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# Principal Socialization: A Single Case Study of Novice Charter School Principals in Los Angeles

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Concordia University–Portland  
College of Education  
Doctorate of Education Program

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Principal Socialization: A Single Case Study of Novice Charter School Principals in Los Angeles

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College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Educational Administration

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Concordia University, Portland

2018

## **Abstract**

Charter school principals need to effectively manage their school and maintain student academic achievement. As a result of these demands, novice charter school principals must also receive support so that they can grow as professionals in order to develop a successful school. Van Maanen and Schein's (1977) foundational theory on organizational socialization is utilized as a conceptual framework to demonstrate a need for novice charter school principal support. This is a single-case study that enlisted 12 participants to further investigate the type of support novice charter school principals in Los Angeles receive. This study identifies effective types of support. This single-case study utilized three qualitative instrumentation methods in order to answer the research questions. These methods were: one-on-one interviews, shadow observations, and observations of the mentor-mentee coaching sessions. Narration, tables, and figures were used to depict the findings. The findings revealed that participants received effective support from their consultant or supervisors concerning budgets, solving political issues, and day-to-day issues within their school. The novice charter school principals studied also felt that in order for support to be effective, the mentee-mentor relationship must involve trust. Several studies could be conducted to further help establish uniform novice charter school socialization in Los Angeles.

*Keywords:* school socialization, charter school, charter school principal, novice teacher, teacher mentorship, teacher support, education consultant

## **Dedication**

To my grandmothers, Rose Alexandrina Burgess and Gloria Marie Gomez. I carry your strength with me every day.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Introduction to the Problem**

“This is not your typical principal job.” There I was, almost 3 years ago, trying to explain to my old professor about my principal position. He is an amazing charter school leader who has taught me everything about charter school administration. After explaining all the nuances of my principal role to him he stated, “Do whatever is in your power to control. So if they only want you to focus on instruction, then do just that.” Typically, a principal makes the executive decisions for all areas concerning the school such as: budgeting, facilities, and hiring; however, I had to come to terms with the fact that this was not to be my determined position here. I was told to “stay in my lane” and not focus on the fiscal, operational, or disciplinary areas of the school. The staff members that were hired prior to my arrival were to have total control over those areas. I knew that this was definitely not going to be a traditional principal role. At that moment I should have quit and dealt with the repercussions of my decision later. But I did not quit; I stayed. I knew God placed me at the school for a specific reason. I would not determine the reason until my third year.

Whether it was planned or not, my interactions with the practices, policies, and procedures of my new school were socializing me to my new organization. During my novice years as a principal, I received support from my supervisor and a paid consultant. I did not find a mentor to support me during my socialization, although I did want one. While the paid consultant did not evaluate me and instead functioned as a mentor would, I was able to apply the skills and knowledge learned from my consultant to my role as a charter school principal. Appropriate socialization is necessary for novice charter school principal support. It is my intent

to identify the types of support that my novice charter school principal colleagues in Los Angeles have received.

### **Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework for the Problem**

**Background.** As I described previously, I was told to focus on student academic progress and nothing else. Even with this limited job description, focused on only academics, through experiences with the novice principal socialization process, I realized that I was living in a state of permanent whitewater. After reading Vaill (1996), I have learned that whitewater is almost inevitable in the principalship. Considering my experiences, the support of the mentor, supervisor, and consultant is necessary for socialization of the novice charter school principal. As I struggled with the socialization of my own novice charter school principal role, it made me think of all the other novice charter school principals in Los Angeles that also struggle during their beginning year and the professional support that they received to get them through their novice year(s). This topic is important because charter schools are fairly new additions to American school reform and must continue to be researched.

I utilized a single-case study method to research the perspectives of a sampling of novice charter school principals in Los Angeles. “The goal of the single-case study is to capture the unique character of the individual case within a real-life context” (Adams & Lawrence, 2015, p. 470). The novice charter school principal perspectives are key to identifying their novice charter school principal socialization. In addition to their perspectives, I viewed their interactions at the school site with stakeholders and observed the novices’ interaction with their support provider (mentor, supervisor, or paid consultant).

**Context.** The context of this study is charter schools in Los Angeles, California. The State of California has the largest number of charter schools in the nation. In 2015 Los Angeles

had more than 150,000 students attending charter public schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District during the 2014-2015 school year—the highest number for any school district in the nation (National Alliance for Public Schools, 2014). The number of Los Angeles charter schools grows each year as more charters are authorized. The large number of charters in Los Angeles demonstrates a need for novice charter school principal support. For the purpose of this study, a novice is defined as having 0 to 3 years of experience as a principal.

Some California charters operate under charter management organizations (CMOs), which have the potential to function as district school systems, while other charter schools function independently. The level of support from a CMO could potentially be greater than that received by independent charter schools, because their supports are already established. To further describe the context of charter schools, I examined several sources regarding charter education. Curry (2013) has over 14 years' worth of knowledge on charter schools as organizations, so I relied heavily on this research.

**History.** Charter schools were authorized as a result of the Charter Schools Act legislation, which became law in 1992 and holds “a unique place in the public school arena” (Curry, 2013, p. 64). This is a substantial reform movement in comparison to other American education reform efforts such as those prompted by *A Nation At Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Charter schools were designed for many reasons, but two key reasons were to alleviate burdens of urban American public schools and to provide an alternative education where students could receive individualized learning from teachers and administrators (Public Broadcasting System, 2004). “Many charter school leaders stand alone in their communities by taking a dream, detailed in the founding charter school documents, and then attaching people, process, and policies to form a living, breathing educational community”

(Curry, 2013, p. 64). This act of standing alone that Curry (2013) is referring to makes the charter school principal role very challenging and thus demonstrates the need for a continued understanding of novice charter school principal support.

**Conceptual framework for the study.** According to Ravitich and Riggan (2012), the conceptual framework is the “system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs your research” (p. 8). In this study, I utilize socialization theory as a lens to research novice charter school principal support. Van Maanen and Schein (1977) originally discussed organizational socialization 40 years ago, stating that organizational socialization is “the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role” (p. 3). Most recently, Grodzki (2011), Bodger, (2011), and Joppy (2013), also utilized socialization theory as a conceptual framework to demonstrate a need for principal support.

Ravitich and Riggan (2012) also state that the conceptual framework is a combination of experiential knowledge and prior theory and research” (p. 9). As a result of their statement, I have created a framework of necessary support that novice charter school principals need. The literature review in Chapter 2 discusses the specific manner in which previous authors conceptualize principal socialization. The conceptual framework pinpoints that the adequate socialization of novice charter school principals includes: professional development, credential clearance, supervisor support, and mentorship. It is necessary that principals, no matter how experienced they are, become acquainted with or socialized within their new school and its culture and organizational procedures.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Many researchers have investigated the demands of the principal role. Excellent principals are “great problem solvers” (Jackson & Rich, 2005, p. 30). Problem-solving is a skill that charter school principals develop with experience, as within any other career. Northfield (2013) also commented on the complexity of the principal role, stating that leadership tasks, combined with the demands of education reform, pose serious challenges for principals. Jackson and Rich (2005) stated that, “the challenges of the principalship continue far beyond the first year or two on the job; a peer-coaching partnership provides both the novice and experienced principal an opportunity to work within a framework that supports reflection on practice” (p. 31). The challenges of the principalship require support. As a result of these challenges, novice charter school principals must also receive support so that they can grow as professionals in order to develop a successful school.

## **Purpose of the Study**

Charter schools and their respective leaders are critical to current education reform efforts. The professional demands of principals call for the examination of effective principal support. The analysis of support received will further ensure their proper organizational socialization. Thus, the purpose of this study was to understand the type of support novice charter school principals in Los Angeles receive and then understand their perspective on the effectiveness of the support. I employed a qualitative research methodology, using interviews, mentor and mentee coaching session observations, and observations of the participants in their normal day-to-day routine. I enlisted 12 participants to reveal their perceptions of the effectiveness of the support they received. The results of this study revealed what novice charter

school principals find effective. The results helped to establish uniform novice charter school socialization in Los Angeles.

This single case study is also known as an embedded case study, an “investigation of single cases that comprise a group or organization in order to understand that group or organization” (Adams & Lawrence, 2015, p. 469). For the purposes of this study I referred to the study as a single-case study.

### **Research Questions**

With this purpose in mind, the following two research questions were used to examine the socialization of novice charter school principals in Los Angeles.

1. What type of formal support do novice charter school principals in Los Angeles receive for learning their leadership role?
2. How effective do novice charter school principals in Los Angeles perceive the support is from their school district during their first year?

These two research questions were developed to attain specific information regarding novice charter school principal supports and their effectiveness. I conducted interviews, made shadow observations, and observed mentor coaching sessions with 12 Los Angeles charter school principals to examine their experiences with mentorship.

### **Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study**

**Rationale.** Schools are considered an integral part of our success as Americans. Americans entrust the success of our schools to the power and leadership of one individual (the principal) and the teams he or she builds. It is necessary to determine the effectiveness of the current support that novice principals receive in Los Angeles, as this understanding can

significantly impact the support novice charter school principals receive. In addition, the study informed the current socialization processes and created recommendations for further study.

**Relevance.** This study added to the research on Los Angeles novice charter school principal socialization, since this is not a heavily researched topic. If an effective novice charter school principal socialization strategy and support program is discovered during this study, it may help other districts to replicate the successful programs for their charter schools with novice principals. Also, Los Angeles charter schools can view this study and identify ways to aid principal socialization in an urban setting.

**Significance.** This study is significant to the future of American education, novice principals, and charter schools with novice principals, because it helps show that the majority of novice charter school principals seem to be getting appropriate support, thus researchers might move their focus to other topics of concern, to more effectively identify what can be done to improve district-wide student achievement. The education of American children is critical, as current children will be the leaders in the future.

### **Definition of Terms**

There are several key terms that must be defined for this study. They are as follows:

**Charter school.** A school that is allowed to open after submitting a charter to an authorizing agency (National Charter School Research Center, n.d.). Often these are schools that have been established with a unique emphasis or teaching methodologies as a means to improve education.

**Charter management organization (CMO).** “An organization that manages several authorized charter schools” (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2014). This term is used to describe the schools that operate within an organization.

**Consultant.** A paid professional who provides expert advice in a particular area.

**Independent charter school.** A charter school that is not managed by a CMO (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2014). The term was used to describe charter schools that operate individually without a large back office of support.

**Mentorship.** According to Rothwell and Chee (2013), mentoring “involves what we call “uplifting behaviors”—namely inspiring, motivating, and encouraging. Its core purpose is to enable the mentee’s growth” (p. 6). This term was utilized to describe a type of support to principal socialization.

**Novice principal.** A principal who has worked 3 or fewer years as a principal. This term was utilized throughout the study to describe the new principals.

**Permanent white water.** A metaphorical term that defines the “difficult condition under which people exercise their will and judgment within society’s macro-systems” (Vaill, 1996, p. 6). Whitewater consists of “events that are surprising, novel, messy, costly, and unpreventable” (p. 14). This term defines the state that a novice principal experiences during the beginning years.

**Socialization.** “An individual’s process of acquiring social knowledge and skills necessary for an organizational role” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977, p. 3). This term was utilized throughout the study to describe the specific supports principals receive to grow into the role of principal.

**Socialization of principals.** A principal’s knowledge of the organization and his or her application of skills to the organization. This term was utilized in this study to describe novice charter school principal supports.

**Support provider.** A term used in this study to refer to a charter school principal’s mentor, coach, or supervisor.

These terms make up the key language of the study. It is important to note these terms as they are discussed, in context, throughout the study in various chapters. Novice charter school principal socialization combines several of terms identified above. The combination of these terms helps make up the study's theoretical basis.

### **Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations**

It is important to note the assumptions, delimitations, and limitations. I used the aforementioned to design strategic procedures—such as participant selection process, interview process, and data collection process—to improve the credibility of this study.

**Assumptions.** I assumed in this research that the novice charter school principal participants in this study were receiving support from a supervisor, mentor, or consultant. I also assumed that novice charter school principals would want to provide their perspective regarding the support they receive.

**Delimitations.** There are several delimitations that could affect the study's findings. The delimitations are:

1. Novice charter school principals with 0 to 3 years of experience as a principal
2. Novice charter school principals in Los Angeles
3. Novice charter school principals that had time and the desire to participate in this study

**Limitations.** The specific limitation of this research study revolves around the study population:

1. "Anecdotal information is subject to interpretation by the researcher" (Adams & Lawrence, 2015, p. 471), which could include unintended researcher bias.

2. The participants' biases toward their principal socialization could impact the findings of the study; they may feel that their socialization to their position was effective because they did not need the specific support.
3. The novice principals will not want to make their organization look unprofessional, so the participants might not give candid responses about their socialization.

