.92 (0.99)	F = 0.07	GE 301	3.66 (0.58)	F = 2.44
	ED 109	2.95 (1.06)		ED 109	3.52 (0.71)	
	LD 140	2.95 (0.97)		LD 139	3.61 (0.62)	
	EMH 127	2.95 (0.97)	EMH 127	3.72 (0.53)		
6. Considers my ideas	GE 304	2.96 (0.87)	F = 0.49	GE 301	3.58 (0.59)	F = 0.76
	ED 110	3.07 (0.88)		ED 109	3.51 (0.63)	
	LD 140	2.96 (0.92)		LD 140	3.58 (0.58)	
	EMH 127	3.00 (0.88)	EMH 127	3.63 (0.55)		

a = GE vs. avg. of ED, LD & EMH  
b = GE vs. ED  
c = ED vs. LD  
d = ED vs. EMH  
e = Gen Ed vs. EMH

GE = General Educators  
ED = Educators of Emotionally Disturbed Students  
LD = Educators of Learning Disabled Students  
EMH = Educators of Educable Mentally Handicapped Students  
C<sup>a</sup> significant (.05) F test of homogeneity of the variance  
t test of significant difference between total mean scores

Appendix G  
Table 22 (cont'd)

Emotional Variables	EXTENT OF SUPPORT			IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT		
	Participants n	Mean (SD)	C <sup>a</sup> Comparison	Participants n	Mean (SD)	C <sup>a</sup> Comparison
7. Allows me input into decisions that affect me	GE	2.90 (0.92)	F = 0.48	GE	3.70 (0.57)	F = 1.24
	ED	2.96 (0.96)		ED	3.80 (0.43)	
	LD	3.01 (0.93)		LD	3.76 (0.49)	
	EMH	2.92 (1.00)		EMH	3.77 (0.47)	
8. Supports me on decisions	GE	3.12 (0.81)	F = 0.54	GE	3.76 (0.48)	F = 0.72
	ED	3.23 (0.83)		ED	3.79 (0.47)	
	LD	3.16 (0.88)		LD	3.83 (0.39)	
	EMH	3.17 (0.88)		EMH	3.80 (0.49)	
9. Shows genuine concern for my program and students	GE	3.01 (0.94)	F = 0.15	GE	3.73 (0.53)	F = 2.21
	ED	3.08 (0.98)		ED	3.78 (0.48)	
	LD	3.03 (0.87)		LD	3.73 (0.57)	
	EMH	3.02 (1.01)		EMH	3.86 (0.37)	
10. Notices what I do	GE	2.82 (0.93)	F = 0.28	GE	3.41 (0.71)	F = 2.41
	ED	2.78 (0.93)		ED	3.21 (0.85)	
	LD	2.76 (0.86)		LD	3.28 (0.75)	
	EMH	2.86 (0.89)		EMH	3.38 (0.80)	
11. Shows appreciation for my work	GE	2.88 (0.95)	F = 0.78	GE	3.52 (0.66)	*F = 3.16
	ED	2.78 (0.97)		ED	3.38 (0.72)	
	LD	2.80 (0.93)		LD	3.40 (0.63)	
	EMH	2.94 (1.02)		EMH	3.59 (0.67)	
12. Treats me as one of the faculty	GE	3.58 (0.68)	F = 0.17	GE	3.62 (0.65)	F = 2.34
	ED	3.63 (0.70)		ED	3.50 (0.78)	
	LD	3.58 (0.69)		LD	3.70 (0.63)	
	EMH	3.57 (0.70)		EMH	3.71 (0.64)	

GE = General Educators  
ED = Educators of Emotionally Disturbed Students  
LD = Educators of Learning Disabled Students  
EMH = Educators of Educable Mentally Handicapped Students

a = GE vs. avg. of ED, LD & EMH  
b = GE vs. ED  
c = ED vs. LD  
d = ED vs. EMH  
e = Gen Ed vs. EMH