## **Chapter 1 Summary**

As a result of my limited job description (being told to focus on only student achievement), experiences with my own principal socialization process and, my initial literary review, I developed the research questions to explore a needed area of study. Charter schools are relatively new to education reform, and California has established more charter schools than any other state. California stakeholders expect charter schools to run efficiently under the leadership of the principals. There is limited research pertaining to Los Angeles charter school principal socialization. This study investigated the effectiveness of the support that novice Los Angeles charter school principals receive to aid in their leadership of their charter school. Los Angeles charter school principals also have to account for the negative political arena of operating an LAUSD-authorized charter school. The aim of this study is to determine effective novice charter school principal supports in order to replicate the supports for other charter schools and even develop a nationwide novice charter school principal support system. I employed a single-case study research methodology to investigate the degree of effective support that novice principals receive. The results of this study were intended to reveal how effective novice charter school principals perceived the support they received. The results may help to establish uniform and effective novice charter school socialization in Los Angeles. The remainder of this study is

organized into several chapters: the literature review, the methodology, the findings, and conclusions.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This literature review begins with an introduction to the conceptual framework involving novice charter school principal supports. After the conceptual framework is established, this literature review provides an in-depth discussion of novice charter school principals including their role as leaders, socialization types, research on mentorship and support programs, and any previous research on novice charter school principals. There is limited research that explores the organizational socialization of novice charter school principals; therefore, this study reviews previous research that involved public school administrators and their experiences then briefly discusses novice charter school principals and their subsequent socialization. The literature review is organized in the following sections: (a) demands of the charter school principal; (b) socialization theory; (c) the novice charter school principal mentorship; and (d) research on the role of novice charter school principal mentorship, support, and induction programs.

This section is important because it reviews the conceptual framework, socialization theory, and its alignment with principal socialization. The major argument is that principals need adequate time to socialize into their new role and organization. This socialization can occur with the support of their supervisor, mentor, or consultant. Bodger (2011) also researched the supports that novice principals need. Bodger stated, “Novice principals in many districts across the United States are left to learn how to apply these various forms of leadership on their own, without mentors, coaches, or training to guide them” (p. 20). Bodger’s research summarizes principal socialization. The principal gains the knowledge necessary to acclimate into the school by implementing their knowledge and receiving effective support from their mentor or supervisor. This literature review discusses the importance of mentorship and other professional support as a means for adequate principal socialization.

In addition to novice principals, this literature review also explores the novice charter school principal's socialization. This is an important lens from which to view charter education. The fast development of charter schools called for the support of their novice leaders. While there is also not much literature that discusses novice charter school principal socialization, there are researchers that discuss the importance of novice charter school principals.

Curry (2013) stated many factors involved in the skills needed to be a charter school principal. He discussed the need for passion and confidence necessary to be a charter school leader. However, Curry also discusses the financial constraints (such as less funding to educate each pupil) and the achievement gaps that charter school principals face that make the job difficult. Grodzki (2011) and Gilliland de Jesus (2009) also focus on novice charter school principal socialization. Thus, this study utilizes previous research to shed light on the mentorship, support, and inductational needs of novice charter school principals.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Charter school principals are tasked to raise student achievement with less average daily attendance funding than public school principals have. As a result of the high demands on novice charter school principals, new charter school principals must receive mentorship in order to grow as successful professionals. Socialization theorists have published a plethora of research in relation to education and socialization. This study utilizes socialization theory as a vantage point to research how novice charter school principal mentorship and support can increase the success of novice principals and their schools. Socialization theory is widely researched in relation to principal socialization, but not specifically charter school principals. Therefore, this broader conceptual framework and literature review informed the study.

Van Maanen and Schein (1977) originally discussed organizational socialization 40 years ago, stating that organizational socialization is “the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role” (p. 3). This “process” that Van Maanen and Schein discuss is necessary to the research supporting novice charter school principals. It is necessary that novice principals “acquire the social knowledge and skills” (p. 3) for their principalship. The conceptual framework of this study is two-fold, focusing on the principal’s knowledge of the organization and his or her application of skills to the organization. The conceptual framework of this study emphasizes two keys that principals need: (a) knowledge, and (b) application. These two skills are essential to novice charter school principal socialization. The novice principal needs to be able to apply what was learned from their preparation programs to their role as a principal. Two keys of principal socialization are knowing the organization and applying the knowledge of the organization on a daily basis. The support from a mentor, coach, supervisor, or consultant can help establish the appropriate socialization process for the novice principal.

Bolman and Deal (2003) also studied organizational frameworks. The principalship first was considered in an organizational framework, because it is a balance of managing the human resources frame, the political frame, the symbolic frame, and the structural frame. The human resources frame measures needs and skills. The political frame encompasses power and conflict. The symbolic frame includes culture and rituals. The structural frame entails rules and roles. If applied to principal socialization, Bolman and Deal’s concept of *reframing organizations* implies that the leader can navigate all of the aspects of the organizational frame. While different, these concepts are relevant to the adequate socialization of novice principals. However, this study

reviewed more in depth the manner that Van Maanen and Schein's (1977) socialization theories have been cited by various researchers when discussing principal success and effectiveness.

Socialization theory has been utilized in research of the novice principal's socialization to a new site, school, and culture (Bodger, 2011; Grodzki, 2011; Joppy, 2013; Manzola, 2008). According to Grodzki (2011), "organizational socialization can include changes in the development of new skills, attitudes, dispositions, knowledge, group values, and—very importantly—new social relationships within the group and organization" (p. 2). Grodzki's research suggests that no matter how skilled in administration or education the novice principal might be, the principal still has to develop or demonstrate the "social knowledge" of his or her organization.

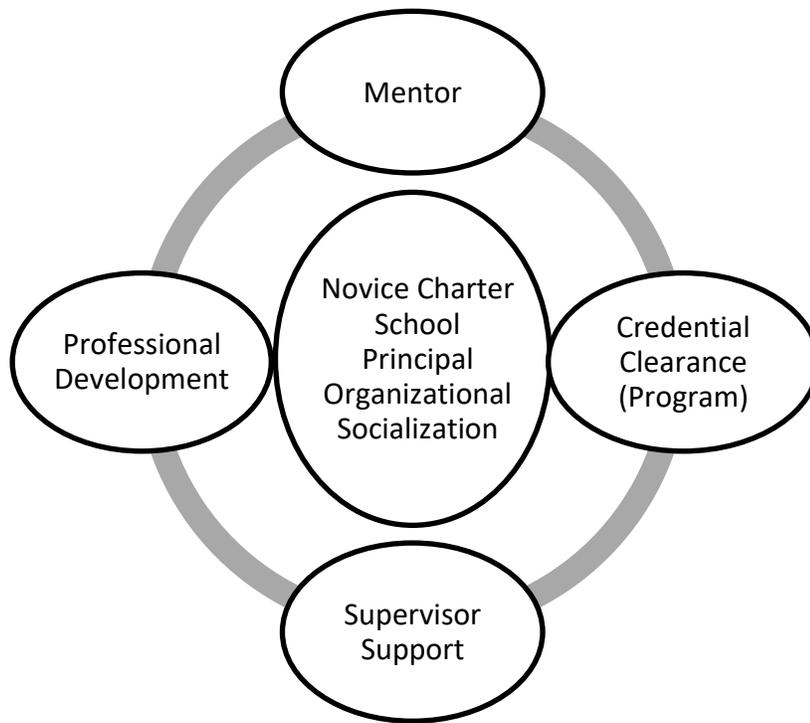
Further, Grodzki (2011) posited that socialization matters, and through socialization newcomers gain a sense of what the organization stands for and why their own role is important. Individuals find their place within an organization and find their role through the socialization process by constructing meaning. Grodzki also identified the difference between organizational socialization as the knowledge, values, and behaviors required of a particular role within the organization. These values may be very different than those the educator learned as part of his or her professional socialization. The difference between professional and organizational socialization is important, because the processes sound similar but are distinct. Both are vital.

Joppy (2013) also stated that principals have the "daunting responsibility of leading schools to success; therefore, it is vital that districts provide effective socialization experiences to help prepare them for the task" (p. 6). "Daunting" is a strong word to describe the principal role, and it demonstrates the need for this research. Further, to address this idea, "Some school districts are offering socialization support to administrators through mentoring, workshops, and

leadership academies that present a series of in-services on pertinent educational themes” (Joppy, 2013, p. 12). The mentoring and support is essential to principal socialization and is discussed further in this study and literature review.

Like Joppy (2013) and Grodzki (2011), Manzola (2008) also utilized socialization theory as a means to discuss new administrator supports. Manzola focused on mentorship as a means to acceptable administrator socialization and their understanding of the job. Mentorship is a common principal support that is repeated in the literature. There is an overwhelming consensus among researchers that novice principals need specific strategies to support their appropriate socialization in the form of mentorship support.

According to Bodger (2011), socialization theory and mentoring provide a link between the academic knowledge provided in university certification and preparation programs and the field-based knowledge necessary for success in today’s educational environment. Bodger’s statement is key, and as a result of her research and that of other researchers (i.e., Grodzki, 2011; Joppy, 2013; Manzola, 2008; Van Maanen & Schein, 1977), research on novice principals is available to inform further socialization systems. The following figure visualizes the socialization supports necessary for novice principals. Based on the literature reviewed, Figure 1 depicts the necessary support for the novice charter school principal. The types of support necessary for the principals’ support are as follows: professional development, administrative credentialing programs, supervisor support, and mentorship. These aspects of charter school principal support are discussed further in this study.



*Figure 1.* The conceptual framework in relation to novice charter school principalship.

While all are equally important to the novice charter school principal socialization support grouping, this study focuses on mentorship and supervisor supports. The preliminary research on socialization theory demonstrates the need for adequate principal socialization through effective supports. As a result of these preliminary research findings, I continued to (a) explore other researchers' perspectives on socialization theory, (b) identify the implication for novice principals, and (c) investigate the manner in which charter schools principals receive effective support. In order for novice charter school principals to achieve success there must be socialization strategies in place to support them. The effectiveness of the support systems was investigated.

### **Review of Research Literature on Charter Schools**

The major context of this study involves the research of novice charter school principals, so it is necessary to spend a short time defining charter schools. Charter schools in their simplest

forms are alternatives to traditional public schools. Many organizations set out to define charter schools. For example, the federal government defines charter schools as, “A public charter school is a publicly funded school that is typically governed by a group or organization under a legislative contract (or charter) with the state, district, or other entity” (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d., para. 1). The governance of the charter school is a key component of the establishment and operations of charter schools. One of the reasons is the fact that the charter exempts the school from certain state or local rules and regulations, and the governing board must make sure the school is serving students adequately. “In return for flexibility and autonomy, the charter school must meet the accountability standards outlined in its charter” (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d., para. 1). Charter school principals, operators, and governing boards must service their schools well, because the charter could be revoked if they are not performing equal to or above schools in their area.

Like the federal government’s definition and description of charter schools, Uncommon Schools (n.d.), an organization that manages charter schools, defines charter schools as, “an independently run public school granted greater flexibility in its operations, in return for greater accountability for performance” (para. 1). While the federal government discussed governance as a key component of the charter school, Uncommon Schools states that the “charter” must also establish a performance contract detailing the school’s mission, program, students served, performance goals, and methods of assessment” (n.d., para. 1). This performance contract is also called a charter petition. The charter petition expressly states the intent and specifics of a charter.

The California Department of Education (n.d.) defines charter schools as a public school that may provide instruction in grades kindergarten through 12. Parents, teachers, or community members may initiate a charter petition, which is typically presented to and approved by a local

school district governing board. The California State Department suggests that it is the intent of the California Legislature, under state law, that charter schools operate independently from the existing school district structure as a method to accomplish all of the following:

- Improve pupil learning.
- Increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving.
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.
- Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system.
- Hold the schools established under the charter accountable for meeting measurable pupil outcomes, and provide the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems.
- Provide vigorous competition within the public school system to stimulate continual improvements in all public schools. (para. 3)

The California Department of Education (2017) has defined the charter petition in more detail than the federal government and the Uncommon Schools CMO. The charter petition would need to specify all of the charter characteristics indicated above with regard to all stakeholders: parents, students, staff, and the governing board.

### **History of Charter Schools**

While charter schools are relatively new to education reform, the call for the improvement of education has been a long uphill battle in our nation at the federal and state

level. There is a duty placed on American schools, principals, and students to perform. Educational improvement is necessary, and charter schools utilize innovative programs to achieve academic success, based on a variety of political or ideological viewpoints. These include ultra-strict disciplinary policies for inner-city youth, which has been popular and successful (Joseph, 2016), to Montessori and Waldorf, and other student-directed learning methods. The political climate places a large demand on charter school principals.