C<sup>a</sup> significant (.05) F test of homogeneity of the variance  
t test of significant difference between total mean scores

Appendix G  
Table 22 (cont'd)

Appraisal Variables	EXTENT OF SUPPORT			IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT		
	Participants n	Mean (SD)	C <sup>a</sup> Comparison	Participants n	Mean (SD)	C <sup>a</sup> Comparison
13. Gives clear guidelines regarding job responsibilities	GE	2.95 (0.87)	F = 0.26	GE	3.51 (0.72)	F = 1.80
	ED	2.89 (0.96)		ED	3.42 (0.86)	
	LD	2.96 (0.93)		LD	3.48 (0.76)	
	EMH	2.99 (0.95)	EMH	3.64 (0.67)		
14. Provides standards for performance	GE	2.95 (0.86)	F = 0.48	GE	3.45 (0.77)	F = 2.09
	ED	2.91 (0.92)		ED	3.28 (0.87)	
	LD	3.03 (0.91)		LD	3.32 (0.83)	
	EMH	3.01 (0.93)	EMH	3.48 (0.71)		
15. Offers constructive feedback	GE	2.91 (1.01)	F = 1.11	GE	3.52 (0.73)	F = 1.77
	ED	2.78 (1.00)		ED	3.34 (0.86)	
	LD	2.94 (0.99)		LD	3.50 (0.73)	
	EMH	3.02 (1.04)	EMH	3.55 (0.74)		
16. Provides frequent feedback about my performance	GE	2.29 (0.98)	F = 1.58	GE	3.19 (0.86)	F = 1.33
	ED	2.40 (1.02)		ED	3.15 (0.95)	
	LD	2.23 (0.91)		LD	3.01 (0.93)	
	EMH	2.47 (1.01)	EMH	3.18 (0.92)		
17. Helps me evaluate my needs	GE	2.26 (0.99)	F = 0.70	GE	2.90 (0.92)	F = 1.01
	ED	2.21 (0.96)		ED	2.83 (1.01)	
	LD	2.28 (0.97)		LD	2.80 (0.97)	
	EMH	2.39 (1.00)	EMH	2.98 (1.00)		
18. Trusts my judgment in making classroom decisions	GE	3.49 (0.77)	F = 0.51	GE	3.80 (0.45)	F = 0.64
	ED	3.55 (0.77)		ED	3.84 (0.41)	
	LD	3.33 (0.74)		LD	3.83 (0.45)	
	EMH	3.57 (0.72)	EMH	3.86 (0.37)		

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C<sup>a</sup> significant (.05) F test of homogeneity of the variance  
t test of significant difference between total mean scores

Appendix G  
Table 22 (cont'd)

Appraisal Variables	EXTENT OF SUPPORT				IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT			
	Participants n	Mean (SD)	C <sup>a</sup> Comparison	Participants n	Mean (SD)	C <sup>a</sup> Comparison		
19. Shows confidence in my actions	GE	3.35 (0.79)	F = 0.68	GE	3.75 (0.52)	F = 0.54		
	ED	3.32 (0.87)		ED	3.76 (0.57)			
	LD	3.27 (0.79)		LD	3.70 (0.58)			
	EMH	3.41 (0.80)		EMH	3.78 (0.47)			
Informational Variables 20. Provides helpful information about coping	GE	2.12 (0.99)	F = 1.07	GE	2.63 (1.04)	F = 1.51		
	ED	2.16 (1.00)		ED	2.61 (1.06)			
	LD	2.24 (1.03)		LD	2.60 (1.04)			
	EMH	2.29 (0.98)		EMH	2.84 (1.08)			
21. Provides information on up to date techniques	GE	2.52 (1.04)	F = 1.89	GE	3.04 (0.89)	F = 2.08		
	ED	2.35 (1.07)		ED	2.85 (1.02)			
	LD	2.29 (1.05)		LD	2.83 (0.97)			
	EMH	2.45 (1.04)		EMH	2.99 (0.98)			
22. Provides knowledge of current legal policies	GE	2.77 (1.03)	F = 0.71	GE	3.11 (0.88)	*F = 3.24		
	ED	2.66 (1.09)		ED	3.10 (0.96)			
	LD	2.67 (1.06)		LD	3.28 (0.84)			
	EMH	2.82 (1.07)		EMH	3.36 (0.85)			
23. Provides opportunities for me to attend workshops	GE	3.23 (0.89)	F = 2.60	GE	3.38 (0.79)	F = 0.24		
	ED	2.99 (1.09)		ED	3.33 (0.80)			
	LD	3.14 (0.93)		LD	3.41 (0.76)			
	EMH	3.00 (0.98)		EMH	3.40 (0.81)			
24. Encourages professional growth	GE	3.11 (0.86)	F = 0.51	GE	3.27 (0.80)	F = 0.29		
	ED	3.01 (0.98)		ED	3.24 (0.83)			
	LD	3.13 (0.91)		LD	3.21 (0.82)			
	EMH	3.07 (0.89)		EMH	3.30 (0.83)			