Calzini and Showalter (2009) discussed how the federal government has been involved in education despite the Tenth Amendment which states that the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people. Calzini and Showalter stated, “Despite education being a reserved power of the states, the influence of federal government is well documented over the last 40 years” (p. 1). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is an example of the largest federal law since *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. NCLB became a law in 2001 and “sought to close the achievement gap between rich and poor students by creating common curriculum standards, closing failing schools, and the public reporting of student test scores” (Spring, 2010, p. 36). Since NCLB, many states have exercised their ability to implement reforms under the tenth amendment.

Federal laws, such as NCLB, called for action in our nation for the establishment of charter schools. Our nation’s need for different models of schooling came from many federal policies initiated by *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and continued through NCLB. According to the National Charter School Research Center (n.d.) the term *charter* originated in the 1970s. In the 1970s, charters were contracts that teachers were granted by their local school boards to discover creative and innovative alternatives to teaching. Since the 1970s, charter schools have become more popular and have involved many changes.

The state of Minnesota opened the first charter school, and since then, many other states have begun operating charter schools. So when juxtaposed with other American education reforms, the charter school movement is relatively new.

While charter schools boasted reform in curriculum, student opportunity, class size, and parent choice, there were also many challenges. These challenges give those that oppose charter schools fuel to further disprove charters' effectiveness. Perry (2013) identified the many reasons people develop opposition to charters (p. 36):

1. Charter schools rob funds and students from regular public schools.
2. Charter schools are too risky.
3. Charter schools are not truly accountable.
4. Charter schools are not really different from regular schools.
5. Charter schools “cream” the most fortunate kids and leave the neediest behind.
6. Charter schools don't have the resources to adequately serve disabled students.
7. Charter schools balkanize American society and weaken the principal institutions that knit us together.
8. Charter schools invite profiteering from public education funds.
9. Charter schools are a stalking horse for vouchers.
10. Charter schools do not go far enough in dramatically reforming education, in that they still are bound to standardized tests and, for the most part, classroom lecture-based learning methods.

The idea of *creaming*, as written in item number 5 in the list above, has been a concern since charter schools opened, but there is no evidence to prove that charter schools attract the “cream of the crop” students. In 2009, the RAND Corporation conducted an evaluation of charter

school performance utilizing longitudinal, student-level academic achievement and performance data such as educational outcomes, attendance, graduation rates, and college attendance. The dataset was gathered from several cities and states: Chicago, San Diego, Philadelphia, Denver, Milwaukee, and the states of Ohio, Texas, and Florida. This study also speaks to questions that have arisen concerning the perceived threat that charter schools present with regard to “skimming” high achieving students in the districts from surrounding schools, as well as questions concerning racial and class segregation in charter schools. The study found very little evidence to substantiate the claims that charter schools skimmed higher achieving students from surrounding traditional public schools (p. 45).

In addition to number 5 on Perry’s (2013) list, “charter schools are not truly accountable,” is also difficult to prove, because many charters schools receive oversight from their authorizer. In addition to number 5 “charter schools balkanize American society” is also an unproven negative opinion about charter schools. The term *balkanize* means to create a hostile group. Charters are in no way hostile to public schools; many charter operators state that it is the other way around. Some charter schools are formed around specific value sets, and perhaps these are strengthened by grouping with like-minded others, but parents who value specific educational experiences have just as much or more proclivity toward hostility when they do not have access to schooling choices that match their values. These negative statements about charter schools take away from the positive contributions that charter schools make, such as smaller class sizes and individualized attention.

According to Gutierrez (2012), charter schools are a part of a larger reform movement. The RAND Corporation (2007) described this reform as the demand for and providing of school choice. Proponents believe in a system in which “parents and their students choose which school

they believe will best increase their academic growth and educational opportunities” (p. 17). The school choice debate is highly contentious, because some educators believe parents and students are not best qualified to select schools that will have the greatest benefit for them and for society as a whole. The RAND Corporation notes the following:

- Proponents of school choice suggest that education vouchers and charter schools afford parents and students the potential opportunity to benefit from better and safer schools.
- School choice advocates also believe that increased school choice may ameliorate socioeconomic inequalities by providing minority and/or socioeconomically disadvantaged students with the opportunity to attend schools in more affluent areas.
- School choice is also predicated on the long-standing business concept of competition. Creating a competitive educational market would rely on the threat to traditional public schools of losing students to charter schools or private schools. (p. 44)

Like RAND’s description of school choice, Reed and Rose (2015) believe that charter schools represent the primary vehicle for school choice in the United States. Yet, the long-term viability of charter schools is unknown.

### **Charter School Authorizers**

Charter school authorizers are “entities” that empower or allow charter schools to operate (Gau & Palmer, 2003). These authorizers play a large role in the opening, management, and compliance of charter schools. Gau and Palmer (2003) conducted a study on charter school authorizers in the nation. They studied authorizers in 24 of the 38 states that had charter law. The primary data collection tools were three on-line surveys, one each for authorizers, operators, and observers. Their study found many key insights to charter operators. One key finding states that “States with fewer authorizers, serving more schools each, appear to be doing a better job” (p. 1).

Also, quality authorizing costs more money. During the research, they found six areas that the authorizers are in charge of: application process, approval process, performance contracts, oversight, renewal, and revocation. The surveys also revealed that there was no consistency among charter authorizers regarding authorizer fees. Some authorizers charge up to 10% in the schools ending revenue. Specific to California charter authorizers, “California earned a D+ for its policy environment and a D+ for authorizer practices, resulting in an overall grade of D+. When California observer and school operator respondents were asked to provide a single ‘holistic’ grade, the average given was a C-” (Gau & Palmer, 2003, p. 31). The defining terms, as presented by Gau and Palmer (2003), demonstrate that there is no consistency with charter authorizer policy in California.

### **Charter Schools in California**

According to research completed by the National Alliance of Charter Schools, California has a dominant role in the charter school movement. California leads the nation in the number of charter schools as well as the fastest rate of growth of charter schools (Center for Education Reform, 2010). California opened the most new charter schools in 2015. In the 2015-2016 school year California operated 1,234 charters, more than any other state.

According to the California Department of Education (2017), in 1992, California became the second state in the nation to adopt public charter school legislation. Currently in 2017:

- There are 982 active charter schools and eight all-charter districts are operating in California. Of the individual active charter schools:
  - Approximately 83% are start-up schools, and the remainder are conversions of pre-existing public schools.

- Approximately 76% are classroom- or site-based, and the remainder are either partially or exclusively non-classroom-based (independent study).
- Approximately 73% are directly funded (i.e., may apply individually and receive funding directly for state or federal programs), and the remainder are locally funded.
- Charter schools are located throughout the state in 54 of California’s 58 counties and in rural, suburban, and urban areas. Student populations are diverse and tend to reflect the student populations of the districts in which the charter schools are located.
- The number of students enrolled in charter schools is approximately 572,752, or approximately 9% of the public school student population in California. (California Charter School Association, n.d.)

This data is key since Los Angeles is the location of this study.

### **Charter Schools in Los Angeles**

In 1992, California became the second state in the United States to enact significant charter school legislation. Even still, the opposition and the political landscape in Los Angeles is still challenging. In October 2016, the Los Angeles unified school district did not renew five out of six charter schools (Blume, 2016). This is an 83% rejection of of charter school renewals, for schools that are currently open, so the chances of a Los Angeles Unified charter school being renewed is not very high. Blume (2016) further discussed the politics surrounding Los Angeles Unified School District’s (LAUSD) relationship with charters, stating that the interaction between charters and LAUSD is complex and often strained. For much of the last two decades, the district grudgingly approved charters; it had to under state law, provided that a prospective charter properly completed a lengthy application process. The “grudging” approval

of charters, combined with the consequent charters, make the political landscape for novice charter school principals a daunting one.

Studying LAUSD situates the study at what might be argued is the nexus of charter school activity for the nation (Gutierrez, 2012, p. 87). However, like with any new reform, critics will have opposition to change. The political adversity that charter schools experience is an unfortunate added layer to the already strenuous demands placed on educators and students. As a result, it automatically becomes the principal's role to disprove these negative perceptions of charter schools by raising student achievement, creating a positive school culture, and increasing the number of credentialed teachers, all with a small budget. The fate of charter schools depends largely on how principals succeed in these areas.

### **LAUSD Charter School Division**

Since approval of its first charter school in 1993, LAUSD has become the largest district charter school authorizer in the nation, with 277 independent and affiliated charter schools serving over 154,000 students. All of the charter school principals participating in the present study are principals at an LAUSD-authorized school. As stated in the Board of Education's Policy on Charter School Authorizing, "Charter schools are valuable partners and viable choices among the district's robust set of educational options" (LAUSD, n.d., para. 2). The Charter Schools Division manages all of the authorized charters in Los Angeles. According to the Charter Schools Division, they "work to ensure that charter schools have both the autonomy which the California Charter Schools Act provides and the public accountability for which charter schools are responsible" (LAUSD, n.d., para. 2). The Los Angeles Unified School District website describes the legislation specific to operating a charter. Referring to Education Code Section 47604.32, the LAUSD website states that the authorizing entity for a charter school

is responsible for ensuring that the school operates in compliance with all applicable laws and terms of its charter (California Department of Education, 2017).

### **Charter School Budget**

According to Reed and Rose (2015), the fiscal challenges of charter schools are a concern for multiple reasons. Charter school leaders also work with lower budgets and fewer resources than leaders of district public schools, which can be overwhelming and frustrating (Griffin & Wohlstetter, 2001). Charter schools operate on far less revenue than public schools, yet are expected to yield results that are better than their public counterparts.

Phillips (2010) identified the specifics of the charter school budget into two categories: revenue and expenses. The revenue comes from “local, state, and federal sources” (p. 15). Local revenue can come from earning from student meals, parent teacher organization, or real estate taxes. State revenue is the largest source for schools:

State revenue sources for charter schools generally come from six of the eight categories: basic instructional and operating subsidies; subsidies for specific educational programs; subsidies for non-educational programs; vocational training for the unemployed; extra grants (i.e., state accountability block grants); subsidies from the national food and nutrition milk, lunch, and breakfast program; subsidies for state-paid benefits (including the state’s share of Social Security and Medicare taxes and the state’s share of retirement contribution). (Phillips, 2010, p. 26)

In terms of expenses, charter schools spend money in several budget categories: instruction, support services, operation of non-instructional services, facilities acquisition, construction and improvements, and other financing uses. Of these expenses, the highest spending category is instruction, which can be defined as salaries, instructional materials, technological teaching

equipment, and professional development. Phillips (2010) further stated, to add to these difficulties, charter schools receive less per-pupil allotment than district schools and are denied access to block grant funds. With these challenges in mind, and the increased pressures to meet state and federal accountability measures, charter schools must find an affordable, sustainable model for increasing student achievement.

Phillips's (2010) study found the analysis of the budget and test data for all four charter schools confirmed that there is a positive relationship between student achievement and resource allocation when funds are spent primarily on (a) instructional-related resources and (b) instructional leaders such as coaches, curriculum directors, and other instructional program directors. Both higher-performing schools in Phillips's study spent over 50% of their resources in these areas, while the two lower performing schools spent less than 50% in these areas.

According to the California Department of Education, the agency that oversees California education, the Public Charter Schools Grant Program 2010-2015 provides grants of up to \$575,000 to plan and implement new charter schools. It serves California's public charter schools by providing startup and initial operating capital to assist schools in establishing high quality, high performing charter school operations for California students and their families. The "dissemination grant" provides grants to charter schools to provide resources likely to significantly improve academic achievement in California's K-12 public education system. There are other grants that charter schools can receive for operation costs. For example:

A charter school that offers more than 20% of its instruction outside of a classroom setting, or a charter school who serves fewer than 80% of its students in a non-classroom setting, is classified as a non-classroom school in accordance with Education Code

Section 47612.5. All non-classroom based charters must file an SB 740 Funding Determination Form to receive state and federal funding. (California Charter Schools Association, n.d.a, para. 5)

### **Charter Management Organizations**

Some charter schools are linked to charter management organizations, also known as a CMO. The CMO is a central office that supports that school. According to Zuckerman (2012), CMOs follow an institutional model. The CMO forms a centralized office that is similar to a district office. The function is to provide the charter schools with support. “By centralizing charter school operations, CMOs can achieve economies of scale by spreading costs across a number of schools, as opposed to a single charter school entity” (p. 5). A few large CMOs, with five or more schools, in Los Angeles are KIPP, Green Dot, Alliance, PUC, and Aspire. These examples demonstrated the intent of CMOs as an increase in the ability to “replicate their school models on a much larger scale by creating a new educational system aligned around a common school model, with consistent educational practices and centralized school and back-office support, such as human resource management, technology, and school finance” (p. 5). The structural support that CMOs can provide to their schools is key in supporting the novice charter school principals and their schools. Zuckerman added that the political aspect of CMOs becomes focused on, “institution-building that is linked to their internal, technical goals and demands, as opposed to normative, rule-based bureaucracies around which schools and school systems have been built” (p. 10). The institution-building makes CMOs purpose and intent similar to that of large school districts, which ironically, many charter operators wished to move away from. Of the approximately 6,825 charter schools in operation in 2018, nearly 60% are independent schools. Of the remaining schools, about two-thirds are managed by CMOs, and one-third are

managed by EMOs (NACS). While CMOs are not a large aspect of this research study, it is important to note that CMOs exist in Los Angeles. Some novice charter school principals receive support from their CMO, and independent charter novice principals do not receive support from a CMO.

### **California Charter School Facilities**

Finding appropriate charter school facilities, buildings that meet the safety regulations and other mandates, often constitutes another obstacle for novice charter school principals. The California Charter Schools Association (n.d.) has developed a detailed descriptions for charter schools to navigate the acquisition of charter school facilities. The CCSA states, “finding a high quality, affordable facility is a daunting task for a charter school” (para. 1). The California Department of Education enacted Senate Bill (SB) 740 in 2001, updated in 2015, which states the following:

To be eligible, charter schools must serve a “student population with at least 55% of their pupils eligible for free or reduced price meals (FRL), or they must be physically located in the attendance area of a public elementary school with 55% or more FRL qualified students. Charter schools may be reimbursed \$750 per ADA or up to 75% of their total lease or rental costs, whichever amount is lower. Funds may not be used to purchase facilities or for lease/purchase agreements. (California Charter Schools Association, n.d.b, para. 1)

There is also another bill passed in California that states, “Charter schools occupying school district, state, or federal facilities, or charter schools receiving facilities through Proposition 39... are not eligible for reimbursement through SB 740” (California Charter Schools Association, n.d., para. 2).

These laws present supports for charter schools and their governing boards to acquire adequate facilities for their charter schools. The CCSA suggest specific strategies for charter schools to acquire facilities. They state that before going out to look for a site, charter school operators should create a plan for their facility by assessing the school's needs (based on anticipated enrollment and educational program), budgeting, and reviewing various options. There are many locations that charter schools can acquire. They can choose from Proposition 39 facilities, commercial leases, nonprofit leases, and charter-owned facilities, among others (California Charter Schools Association, n.d.a). Proposition 39 facilities ensure "that public school facilities should be shared fairly among all public school pupils, including those in charter schools" (Education Code, Sec. 47614).

After acquiring these facilities, charter schools must adhere to health and safety inspections conducted by the Los Angeles County of Education (LACOE). If LACOE representatives find that the facility is in ill-repair, they will return to the school to verify that repairs have been made (California Department of Education, n.d.b).

### **Demands of the Charter School Principal Position**

A key component of this literature review is the charter school principal, their role as charter school leaders, and the responsibilities the novice charter school principal must complete in order to be effective. Curry (2013) discussed the key aspects of the principal job description and touches upon the supports needed. The charter school principal position is unique in many ways. Curry stated that the job of charter school leadership is not for everyone and requires a unique skill set. This skill set could be difficult to attain for any individual, let alone a novice. Curry further stated that a principal's abilities to adapt, align, and stay in tune with student needs and parent expectations are crucial. These human resource skills (such as ability to adapt) are

difficult combined with the day-to-day operations of the school. Curry posited that charter school leaders often have to push traditional boundaries and leave the status quo behind, ensuring that academic needs of students are addressed with individualized and personalized approaches to learning. These approaches become political, as charter schools must perform well in order to keep their charter open. The duties of the charter school principal demonstrate a dire need for effective and established mentorship, support, and induction.

Garza (2010) posited that charter school leaders are constrained by time, and most of their time is spent addressing managerial issues instead of instructional issues. Instructional leadership is essential to a school's academic success, because with no supervision of instruction, a charter school leader might not know if the teachers are inexperienced or ineffective. The leaders of charter schools need to effectively manage their school and maintain student achievement because consistently poor academic achievement leads to charter school closures. Like other school leaders, charter school leaders need to be aware of federal and state regulations and accountability.

In addition to the expectation of performing on far less funding, charter schools receive yearly rigorous oversight from their authorizers. Some authorizers in California are friendly and some solely focus on compliance. For example, the LAUSD charter schools division focuses on compliance. It is their mission to ensure that students have access to a safe, high quality education (LAUSD, n.d.). This mission is achieved through a yearly oversight visit in which an LAUSD experts team reviews the schools' governance, operations, academic achievement, and fiscal responsibility.

Of course every school wants to score four out of four on the evaluation rubric, but many fall short of this score. The oversight process is a very objective process where the expert

evaluates whether the charter school has met compliance on all areas. This oversight may be a daunting process, but in the end it makes the charter school better. The charter school principal must navigate the charter oversight as a demand of their job. It is an added layer of the charter school principal role that public school principals do not need to meet.

In summary, the demands of the charter school principal are exceptionally high. They educate students on less funding, must navigate the political arena, close student achievement gaps, and operate in safe facilities. I discuss charter school facilities later in this chapter. It is safe to say that the demands of the charter school principal role require a large amount of support from the sources listed in the conceptual framework for adequate principal socialization. The supports are professional development, credential clearance, supervisor support, and mentorship. These supports together can provide the novice charter school principal with adequate socialization.

### **Permanent Whitewater**

In the introduction of this study, permanent whitewater was discussed as a concept that many novice principals will experience regardless of the skill and knowledge that they possess. Permanent whitewater is defined as a metaphorical term that defines the “difficult condition under which people exercise their will and judgment within society’s macro systems” (Vaill, 1996, p. 6). Vaill (1996) state three strategies for coping with whitewater: continual learning, systems learning, and leaderly learning.

Continual learning, according to Vaill (1996), is “thinking through what it means to be learning throughout our lives” (p. 46). Vaill stated that, “a continual stream of novel learning problems on the learner, permanent whitewater keeps the learner feeling like a beginner” (p. 46).

This could describe novice charter school principals during their first 3 years. However, Vaill believed that one can become a “personal master in permanent whitewater” (p. 46).

Systems learning is also another aspect to permanent whitewater. Vaill (1996) stated that, “viewing these situations as systems, and coming to understand what that implies, is a promising approach and one I fully endorse” (p. 105). The novice principal must “learn about oneself in interactions with the surrounding world” (p. 110). Which means the novice will have to reflect and think how to handle the situations they encounter, so they know how to handle further situations.

Leaderly learning is another specific strategy the novice can implement to navigate through the permanent whitewater. Leaderly learning is “the kind of learning that a managerial leader needs to engage in as an ongoing process” (p. 127). Vaill (1996) stated that when an individual applies the learning premise to himself or herself and becomes comfortable with it, it changes everything” (p. 127), which means staying true to philosophies and beliefs as the whitewater occurs. Specifically, continual leaderly learning entails understanding of what lifelong learning means to the leader.

In addition to continual learning, systems learning, and leaderly learning, whitewater also consists of “events that are surprising, novel, messy, costly, and unpreventable” (Vaill, 1996, p. 14). Vaill encourages readers to “embrace the complexity” associated with appropriately navigating permanent whitewater. This would mean adopting a specific strategy that could be used to navigate permanent whitewater and remaining consistent with the usage.

### **Principal Mentoring**

Mentorship is a key factor in novice charter school principal socialization. This mentorship must meet many of the characteristics of mentorship and coaching as defined by

Rothwell and Chee (2013). While coaching and mentoring are similar, they have many differences, as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

*Coaching and Mentoring in Relation to Novice Charter School Principalship*

Purpose of the role	Coaching	Similarity between coaching and mentoring	Mentoring
Competencies	Focuses on skills	Both help a novice that is new in the field	Focuses on characteristics and traits
	Skills that are specific to the position	Both focus on skills	Skills that are needed to survive the position
Focus	To teach the novice	To help the novice	Help novice maintain success
Roles	To teach the novice new knowledge	To help the novice	To support the novice
Relationship	The coach would take the lead in teaching the mentee predefined lessons	Less similarity	The mentee can express what they specifically need help with
	Could be a supervisor to mentor level	A relationship is necessary	A two-way relationship
Facilitation	Specific to the field	The novice will learn	The novice will learn from the mentor
	The coach must facilitate the learning		The mentor or novice can initiate or facilitate
Duration	The novice will learn everything they need to learn and grow professionally	Support for the novice	The novice can achieve success
	Lasts until the novice has learned all needed knowledge	Dependent on the novice	Can occur anytime the novice needs help or during a set time

As the table depicts, there are a few overlapping similarities between coaching and mentoring; however, it is important to identify the differences of coaching and mentorship in order to provide adequate socialization for the novice principals. Mentoring is the “help,” “support,” “focus,” on the novice utilizing a two-way relationship. The coach “teaches” the novice, and the mentor does not. The coach could also be a supervisor, and the mentor is not. These differences are important to note, because once the evaluative relationship is added, the coach could have a harder time getting through to the novice than the mentor would.

According to Rothwell and Chee (2013) mentoring “involves what we call ‘uplifting behaviors’ namely inspiring, motivating, and encouraging. Its core purpose is to enable the mentee’s growth” (p. 6). This definition differs from coaching, because coaching focuses on the skill versus giving the novice charter school principal the tools to achieve success. Another key difference that Rothwell and Chee (2013) stated is that “Mentors and coaches also differ in a big way in terms of behavior: The mentor is generally directive, whereas the coach nondirective” (p. 15). A specific mentorship plan is suggested:

- Step 1: Clarify the measurable business reasons for the effort and create measurable goals for the mentoring program.
- Step 2: Clarify the role responsibilities of mentors and mentees.
- Step 3: Establish ways to hold people accountable for achieving the mentoring program goals.
- Step 4: Train mentors and mentees.
- Step 5: Introduce mentors and mentees, or foster their meeting.
- Step 6: Ensure continuing follow-up.
- Step 7: Provide tools and resources to support mentors and mentees.

- Step 8: Implement the mentoring program.
- Step 9: Track results against measurable goals and communicate success stories.

(Rothwell & Chee, 2013, p. 151)

These introductory steps are necessary to establish a standard of mentorship. In addition, step 9 is key to determining the success of the mentor-mentee relationship. If novice charter school principal support programs implemented these steps, it would benefit the mentorship and help the novice charter school principal grow and achieve success in their school.

Principal mentorship is different in each state and each school. This section of the literature review focuses on two principal mentoring studies that were previously conducted by doctoral candidates. Woolsey (2010) stated positive outcomes for new principal mentorship. The first movement of mentoring for new principals emerged in the 1980s, but soon diminished in the early 1990s due to lack of clear focused goals for the program, insufficient funding, inadequate training for the mentors, and the shrinking belief of the importance of leadership development for new school leaders (Woolsey, 2010, p. 10). Woolsey's research on principal mentorship found five consistent themes in previous research: (a) planning and implementation, (b) mentor selection, (c) mentor/mentee pairing and relationships, (d) mentor/mentee training, and (e) time to meet and reflect. These five themes would allow for a successful new principal mentorship. In the implementation phase a planning team should be established in which the specific terms of mentorship are defined. Caution should be used when selecting mentors because of the confidential nature of the mentor-mentee relationship. In the third and fourth phase the mentor/mentee pairing and relationships should be matched appropriately then trained by the implementation team on how to communicate. In the fifth phase, mentorship programs must determine meeting times to communicate and reflect on the duties of the principal position.

According to Woolsey’s research, the mentor-mentee relationship was successful if these themes were followed.

Manzola (2008) distinguished the difference between mentoring and socialization for the purposes of her study. She describes mentorship as the relationship and socialization as the process. Manzola further examines the assigned mentoring of the Indiana External Mentorship Committee. The assigned mentors attended training without the administrators. Mentors were responsible for guiding the mentee during specific meetings. Each of the four mentor-mentee relationships that Manzola studied demonstrated various levels of effectiveness. Collectively she found a lack of accountability of the mentorship program and discussed their need to rectify their lack of support for administrators.

While Woolsey (2010) found positive findings in her study, Manzola (2008) found more work that needed to be done in terms of supporting principals. Despite these varied results, the research on principal mentorship sheds light on the need for mentorship to aid in adequate principal socialization. Both the Woolsey and Manzola studies demonstrate a need to continue the standardization of principal mentoring in each state. This is something that has not been done previously. However, such standardization efforts may be met with resistance, as the charter school movement is founded on the idea of increased flexibility, meaning less oversight and regulation.

Mentorship is a key framework to the development of the novice principal. The mentor “supports” and “focuses” on the novice utilizing a two-way relationship. This two-way relationship is essential to growth. Previous researchers—Manzola (2008), Woolsey (2010), and Rothwell and Chee (2013)—discussed the “wrapping” of the thoughts for the socialization of the novice charter school principal.