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Appendix G  
Table 22 (cont'd)

Informational Variables	EXTENT OF SUPPORT			IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT		
	Participants n	Mean (SD)	C <sup>a</sup> Comparison	Participants n	Mean (SD)	C <sup>a</sup> Comparison
25. Provides suggestions to improve instruction	GE 302	2.40 (0.98)	F = 0.86	GE 301	3.02 (0.92)	F = 0.98
	ED 110	2.41 (0.92)		ED 109	2.95 (0.92)	
	LD 140	2.26 (0.99)		LD 140	2.86 (0.93)	
	EMH 127	2.31 (1.02)		EMH 127	2.94 (1.06)	
26. Identifies resourceful personnel to contact	GE 303	2.66 (1.04)	F = 0.47	GE 300	3.09 (0.88)	F = 1.77
	ED 110	2.57 (1.04)		ED 108	3.13 (0.92)	
	LD 139	2.72 (1.03)		LD 138	3.17 (0.82)	
	EMH 127	2.70 (1.01)		EMH 127	3.30 (0.91)	
27. Assists with proper identification of special education students	GE 297	2.62 (1.07)	F = 0.39	GE 293	3.19 (0.93)	F = 0.57
	ED 109	2.72 (1.13)		ED 109	3.14 (1.06)	
	LD 138	2.65 (1.12)		LD 139	3.29 (0.94)	
	EMH 126	2.73 (1.15)		EMH 126	3.17 (1.01)	
<u>Instrumental Variables</u>						
28. Is available to help when needed	GE 304	2.77 (0.93)	*F = 3.26 a,c	GE 301	3.61 (0.62)	F = 0.72
	ED 110	2.95 (0.95)		ED 109	3.64 (0.63)	
	LD 139	3.02 (0.92)		LD 140	3.54 (0.74)	
	EMH 127	2.99 (0.89)		EMH 127	3.63 (0.60)	
29. Helps me establish my schedule	GE 301	2.26 (1.03)	*F = 3.60 a,c	GE 296	2.52 (1.09)	F = 2.14
	ED 110	2.06 (0.99)		ED 109	2.32 (1.16)	
	LD 140	1.94 (0.97)		LD 140	2.27 (1.16)	
	EMH 127	2.24 (1.07)		EMH 127	2.52 (1.18)	
30. Helps me solve problems and conflicts	GE 304	2.77 (0.94)	F = 1.00	GE 302	3.32 (0.83)	F = 0.55
	ED 110	2.85 (0.96)		ED 109	3.32 (0.76)	
	LD 139	2.94 (0.88)		LD 138	3.25 (0.85)	
	EMH 126	2.84 (0.91)		EMH 125	3.38 (0.82)	

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Appendix G  
Table 22 (cont'd)

Instrumental Variables	EXTENT OF SUPPORT			IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT		
	Participants n	Mean (SD)	C <sup>a</sup> Comparison	Participants n	Mean (SD)	C <sup>a</sup> Comparison
31. Establishes communication between general and special education teachers	GE	2.55 (0.98)	F = 1.10	GE	3.12 (0.87)	*F = 4.70 a,b,c
	ED	2.51 (1.04)		ED	3.41 (0.79)	
	LD	2.37 (1.01)		LD	3.35 (0.82)	
	EMH	2.43 (0.99)		EMH	3.32 (0.88)	
32. Helps me with classroom discipline problems	GE	2.65 (0.99)	F = 0.78	GE	3.41 (0.80)	F = 0.27
	ED	2.79 (1.02)		ED	3.32 (0.93)	
	LD	2.72 (0.96)		LD	3.40 (0.89)	
	EMH	2.76 (1.00)		EMH	3.40 (0.92)	
33. Helps me during parent confrontations	GE	3.10 (0.96)	F = 0.81	GE	3.63 (0.66)	F = 0.80
	ED	3.14 (1.02)		ED	3.63 (0.64)	
	LD	3.22 (0.97)		LD	3.67 (0.62)	
	EMH	3.24 (0.93)		EMH	3.72 (0.59)	
34. Provides time for various non-teaching responsibilities	GE	2.52 (1.02)	F = 0.89	GE	3.28 (0.85)	*F = 9.26 a,b,c,e
	ED	2.54 (1.12)		ED	3.54 (0.71)	
	LD	2.36 (1.10)		LD	3.57 (0.70)	
	EMH	2.43 (1.18)		EMH	3.65 (0.67)	
35. Provides adequate planning time	GE	2.93 (0.97)	F = 1.95 a	GE	3.67 (0.59)	F = 0.16
	ED	2.75 (1.10)		ED	3.70 (0.50)	
	LD	2.73 (1.05)		LD	3.66 (0.59)	
	EMH	2.75 (1.08)		EMH	3.70 (0.74)	
36. Provides materials, space, resources	GE	2.90 (0.93)	F = 0.57	GE	3.55 (0.65)	F = 1.14
	ED	2.94 (0.92)		ED	3.59 (0.66)	
	LD	2.94 (0.93)		LD	3.67 (0.51)	
	EMH	2.80 (0.93)		EMH	3.61 (0.73)	

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Appendix G  
Table 22 (cont'd)

Instrumental Variables	EXTENT OF SUPPORT				IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT			
	Participants n	Mean (SD)	C <sup>a</sup> Comparison	Participants n	Mean (SD)	C <sup>a</sup> Comparison	C <sup>a</sup> Comparison	
37. Participates in child study eligibility IEP meetings	GE	2.95 (1.04)	F = 0.39	GE	3.27 (0.89)	F = 0.75		
	ED	3.01 (1.04)		ED	3.32 (0.94)			
	LD	2.96 (1.07)		LD	3.34 (0.90)			
	EMH	2.87 (1.06)		EMH	3.41 (0.89)			
38. Works with me to plan specific goals and objectives	GE	2.11 (1.05)	*F = 3.03 a,c	GE	2.68 (1.00)	*F = 4.20 a,c		
	ED	1.95 (0.94)		ED	2.48 (1.08)			
	LD	1.85 (0.90)		LD	2.31 (1.05)			
	EMH	1.90 (0.94)		EMH	2.54 (1.16)			
39. Provides extra assistance when I become overloaded	GE	1.98 (1.00)	F = 0.37	GE	3.05 (0.95)	*F = 2.74 a,e		
	ED	2.07 (1.09)		ED	3.23 (0.96)			
	LD	1.97 (0.96)		LD	3.06 (0.88)			
	EMH	2.05 (1.01)		EMH	3.29 (0.90)			
40. Equally distributes resources and unpopular courses	GE	2.65 (1.02)	F = 1.67 a	GE	3.39 (0.75)	F = 1.35		
	ED	2.80 (1.06)		ED	3.23 (0.88)			
	LD	2.84 (1.04)		LD	3.31 (0.80)			
	EMH	2.83 (1.06)		EMH	3.40 (0.83)			