Bodger (2011) suggested mentoring as key to effective principalship, stating “Mentoring, programs for teachers are well established, yet the concept of mentoring is fairly recent in the field of educational leadership” (p. 30), and as a result, mentorship for principals must further be established. Mentors can only benefit the novice charter school principal as they:

- Serve to articulate critical concepts and practices, thus, shaping the careers of newcomers
- Serve as a means to reduce isolation and to provide a link from academic theory to the real-world problems for the new principal
- Help the new principal socialize to the new role in the organization by helping them make sense of what is happening around them
- Help novice principals see beyond immediate problems and challenges and reflect on the difference between their intentions and their actions (Bodger, 2011, p. 12)

As Bodger (2011) stated, the main goal of the mentor is to serve and help the novice principal. Further, Bodger’s description of mentoring is very specific and provides the mentor or principal with a guide for support. Bodger states the serving and helping will “socialize” the novice principal to his or her role. Bodger’s statement also demonstrates a consistency of the “socialization” terminology when describing novice principal supports.

For the purposes of this study, it is essential that the role of mentorship and the supervisor role not be intertwined. The supervisor support is attached to an evaluative perspective. It is also apparent that the research on principal mentorship can be directly applied to charter school principal mentorship.

### **Socialization Theory and the Novice Charter School Principal**

Van Maanen and Schein (1977) originally discussed organizational socialization 40 years ago, describing it as “the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills

necessary to assume an organizational role” (p. 3). Most recently, Grodzki (2011), Bodger, (2011), and Joppy (2013), also utilized socialization theory as a conceptual framework to demonstrate a need for principal support. This studies’ literature review discusses the specific manner in which previous authors conceptualize principal socialization.

It is evident that the demands of the charter school duties demonstrate a need for appropriate socialization. However, principal socialization as it pertains to novice charter school principals is very limited. Curry’s (2013) text does not discuss principal socialization, although he does discuss many of the key concepts related to socialization. For example, “Employees need to wrap their thoughts and actions around a company’s mission, vision, and organizational culture” (Curry, 2013, p. xii). Wrapping their thoughts and ideas around the company’s vision and mission is the direct focus on the knowledge and application. The “wrapping around” can only occur through appropriate socialization.

While novice charter school principals and their adequate socialization in LAUSD jurisdiction have not been directly researched, the application of socialization theory and district principalship can be applied to novice charter school principals and their needs for socialization. For example, Joppy (2013) discussed the socialization of school principals and the fact that education leaders are supposed to “fulfill their changing, complex role and address the shortage of qualified principal candidates” (p. 1).

### **Principal Supervisor Support**

Orlando (2014) studied the evaluation system of a charter management organization in Los Angeles. In order to study the evaluation of principals, he also researched the role of the principal’s supervisor. Orlando found that, “The supervisor, regional director, and peers would support a leader’s growth using the evaluation system (p. 91). Research emphasized this idea of

having organizations committed to having supervisors over principals to provide support and guidance so that they learn and grow (p. 101). He further stated that the role of supervisor should be fully explored before developing an evaluation for their direct reports. If the roles and responsibilities are established without opportunity for flexibility, then it will be difficult to align supports once the system is developed (p. 108).

### **Consultant**

With the design and implementation of charter schools, there has been an increased demand for paid educational consultants to support charter schools. Since charter schools operate independently and without a large district office, the need has increased to hire an external expert to provide support, instead of adding an additional position or salary such as assistant principal. According to Blanton's (2012) research on California charter schools, 66% of the charter schools surveyed utilized paid consultants to service their school. Reed and Rose (2015) stated, using 9 years of finance data from California, we find charter schools spend less on instruction and pupil support services than traditional public schools. The lower spending on instruction and pupil support is offset, not by administrative costs, but by higher spending on operations, consultant services, and a greater rate of savings, a carry-over (p. 407). The evidence that charter schools spend more than twice as much on consulting services than TPS persists across the 9 years of data examined. Long-term charter schools spend \$322 per pupil less than newly founded charter schools' average of \$1,185 per student on consultants. Charter schools hire consultants to facilitate initial start-up activities, such as writing charter applications, setting up human resources, creating financial management systems, and conducting professional development for newly hired instructional staff. Because restricted revenue decreases as charter schools mature, as do consulting services, it is reasonable to believe that a proportion of the consulting fees

occurring during the first 5 years of operation are funded by start-up grants, which disappear as charters gain experience. Reed and Rose (2015) did not analyze what specific consultant services were utilized at the specific charter schools studied in their longitudinal study. This additional research is critical to investigating charter consultant services.

### **Principal Induction Programs**

Principal induction is another strategy to ensure appropriate, adequate, and effective novice charter school principalship. However, like mentorship, induction programs across the nation are not standardized nor established for charter schools. Bodger's (2011) research posited that:

Support and induction practices for new principals include assigning formal mentors or coaches to new principals during the first years of the principalship, requiring new principals to participate in state-mandated credentialing programs offered by individual school districts or state departments of education, and encouraging participation in non-mandated new principal institutes offered by professional organizations. (p. 28)

There are many state-mandated induction programs that novice principals can enroll in to gain access to a mentor during their completion of the requirements. However, their success is questionable. For example, Gilliland de Jesus's (2009) study of induction programs for conversion charter schools found that principals involved in their conversion charter school's induction program were unsupported. This evidence supported his research expectations, further demonstrating a need for principal socialization.

The existing induction programs aim to have the novice principal reflect and polish their practices. For example, California has a two-tiered principal induction program in which the

leader must renew their credential in 5 years by attending a university program. This induction allows novice principals to reexamine their professional practices.

### **Other Supports**

Other supports, although not fully defined, are still key to novice principal socialization. There is limited research concerning other supports for novice charter school principals. However, a few other novice charter school principal supports include, but are not limited to leadership programs, professional development, professional networks, and collaboration among principals. If there are no specified mentorship supports for novice charter school principals, then the principal may need to utilize one of the above listed types of assistance.

### **Principal Professional Development**

Traditional leadership programs and professional development programs for principals often do not address the specific needs of leading a charter school, which often leaves these principals underprepared for the job (Carrillo, 2013). This lack of professional development, guidance, and support decreases the retention rate of principals (Sun & Ni, 2015). Thus, principal training must focus on building the leader's capacity to deliver strong professional development that is tied to teachers' and students' needs and to implement structures that have proven to increase teacher practice and raise student achievement (Grodzki, 2011, p. 32). There are examples among current Los Angeles Charter management organizations—such as Green Dot, KIPP, and Alliance—that principals received ongoing professional development from upper management throughout the school year. Grodzki further suggested that the principal had to commit to further professional learning for it to be effective.

Principals and their support team (supervisors, mentors, or paid consultants) will need to determine the level of professional development needed to support the novice charter school

principal. The California Charter Schools Association (CCSA, n.d.b) provides training for charter school leaders on school development, replication and growth, funding, facilities, increasing student achievement, leadership, advocacy operations, and compliance. CCSA also has an annual California Charter Schools Conference for charter school principals to network and receive professional development. Attending these workshops and conferences organized by the CCSA could support novice charter school principals.

De Jesus (2009) states in his findings that principals need support, but he also makes recommendations of support that can be implemented for principals. He suggests an administrator residence program, professional development resources, quarterly focus groups, plus ongoing coaching and training. These recommendations are extensions of this studies' conceptual framework of the necessary support of the novice charter school principal and professional development, credential clearance, supervisor support, and mentorship.

### **Charter School Principal Networks**

“Charter school leaders need to become familiar with the state and national organizations that are in place to support individual charter schools” (Curry, 2013, p. 70). Curry’s statement is true and evident in this study and conceptual framework. Novice charter school principals need multiple support systems for adequate socialization. In addition to professional development, charter school principals can join professional networks such as the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS) or the California Charter Schools Association (CCSA). The mission of the NAPCS is to support stakeholders in their growth of charter schools. This professional network could also be utilized to support novice charter school principals.

Like the NAPCS, the CCSA organizes professional development for teachers and principals in order to support California charter school educators. Figure 1 is the conceptual

framework of this chapter, which depicts the necessary grouping of support for the novice charter school principal and professional development, credential clearance, supervisor support, and mentorship.

In addition to these examples of other charter school principal supports, Chitpin's (2013) research describes specifics to their online learning community. They established the need for the website based on their initial research findings that "principals often work in fragmented and isolated cultures" (p. 2). Chitpin (2013) posited that:

Principals do not take time to consult relevant research to help them solve practical problems that arise on a daily basis. Although they regularly meet with their peers at board level meetings, participate in workshops organized by their associations, and sometimes attend research conferences, most of these initiatives have prescribed or predetermined agendas, leaving little room for sharing research-based and timely information that might be useful for solving novel situations they may face at their schools. (p. 3)

Chitpin's statements address a key concern about other principal supports. These supports help avoid working in isolation, but the principal is also required to initiate this type of socialization. Current research is key to developing the acumen necessary to be a successful principal. Chitpin goes on to state specifics about the website they created to support the principal socialization.

- The purpose of the website was to increase principal-to-principal interaction with one another by posting their questions and sharing ideas and information with each other.

- Another purpose of the website was to serve as a structure to link principals and researchers and to facilitate dissemination of research between researchers and practitioners.
- A third purpose of the website was to share the challenges faced and the learning that occurred through participating in the CPLN.

The purpose of the website that Chitpin (2013) created serves as an additional layer of other principal supports. Principals need to be able to come together to collaborate in some way. The only downside to Chitpin's research and website is that they were not able to measure the effectiveness of the website for principal support. This could be a useful area for an upcoming researcher to explore.

As previously stated, other novice principal supports are key to novice principal socialization. It is important to research other novice principal supports in case the mentor or supervisor support is non-existent or ineffective. The principal may need to seek support with one of the above listed supports. In addition, the principal will need to advocate for the other supports that he or she may need in addition to the support he or she is already receiving.

### **Review of Methodological Issues**

Many of the researchers that examined the topic of novice principal supports have similar research questions to this study (with the exception of studying novice charter school principals in Los Angeles). Those points were examined in this review of methodology. Among all researchers, there is no set methodology utilized pertaining to the topic of novice principal supports. Researchers selected qualitative, mixed methods, and quantitative studies depending on their sample sizes.

The mixed method research included interviews, principals' instructional observation database, and surveys (Curry, 2013; Taylor, 2015; Wagner, 2014). Wagner's (2014) mixed method study evaluated the outcomes of a leadership academy for school principals. Interviews, principals' instructional observations, and teacher surveys were utilized to evaluate the program. This study related to my study because it demonstrates a mixed method study of novice principals. I discuss the findings of these studies in the synthesis of research in the next section of this literature review.

The qualitative research studies utilized interviews and observations (Bodger, 2011; Carroll, 2015; Gilliland de Jesus, 2009; Grodzki, 2011; Northfield, 2013; Sun & Ni, 2015). Grodzki (2011) utilized a case study of a mid-sized Canadian school to investigate how novice administrators adequately socialize to their new job duties. Grodzki selected qualitative methodology in order to uncover participant role identities. His role as the researcher was that of a participant observer. His role was crucial to his study, since he was an administrator in the district that he was studying. Grodzki conducted semi-structured interviews and observations prior to transcribing the results and categorizing them for pattern analysis. Similar to Grodzki (2011), Bodger (2011) also utilized qualitative research methods by completing a multiple case study of six principal interns to discover the types of support novice administrators need. Previous research has proven that qualitative studies help to understand the participant's perspective much more fully than quantitative research. This is because qualitative studies gather participant first-hand accounts and are appropriate for topics about which not much prior research has been conducted.

In addition to the mixed methodology and qualitative research about novice principal support, there were a few studies that utilized a phenomenological approach (Buckey, 2014;

Joppy, 2013; Petersen, 2015). While phenomenological studies are not as widely used as the case study approach in deciphering principal socialization, it still deserves review. Joppy (2013) utilized a phenomenological research method and showed how novice principals are socialized into their schools. She utilized Moustakas' (1994) approach, which implements a four-step model in the phenomenological study, which included:

- Step 1: Epoche – Identification of the researcher's own interpretations
- Step 2: Phenomenological reduction – Considering each experience in its singularity
- Step 3: Imagination variation – Looking at the experiences from various angles
- Step 4: Synthesis of composite textural/structural descriptions – An overall description

She made “meaning” of the manner in which principals viewed their organizational socialization. Her implementation of this four-step model was very detailed and helped to eliminate researcher bias to truly understand her participants' experience. Joppy's (2013) study of 19 principals revealed that a sense of family, familiarity, preparation, and continuous training were needed for effective principal socialization.

This section discussed the qualitative research methods of previous researchers. Each of the researchers used qualitative methods in order to decipher results for their research question. While there is no research method that is better than the other, overall, it is key that future researchers identify which research method is best suited for his or her research questions.

It would appear that the researchers investigating the topic of novice principal support would most effectively utilize qualitative methods as a methodology, because there would not be much prior research from which to formulate hypotheses about the support they receive. On the contrary, the research methods are split between mixed methods and qualitative. The research conducted in mixed methods or qualitative methodologies (Carroll, 2015; Curry, 2013; Bodger,

2011; Gilliland de Jesus, 2009; Grodzki, 2011; Northfield, 2013; Sun & Ni, 2015; Taylor, 2015; Wagner, 2014) justified their research findings that novice principals need support.

One of the major strengths of the previous research on novice principals and their socialization and support was that their research proved that novice principals need support. However, there needs to be continued research on the effectiveness of mentorship, supervisor support, and induction programs. Of the novice principal research, minimal research was collected on novice charter school principal socialization and their support systems. As a result, there needs to be more research on charter school principals and the support that they are currently receiving.

Creswell (2007) stated, “When researchers conduct qualitative research, they are embracing the idea of multiple realities” (p. 16). This qualitative study allows for the voice of the novice principals to describe their experiences with his or her socialization. As a result of my preliminary research or methodological designs, I conducted a single-case study.

### **Synthesis of Research Findings**

Wagner’s (2014) mixed method study revealed evidence of principals’ increased knowledge of intended instructional strategies and targeted professional development for teachers. Wagner’s study revealed that during the novice principal professional development, principals’ accuracy and rate of instructional observations increased. This further proved their point that novice principals need support.

Grodzki’s (2011) qualitative study findings reported that administrators were surprised at the scope of the expectations and immediate demands, overwhelmed with the amount of knowledge required, and felt unprepared to assume their roles. De Jesus’s (2009) study of

induction programs for charter school principals also discovered evidence to support his research expectations.

Bodger's (2011) study revealed that that new principals welcome support from mentors, role models, and coaches. They need professional development to help them to put theory into action in their daily work. The study also confirmed the application of socialization theory to addressing the problem of novice principal support. As previously stated, although all four of the studies (Bodger, 2011; Gilliland de Jesus, 2009; Grodzki, 2011; Wagner, 2014) had different research questions, shared the same topic of novice principal support, and discovered evidence to support their research expectations. While research methodologies varied, the researchers' discovered evidence to support their research expectations. There were not any findings that did not support the idea that novice principals need support, which is a foundational idea for the present study.

De Jesus' (2009) findings also revealed that charter school principals need support during the self-created 1-year principal induction program. De Jesus stated that his role as an administrator for the principals demonstrated a limitation of the study. This was an important fact to note throughout his study as to not contaminate the findings.

It is important to note that the researchers' findings were able to answer their research questions. These various researchers were used as an example for how to structure and set up my research questions, methodologies, and findings. However, my study investigated the need for effective supports. All of the qualitative studies researched for the purpose of this literature review justified their research hypothesis that novice principals need support (Carroll, 2015; Curry, 2013; Bodger, 2011; Gilliland de Jesus, 2009; Grodzki, 2011; Northfield, 2013; Sun & Ni, 2015; Taylor, 2015; Wagner, 2014). The researchers implemented various qualitative or

mixed methodologies and still came to this same conclusion. Qualitative studies allowed the participants to share their perspective on support and the mixed methods studies combines surveys and interviews.

### **Critique of Previous Research**

Grodzki (2011) studied participants in his own school district. His findings displayed results to support his research expectations. Researchers in such cases have to be careful to maintain a non-biased perspective and justify their conclusions by describing efforts to reduce bias. In a setting such as Grodzki's, there would be a greater risk of researcher confirmation bias, acquiescence bias ("yea-saying"), sponsor bias (when respondents know or suspect the sponsor of the research), or the "halo effect" in which respondents have a tendency to see something or someone in a certain light because of a single, positive attribute, which in a participant-observer role, might be known of beforehand (Quirk's Media, n.d.).

The only negative critique of the previous research is that the researchers did not evaluate the effectiveness of novice principal support; however, they specified the need for the further examination of effective principal socialization support. The fact that the previous researchers did not evaluate the effectiveness of the support given to principals demonstrates a direct need to investigate my research questions.

### **Chapter 2 Summary**

This literature review was organized in the following sections: (a) demands on the charter school principal; (b) socialization theory and the novice charter school principal mentorship; and (c) research on the role of novice charter school principal mentorship, support, and induction programs. In this chapter I have reviewed literature that pertains directly to novice charter school

principals, their role as leaders, their socialization into their new position, their mentorship and support, and induction programs.

This chapter began with discussing the theory behind my conceptual framework as Van Maanen and Schein's (1977) original discussion of organizational socialization 40 years ago, stating that organizational socialization is "the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role" (p. 3). The research utilizes socialization theory as a framework informing research about the manner in which novice charter school principal mentorship and support can increase the success of novice principals and their schools. There is an overwhelming consensus among researchers that novice principals need mentorship to support their appropriate socialization.

This literature review also discussed the role of the charter school principal as demanding, political, and unique. The demands of the charter school principal are exceptionally high. They must educate students on less funding, navigate the political arena, close student achievement gaps, and often operate a successful school in facilities of ill repair. While there was not much research on novice charter school principal socialization, the conceptual framework can directly be applied to novice charter school principals.

This literature review has also explored other researchers' perspectives on socialization theories and their implications for novice principals. In order for novice charter school principals to achieve success, there must be effective socialization strategies in place to support the novice principals. Previous researchers chose to conduct qualitative, mixed methods, and quantitative studies. The qualitative research studies focused on interviews and observations (Carroll, 2015; Bodger, 2011; Gilliland de Jesus, 2009; Grodzki, 2011; Northfield, 2013; Sun & Ni, 2015).

While research methodologies vary, the research findings of previous researchers displayed evidence to support their research expectations. There were not any results that did not support the assumption that novice principals need support. As a result of this literature review, I chose to employ a single-case study methodology to determine the effective support systems for novice charter school principals in Los Angeles.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This study explored novice charter school principal support and the effectiveness of the support participants received for a paid consultant or supervisor. This chapter includes the research methodology and procedures used for the single-case study. This chapter reviews the purpose of this study, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis. The objective of this study was to discover the effectiveness of supports that novice charter school principals received. Qualitative methods were used to discover the novice Los Angeles charter school principals' perception of support. Grodzki (2011) stated that qualitative research is the participants understanding of their experiences. I also wanted to be able to evaluate the supports that they received. The findings of this study were hoped to inform the design of standardized novice charter school principal support in Los Angeles.

### **Research Questions**

According to Creswell (2017), qualitative research questions are open-ended, evolving, and non-directional. Two research questions guided this study:

1. What type of formal support do novice charter school principals in Los Angeles receive for learning their leadership role?
2. How do novice charter school principals perceive the effectiveness of the support from their school district during their first year?

These questions pertain to novice charter school principal and their experience with support or mentorship as a new principal.

### **Purpose and Design of the Study**

Charter school principals are tasked with the difficult responsibility of raising student achievement with fewer resources than their public school counterparts. "The business of

running a charter school clearly requires an expanded skill set not often found in traditional school district offices” (Curry, 2013, p. 64). The numerous demands of principals call for the examination of effective principal support in order to ensure their proper socialization into the organization. Creswell (2017) stated that “some case studies involve the analysis of multiple units within the case,” such as how this study analyzes multiple schools within the Los Angeles charter school network. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the support that novice charter school principal’s receive while working in charter schools in Los Angeles.

This design employed a single-case study qualitative research was based on the view that reality was constructed by individuals interacting with their social world. The single case study focuses on an issue or concern and then selects one “bounded case to illustrate this issue” (Creswell, 2017, p. 161). For this study, the bounded case is of charter school principals, and the multiple units were the specific support structures for novice principals. Based on this assumption, qualitative researchers “are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Grodzki, 2011, p. 85). The “meaning” of the novice principal experience is highly important to the purpose of this study. This was an appropriate design because it gave the reader insight into the novice principal’s perspective of the effective supports they received at their particular charter school. In addition, the insight of non-effective support was also revealed. Qualitative study allows the researcher to attain a first-hand account of their experiences. Grodzki’s (2011) research design demonstrated the importance of employing a qualitative study to attain principal accounts of their socialization process. Creswell (2014) stated, “the process of research as flowing from philosophical assumptions, to interpretive lens, and onto the procedures involved in studying social or human problems” (p. 44). Creswell concluded that qualitative

research is the appropriate method to study individual perspectives, which in this study consists of how support received affects the principal's knowledge of the organization and his or her application of skills to the organization.

### **Population and Sampling Method**

According to Creswell (2014), there must be an inadequate or nonexistent study of the population for the study to be relevant. In the case of this study, previous researchers have studied novice principal socialization, but novice charter school principals in Los Angeles have not been extensively studied. Los Angeles was an important geographical place to study because it is a city with a large charter school population. Twelve novice charter school principals with 0 to 3 years of principal experience were studied. The sampling focused on a 50/50 ratio of male and female participants. The 12 participants make up 6% of the estimated novice principal population in Los Angeles. In order to solicit appropriate participants, the email to principals requesting their participation in the study stated that this study called for novice charter principals.

Criterion sampling refers to sampling that meets pre-specified criteria (Creswell, 2017, p. 516). The study utilized criterion sampling with the identified criterion of being a charter school principal in Los Angeles within 30 to 40 years of age. This was the typical age of novice principals. This purposeful sampling helped to identify the specific areas of support needed for each principal and the effectiveness of the support that the principal received. It was necessary to create two categories of novice charter school principals. The two categories were charter schools that are a part of a CMO, and independent charter schools, so that analysis could show whether or not the two experiences were the same or different. The support a principal of an independent charter school could potentially receive less support than that of a principal CMO

school. After receiving IRB and committee approval for this study, an email was sent to charter school principals in Los Angeles that explained the purpose and requirements of the study to charter school principals. The list was taken from the California Department of Education (2017) list of charter schools. The interviews of the 12 participants consisted of 27 questions. The interviews took about an hour per participant.

### **Instrumentation**

Creswell (2014) suggested that the researcher is a key instrument in the study. Creswell (2017) also suggested the researcher should collect and integrate many forms of qualitative data, ranging from interviews, to observations, to documents, to audiovisual materials. As a result of Creswell's research design suggestions, the study utilized several qualitative instrumentation methods in order to answer the research questions. These were interviews, shadow observations, and observations of the mentor-mentee coaching sessions. The instrumentation method is discussed in this section. Table 2 briefly describes the observations. One-on-one interviews were conducted with the novice charter school principals. The purpose of the interviews were to retrieve a first-hand account of the principal's experience with supports received at his or her charter school (see Appendix A). The instrument consisted of 27 open-ended questions that focused on the charter school principal role, the supports received from supervisors, consultants, and the success of that support. Additional questions that were more than *yes or no* questions were used to received detailed responses from the participants.

Table 2

*Data Sources and Their Purpose in This Study*

Strategy	Purpose	Frequency
One-on-one interviews	To retrieve a first-hand account of the principal’s experience with supports received at his or her charter school	Once
Mentor-mentee observation	To view the support sessions first-hand and include in the findings the data collected from the coaching sessions	Twice
Shadow observation	To determine the principal’s socialization (the manner in which they have acclimated with stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and students in the school)	Twice

In addition to one-on-one interviews, shadowing the 12 novice principals for a half-day at the school site helped to determine the principal’s socialization (the manner in which they acclimated to the school). The observation tool can be viewed in Appendix B. Shadow observations allowed me to (a) check the interactions with parents, staff, and students and (b) see the level of confidence the principal. If there were negative interactions with any of the stakeholder groups, their responses could demonstrate a negative socialization experience for the novice charter school principal. The observation tool is blank and allows me to capture dialogue and interactions of each participant. Descriptions and conversations were written in the descriptor category. Shadow observations also allowed me to see if the principal’s support or mentorship has helped with their socialization. Table 3 describes the specific shadow observations and their rationales.

Table 3

*Type and Purpose of Shadow Observations*

Stakeholder group	Type of observation	Rationale
Parents	Monthly parent meeting or school site council meeting	To observe the interactions between the parents and the principal in a leadership setting
Students	Yard supervision	To observe the interaction between students and the principal in a leadership setting
Staff	Unscheduled	To observe the interaction between the staff and the principal in a leadership setting

Observations of two coaching sessions were conducted with each of the novice principals and their support provider (consultant or supervisor). The coaching sessions took place once at the beginning of the study and once at the end of the study. All participants needed to be observed in a coaching session with his or her mentor or supervisor. Observations allowed me to view the support sessions first-hand and include in the findings the data I collected from the coaching sessions. It was anticipated that the coaching sessions would reveal participant weakness and strengths as a principal and show the manner in which the mentor supports the principal. Body language, tone, and communication between the participant and his or her mentor were noted (see Appendix C).