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## VITA

Peggy Littrell

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2126 Catlett Drive  
Salem, Virginia 24153

Glen Cove Elementary School  
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Roanoke, Virginia 24019

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### EDUCATION

- 1992**                    **Ed. D.**  
Administration and Supervision of Special Education  
Certification in Elementary Administration  
**Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University**  
Blacksburg, VA
- 1979**                    **Master of Science**  
Special Education: Learning Disabilities  
Minor: Reading  
**Radford University**  
Radford, VA
- 1961**                    **Bachelor of Arts**  
Social Science  
Minor: Psychology  
**High Point College**  
High Point, NC

### ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

- 1979-1984**            **Practicum Supervisor**  
Radford University  
Radford, VA  
Responsibilities:  
Supervised practicum students in special education, grades 3-9.  
Responsible for orientation, classroom observation, summative  
evaluation and recommendation for certification of master's  
degree students.

**1988-1989**

**Practicum Supervisor**

Radford University  
Radford, VA

Responsibilities:

Supervised practicum students in elementary education, grade 6. Responsible for orientation, demonstration teaching, classroom observations, summative evaluation and recommendation for certification of bachelor's degree students.

**ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE**

**1991**

**Graduate Assistant**

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
Blacksburg, VA

Responsibilities:

Graduate assistant to professor of special education. Assisting with research project concerning perceptions of learning disabilities programs, instructional leadership in special education, effective instruction, and teacher attrition.

**1978-1992**

**Teacher**

Roanoke County Schools  
Roanoke, VA

Responsibilities:

Instructor in elementary program, grades 4-6; instructor, gifted math. Additional responsibilities include: coordinator, 6th grade; chairperson, academic and in-school committees; member, program development committees; counselor (peer and student); coordinator, student trips and academic competitions.

**Special Education Instructor, K-9**

Roanoke County Schools  
Roanoke, VA

Responsibilities:

Coordinated child study meetings, provided individualized instruction for students, administered screening tests, developed programs for teachers to use with special education students, and counseled students, parents and teachers.

**1977-1978**

**Teacher**  
Roanoke City Schools  
Roanoke, VA  
Responsibilities:  
Instructor, grade 6.

**1961-1963**

**Teacher**  
Chesapeake City Schools  
Chesapeake, VA  
Responsibilities:  
Instructor, grade 5; VEA faculty representative. Additional responsibility included: cooperative instructor in elementary science curriculum, televised to Chesapeake City students.

**1961-1962**

**Social Worker, Child Protective Services**  
Norfolk City  
Norfolk, VA  
Responsibilities:  
Provided child welfare protective services, conducted home studies, placed and supervised children in foster homes, worked with court system regarding juvenile hearings, coordinated interagency services, and served as child advocate.

## **RESEARCH GRANT**

"A study of the effects of principal support on general and special educators' stress, job satisfaction, school commitment, personal health, and intent to stay in teaching" Funded by VA Department of Education, 1990-91.

## **REPORTS**

Littrell, P., Billingsley, B., and Tomchin, E. (1991). Supporting beginning and experienced special education teachers in A Staff Development Manual for Special Educators. Draft submitted to the VA Department of Education.

Littrell, P., Cline, B., and Nelson, B. (1989). Teachers and Supervisors' perceptions of secondary learning disabilities programs: Roanoke County Schools. Administration and Supervision of Special Education, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

## **LOCAL PRESENTATIONS**

"SRA Reading Curriculum Designed for Special Education Students"; Roanoke and Botetourt County Schools, 1985.

## **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Member, Council for Exceptional Children  
Member, Virginia Education Association  
Member, Roanoke County Education Association

## **REFERENCES**

References and additional information upon request.