These three methods sought to gain insight on the novice charter school principal’s own account of the supports that he or she is receiving. As the researcher, I was also a participant-observer, as defined by Creswell (2014), where I engaged with the novice charter school principals that I observed. To accomplish this, I interviewed and observed the participants in their charter school. This revealed the participants’ behavior in their natural work environments.

## **Data Collection**

Creswell (2014) stated that data collection is a multi-layered process that involves “gaining permissions, conducting a good qualitative sampling strategy, developing means for recording information both digitally and on paper, storing the data, and anticipating ethical issues that may arise” (p. 145). Guided by Creswell’s discussion of data collection, data sources included collection of stories from interviews, coaching sessions, and shadow observations.

During the interview portion of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted and interviews audio taped and transcribed. For the shadow observation and coaching sessions, I gathered field notes while conducting an observation (see Appendix C). Interviews garnered participant first-hand accounts on their perspectives of the effectiveness of the supports they received. These attributes directly align to the study, data collection, and analysis of novice charter school principals in Los Angeles.

## **Data Analysis Procedures**

There were three main data sources: interviews, shadow observations, and mentoring sessions. Keeping these data sources in mind, I identified several data analysis procedures in order to decipher the qualitative data collected. According to Creswell (2014) data analysis begins with data collection as an important start to the data analysis. After collecting and organizing the data, I reduced the data into themes through coding processes and condensing the themes.

After coding was complete I interpreted the data and represented the data in findings section of this study. The data collected over the course of several months. The data collected throughout the study was used to describe support systems of novice charter school principals in Los Angeles.

Specific to coding the data, I created about 25 codes during the data analysis process. The coding for the interviews has the most codes that pertained to the type of support the novice charter school principal received and the cases within the context. The shadow observation codes divided the principal interviews into positive and negative interactions for each participant. The mentor-mentee observation codes were separated based upon the conversations between the supervisor or paid consultant. I was open to adding emergent themes that might arise. One theme that arose was the references made to a paid consultant. There were no emergent themes in the shadow observation and mentor-mentee observation. I implemented a chart as suggested by Saldaña (2009). The data section contained the transcribed data, and the observations contain the codes, themes, and the interaction inference contained the preliminary inference regarding the data and transcriptions.

Once I had a clear perspective of prevalent codes, I began extracting the data, formulating themes and, interpreting the data. After this process, I created charts and diagrams that display the research findings. Then I used the charts and diagrams as graphic organizers to write the narrative explanation and findings of the results. I did not expect that the data analysis was linear. Once the narrative was written, I listened to the recordings and reviewed the transcriptions several times, created new meanings for them, and added additional narrations to the findings chapter.

### **Limitations of the Research Design**

It is important to discuss the limitations of this research study in order to maintain the integrity of the research and potential findings. The limitations of this research study were specific to the study population. For example, I worked with busy professionals, so scheduling appointments and meetings were a limitation. I needed to ensure the responses were not rushed

and that time pressure did not detract from the study. Further, the participants' personal biases toward their own principal socialization could impact the findings of the study.

**Validation.** Validation in qualitative research is an attempt to assess the "accuracy" of the findings, as best described by the researcher and the participants (Creswell, 2014). I accounted for the accuracy. This validation is a process that requires strategies. I reviewed the transcriptions, codes, and patterns several times in order to assess the accuracy of the participant statements during the interviews. Two specific threats to validity were participant limitations and researchers bias. Participant limitations were discussed in the previous section and are specific to the participants' perception of their workplace and their statement of the effectiveness of the support they receive.

I also had a bias toward novice principal socialization that had to be identified. When I was transitioned from an assistant principal to a principal, I knew that I needed to find a mentor to guide me along my path. Once I began working, I was quickly introduced to the school's mentoring program, which was a consulting agency for charter schools. As a new principal I was assigned a director of school services to support me in building the school and my knowledge as a new principal. With that said, I had bias about principal socialization that novice charter school principals need support. As a result of my experiences I employed sound research methods.

**Credibility.** My bias was directly tied to the topic, at the time of the study. I served as a novice charter school principal. My experience as a novice charter school principal is a reason for studying this topic. I wished to view what other novice charter school principals view of the socialization process and ask them whether they found their support effective. I am fully aware of the potential bias, and as a result of the potential bias I kept my focus on understanding the participants' perceptions as stated by them in response to open-ended questions, not leading

questions. In addition, I defined my role as the observer and not a participant in order to further maintain credibility. Creswell (2014) states that if the participant thinks the researcher has a vested interest in their results (such as working in the same organization) it could lessen the information that the participant discloses. It was necessary to define my role as a non-vested researcher.

**Dependability.** Dependability is also known as reliability and expresses the credibility of the data. To account for the dependability of my study, I employed specific measures. I employed good quality tape recording and field notes to increase the reliability of the research. Creswell (2014) believed that dependability is a research auditing process that involves multiple processes. These processes included quality, as in, just prior to an interview, checking tape recordings for background noise so that the recording can be transcribed appropriately.

### **Expected Findings**

While it is difficult to predict the type of relevant findings of the study before the study is done, I expected to find:

1. Novice charter school principals will have received support, yet the effectiveness of their support will differ.
2. The effectiveness of the support will differ if the novice charter school principal is part of one charter school or a network of charter schools.
3. The supervisor and paid consultant will offer the novice principal different levels of support.

### **Ethical Issues in the Study**

I follow all the ethical guidelines set forth by the Concordia IRB. The study protected the identity, confidentiality, and rights of the participants and schools. Due to the sensitive nature of

participant experiences, participant confidentiality was maintained in order to not provide their identity. As the researcher, I was the only person with access to the participant files, interview data, recordings.

I expected the following ethical issues:

1. Possible selection of a participant without interest in my study
2. Sensitivity to the participant's feelings about their role as a principal
3. Power imbalances and exploitation of participants
4. Participants who may not disclose negative support provided from their supervisor

Creswell (2014) identified reciprocity as a way to account for participants and their interest or non-interest in the study. Reciprocity entailed connecting the participants gain from the study. In this case, the participant's school is anonymous to the readers of this study, but participation gives the novice charter school principal participants an additional layer of reflection and analysis that could contribute to their future success as an administrator. This was important to state when the participant agreed to participate in the study. I implemented validation strategies as mentioned previously to protect the integrity of the study. There were no ethical issues during the research phase of the study.

### **Chapter 3 Summary**

The research design methods developed for this study were chosen with the intent to investigate novice charter school principal support in Los Angeles. The single-case study examined novice charter school principals in Los Angeles and their principal socialization as provided by their charter organization. A case study was appropriate to gather first hand accounts of the participants (Creswell, 2017). I enlisted principals to participate in interviews, mentor and mentee coaching session observations, and observations of the participants in their normal day-

to-day routine. I utilized criterion sampling with the identified criteria of being a charter school principal in Los Angeles within the ages of 30 to 40 years of age. This purposeful sampling helped to identify the specific areas of support needed for each principal and the effectiveness of the support that the principal received (Creswell, 2017).

Data from participant interviews, shadow observations, and coaching sessions were transcribed, coded, and reviewed several times in order to protect the integrity of the study's findings. I expected to find that while novice charter school principals found their support effective, the support program—such as meeting times and level of support—differed as a result of the support provider. I ensure the validity of this study so that the study can be utilized to aid in the design of standardized novice charter school support in Los Angeles and nationwide. I maintained awareness that in a qualitative study, the participants' personal biases toward their own principal socialization could impact the findings of the study.

## Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

This chapter summarizes and presents the findings of this research study as it pertains to the conceptual framework, socialization theory, support provided, charter type, and the research questions. The chapter is organized as follows: research questions, study design, description of participants, a summary of findings, and presentation of data and results. I sought to investigate the type of formal support novice charter school principals in Los Angeles received and the effectiveness of that support. The two research questions were developed as a result of my initial literary research and personal experiences as a novice charter school principal in Los Angeles. The conceptual framework in Chapter 2 stated that principals have two attributes necessary to appropriately socialize into their organization. Those two attributes are knowledge and application (skills). In addition to these two attributes, the essence of principal socialization is knowing the organization and applying the knowledge of the organization on a daily basis. These should be utilized concurrently with other principal supports, such as professional development, supervisor support, credential program clearance, and mentorship. These supports combined contribute to the adequate socialization of the novice charter school principal.

Joppy (2013) also strongly believed that principals have the “daunting responsibility of leading schools to success (p. 6). Like Joppy (2013) and Grodzki (2011), Manzola (2008) also utilized socialization theory as a means to discuss principal socialization. After reviewing these studies and their exploration of socialization theory, I conducted interviews, shadow observations, and mentor observation sessions of 12 Los Angeles novice charter school principals to assess their experiences with socialization into their school and role. Creswell (2007) stated, “When researchers conduct qualitative research, they are embracing the idea of multiple realities” (p. 16).

I intended to allow the participant voices to be heard regarding socialization support that they received. This chapter includes the principals' voices.

Creswell (2014) stated that the researcher is a key instrument in the study. While I am currently a novice charter school principal in Los Angeles, my role as the researcher during my study was that of an observer and not a participant. I conducted the study in this manner to maintain credibility. Also, I had a non-vested interest as a researcher. It was my purpose to reveal the voice of my novice charter school principal peers, not my own voice. Throughout this chapter, I weaved the narrative perspective of novice charter school principals into the results portion of this chapter to discuss the three key findings of this study. All findings were results of the interview instrument, the mentor-mentee observations, and shadow observations.

### **Description of the Participants**

Los Angeles charter school principals were solicited for the purposes of this study in order to effectively investigate Los Angeles novice charter school principal support. Previous researchers—Bodger, (2011), Grodzki (2011), Joppy (2013), Manzola, (2008)—each studied novice principal socialization, but novice charter school principals in Los Angeles had not been extensively studied; thus, Los Angeles was determined as an important geographical place to study. Los Angeles is also city with a large charter school population. More specific to charter opposition in Los Angeles, the political landscape has been a challenge. Charter schools must meet all the criteria that are discussed in Chapter 2, which were to maintain an organized and effective board, a fiscally sound institution, high academic achievement, and efficient operations. As a result of my initial research on principal socialization and charter schools, I studied 12 Los Angeles novice charter school principals with 0 to 3 years of principal experience. The sampling focused on a 50/50 ratio of male and female participants. The 12 participants make up 6% of the

estimated novice principal population in Los Angeles. To meet inclusion criteria, it was essential that these novice Los Angeles charter school principals have 0 to 3 years of experience. I emailed principals to invite them to participate in the study. In my email I emphasized that they needed to meet the novice criteria. The 12 principals that agreed to participate in my study ranged from ages 31 to 38. The interviews were conducted over the summer months (June to August) when principals had more time to participate in the study instead of their busy school year. Interviews and mentor-mentee observations were conducted in the office of each principal at a time they deemed convenient. The shadow observations were each conducted at various school events. Table 4 summarizes the participants' gender, years as principal, and charter school type.

Table 4

*Participant Demographics*

Pseudonym	Gender	Years as principal	Charter type
Participant 1	Female	3	CMO
Participant 2	Male	1	CMO
Participant 3	Male	3	CMO
Participant 4	Female	3	Independent
Participant 5	Female	3	CMO
Participant 6	Female	1	Independent
Participant 7	Male	1	Independent
Participant 8	Male	2	CMO
Participant 9	Male	1	Independent
Participant 10	Female	2	CMO
Participant 11	Male	1	Independent
Participant 12	Female	3	Independent

Of the 12 participants involved in the study, half of the participants were from charter management organizations (CMO), and the other six were from independent charters. The purpose for this differentiation in charter type was to see if effective support differed from independent charter to CMO. The results of this finding are discussed in the next section. Whether CMO or independent charter, the 12 participants were able to voice their viewpoints.

All of the participants were friendly and eager to provide their responses to the interview questions and observations. Participant 3 was the most eager. He had just completed his first year as a principal and had an extremely difficult year. His interview supported my initial research question regarding the demands of the charter school principalship and the need for adequate socialization supports. Curry (2013) stated that the job of charter school leadership is not for everyone and requires a unique skill set. This skill set could be difficult to attain for any individual, let alone a novice principal. Curry further stated that a principal's abilities to adapt, align, and stay in tune with student needs and parent expectations are crucial. Participant 3 struggled the most of all the participants.

### **Research Methodology and Analysis**

Creswell (2007) stated that when researchers conduct qualitative research, they are accept the idea of multiple versions of reality, as qualitative studies help to understand the participant's perspective. Creswell's (2014) recommendations of data sources led to collection of stories from interviews, coaching sessions, and shadow observations. Qualitative studies gather participants' first-hand accounts. As explained in Chapter 3, the research methodology implemented was a single-case study. After careful review of literature and methodologies, I utilized Gilliland de Jesus' (2009) research design as a model for this research design. He also conducted shadow

observations of novice principals that yielded research results. The design allowed me to attain narrative experiences from the 12 participants.

**Interviews.** Interviews were implemented in order to provide first-hand accounts of the novice principal perspective. This methodology provided the most successful results. I was able to gather significant information from the interviews. The participants also gave very true and passionate responses to the questions. They were eager to share their perspectives as novice charter school principals. In Chapter 1 and 3 I stated that their desire to provide positive statements about their organization could present a limitation, but this was not the case. All participants shared negative aspects of their accounts without hesitation. The interview results were discussed in detail during the findings section of this chapter. I will discuss the specific data from all the interviews conducted in the presentation of data section in this chapter.

**Shadow observations.** The shadow observations allowed me to view the participants in their natural setting. I was successful in observing all novice charter school principals in shadow observation. I was able to learn from the shadow observations that the principals had each adequately socialized to their school. The interactions with stakeholders were positive and productive. For example, I observed Participant 4's new student orientation meeting. During the meeting the principal gave a welcome back speech to set the tone for the school year. Parents and students were both receptive to the principal's message. I also observed Participant 7's interview of a potential new teacher during the shadow observation. I observed that Participant 7 was very firm yet friendly during the interview. There was one question that this participant did not answer about classroom management strategies, and instead of allowing him or her to not answer the question, it was rephrased three times until the interviewee answered the question. Of the three methodologies used, this methodology provided the least amount of information to answer

the research questions. I will discuss the specific data from all the shadow observations in the presentation of data section in this chapter.

**Mentor-mentee observations.** The mentor and mentee sessions allowed me to view the interactions between the supervisor or consultant and the novice principal. This research design is titled “mentor-mentee observations” because I anticipated that the participants would have mentors, but after my research, I realized that their support providers were either supervisors or paid consultants. I decided not to change the name of the methodology since the processes of support were mentor-like. Like the interviews, this methodology revealed that novice charter school principals received effective support from their supervisor or consultant. I will discuss the specific data from all the mentor-mentee observations in the presentation of data section in this chapter.

**Assumptions.** I assumed prior to this research that the novice charter school principal participants in this study were receiving support from a supervisor, mentor, or consultant. I found this to be true. The participants were either supported by a consultant or a supervisor. However, none of the participants reported that they had a mentor to support them. I also assumed that novice charter school principals would want to provide their perspective regarding the support they receive. I also found this to be true during my study. They were eager to share their perspectives.

**Delimitations.** There are several delimitations that could affect the study’s findings. The delimitations were studying novice charter school principals with 0 to 3 years of experience as a principal, studying novice charter school principals in Los Angeles, studying novice charter school principals that had time to be studied. These delimitations were accurate. They represented specific parameters that I set up to investigate my research questions.

**Limitations.** The specific limitation of this research study revolves around the study method: “Anecdotal information is subject to interpretation by the researcher” (Adams & Lawrence, 2015, p. 471). The participants’ biases toward their principal socialization could impact the findings of the study; they may feel that their socialization to their position was effective because they did not need the specific support. The novice principals will not want to make their organization look unprofessional so the participant will not give candid responses about their socialization. These limitations seemed to hold true. However, participant number 7 was uninhibited in sharing his perspective. He gave very candid commentary.

It is important to note that, while there was no deviation from my Chapter 3 methodologies plans, during the study I felt there was no real need to view the participants in their natural setting and interactions. But to stay true to my research design, I conducted them as planned. I was able to make sense of the information gleaned from the shadow observations and include the results in this chapter.

In addition, I also worked to maintain my credibility as a researcher. Of all the participants, Participant 3 was very open with me during the entire process. It appeared that he wanted to receive my advice regarding his support provider and his trials and tribulations as a principal, but I maintained the professional stance as a researcher. The purpose was to record the voice of my peers, not give my perspective.

### **Summary of the Findings**

The findings of novice charter school principal socialization are organized in the following order: (a) narrative data, (b) emergent findings, and (c) research questions (in the presentation of findings). Chapters 1 and 2 identified the rationale of this study as: Charter schools and their respective leaders are critical to current education reform efforts and thus the

professional demands of principal's call for the examination of effective principal support in order to ensure their proper organizational socialization. Thus, the intent of this study was to review the type of support novice charter school principals in Los Angeles received, then understand their perspective on the effectiveness of the support. Novice charter school principals reported that they received support from either a paid consultant or a supervisor. The paid consultant took on the role as a mentor and offered support and guidance, not directives like a supervisor would.

**Socialization theory.** In my research I found that novice charter school principals received adequate socialization in their organization. Van Maanen and Schein (1977) originally discussed organizational socialization 40 years ago, stating that organizational socialization is “the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role” (p. 3). This process that Van Maanen and Schein (1977) discuss is necessary to the research supporting novice charter school principals. It is necessary that novice principals “acquire the social knowledge and skills” for their principalship.

During the mentor-mentee observation session, Participant 3 and his supervisor were on task the entire hour-long meeting. The supervisor was helping him solve a problem with a parent, and Participant 3 was jumping around to other areas of concern. Participant 3 stated in his interview that his supervisor, “focused on what needed to be addressed instead of pretending to care about my efforts as a principal.” This adequate socialization strategy was important to Participant 3, because he had a paid consultant support him for 6 months prior to his supervisor's guidance. He felt the prior support was ineffective because of the answers the consultant gave.

In the shadow observation, participation 12 was observed at a professional development in order to observe her socialization with leadership skills. The professional development was an

hour and 30 minute observation of the staff. Participant 12 was presenting the 2016-17 school year data to her staff. Her tone was informative yet encouraging. For example, the math department math scores dropped from last year and she stated, “I am confident that with continued data driven instruction we will be able to bring the scores back up. This was a unique shadow observation because Participant 12’s supervisor was at the professional development and I observed him nodding and smiling in her direction as she was speaking. This positive display of support was a direct example to prove Van Maanen’s (1997) socialization theory that the individual’s socialization is key to their success.

**Conceptual framework.** In Chapter 2, I also discussed the importance of a grouping of supports for novice charter school principals. Based on the studies mentioned in my literature review, I created Figure 2 to depict the necessary grouping of support for the novice charter school principal through professional development, credential clearance, supervisor support, and mentorship. While all are equally important to the novice charter school principal’s socialization, this study focuses on mentorship supports. The multiple supports are very important because they support the novice principal in multiple facets of the demanding job.

**Consultant or supervisor.** When I originally set out to study novice charter school principal support in Los Angeles, I expected that principals would receive support from their mentor or supervisor. I even included a section in my literature review on mentorship. However, after conducting the interviews I realized that novice charter school principals also received support from paid consultants. Of the 12 participants studied, 6 of them had received support from a paid consultant. Participant 2 stated in his interview, “I received support from an executive coach, which was only 3 days (daily on-site coach on curriculum and instruction).” This executive coach that Participant 2 is referring to is a paid consultant. Participant 3 further

stated, my “area superintendent did not support me as much, which is probably why he hired the executive coach for me and five other principals.” The five other participants that received support from a paid consultant also made similar statements, that their supervisor “did not have the time” to provide support. The participants that were only supported by their supervisor did not report that their supervisor had time conflicts.

The mentor-mentee observation sessions did not reveal any differences in the interactions between consultants and the novice, in comparison with the supervisor and the novice. It was evident in my observations that the novice participant viewed the consultants as experts in the field. The consultants were all retired charter school principals that had opened consulting agencies to support novice charter school principals and their schools. For example, Participant 7’s mentor-mentee observation with his consultant reviewed staff perception surveys with professionalism and a sense of trust. This could have easily been a topic the consultant and principal could have experienced difficulty sharing.

The shadow observations also did not demonstrate a significant difference between the support of a consultant and supervisor. It is important to note that there was only one supervisor that was present during all of the shadow observations conducted (Participant 12’s). Otherwise, I viewed the participants in their natural setting to identify if the meetings with the consultant or supervisor was effective. For example, during my shadow observation with Participant 5, I observed her interaction with at an informational meeting for enrollment. Her tone was informative, persuasive and proud. She specifically told parents, “I will do my best to ensure that your son/daughter receives a high quality education and that our school remains safe.” This was also a demonstration that the support from her support provider was effective. She was confident in her abilities as a principal.

The fact that novice charter school principals received support from paid consultants instead of their already paid supervisors is an important finding. Charter schools operate on a tight budget and must manage the finances in order to remain fiscally sound, so the fact that charters pay for additional services that do not directly impact instruction and student achievement poses an interesting question. This notion was discussed further in the recommendations for further research.

**Permanent whitewater.** In Chapters 1 and 2, I discussed the idea of permanent whitewater. Permanent whitewater is the metaphorical term that defines the “difficult condition under which people exercise their will and judgment within society’s macro-systems” (Vaill, 1996, p. 6). It is relevant because many administrators reach a state of permanent whitewater throughout their day or job. During my research, the principals identified times that they had permanent whitewater in their interviews. Each of them experienced some form of difficulty. Participant 3 stated that he had difficulty with personal attacks from students, and he had to remain professional and bite his tongue. The other participants also shared their experiences with permanent whitewater. One participant stated his students acted like they did not hear him when asked questions. The support provider proved to be able to support the principals with their socialization and navigation through permanent whitewater.

The mentor-mentee observations demonstrated a few examples of permanent whitewater. I discussed a few examples earlier with Participant 7’s and the consultant were reviewing principal staff surveys regarding his performance and the consultant shared that the teachers gave him low ratings. The shadow observations did not reveal any permanent whitewater. All of the participants observed were confident and competent in their interactions with parents, staff and

students. As a result, the participant interviews were more effective in researching permanent whitewater.

**Charter management organization or independent charter support.** During Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 I discussed an inquiry of whether or not support differed among novice charter school principals that worked at independent charter or charter management organizations (CMO). To inquire, I studied six CMO novice principals and six independent charter school principals. Both groups received support from their consultant or supervisor. There was also no differing trend in the support provided for the independent charter school principal. They had both consultants and/or supervisor support, which is similar to that of the CMO. However, I did find that the novice charter participants at a CMO were able to advocate for themselves and change their supervisor or consultant if they felt they were not receiving effective support.

**On the novice charter school principal role.** The novice charter school principal interviews revealed the perspectives of the principals on their roles and the support they received. The charter school principals reported that their process of becoming a principal was the “normal track.” The defined normal track was, first they were a teacher, then promoted to a teacher leader, then joined an administrative credentialing program, became an assistant principal, then after 2 or 3 years applied for a principalship. The participants also reported that they “really love their role as a principal” (Participant 1) and “enjoy the level of ownership” (Participant 2) involved with the principalship. There was only one participant that stated he was looking for another career in education (Participant 7). One also reported that they like “seeing the smile on parents’ faces when their child has shown improvement” (Participant 12). Participant 4 stated, “I am good at organizing and managing people.”

I also asked the participants to “Describe a typical day” as principal. Participant 1 started, “My day consists of meeting with people, completing tedious paperwork, observing teachers, debriefing with teachers.” Participant 3 stated, “The first task I do is check my email because it determines how my day will go. For example, will I be responding to media, parents, or the authorizing district about a particular incident? Or will I be able to observe classes that day?”

When asked about the three characteristics they possess and are still working on improving, the participants reported that organization, relationships, positivity, and visionary leadership are necessary for the principal role. Participant 1 stated that “Being detailed oriented has helped with the systems portion of being a principal, but I am also passionate about service, and an ability to connect and form relationships with people.” The participants also stated that they are still working on task delegation and leaving work at work. Participant 9 stated, “I am still learning how to effectively leverage people, remain solutions-based, and budget the school’s finances.” Overall, many of the participants stated that they were still learning to manage the school’s budget.

The question that was asked about the most challenging day revealed responses that were different for each participant. Participant 9 stated that the most challenging day was when “A student was shot off campus and I was responsible for relaying the message to parents and students. There were many questions about what I was going to do about gangs in our school.” Participant 1 also shared that the most challenging day was “When a teacher was accused of misconduct.”

If the novice principals could waive a magic wand, they would improve their school’s finances and facilities. This was consistent across participants. Of the 12 participants, there was only one participant that consistently provided responses that demonstrated unhappiness with the

charter school principalship. Participant 7 stated that he disliked the politics associated with the principal role. However, he was still “Working on being more solutions-based, not taking things personally,” and not bringing work home. When I asked if he could wave a magic wand to improve the school, he stated that he would “Increase the school’s finances to add more staff.” Participant 7 also stated that he would be looking for “Another career in education.”

Aside from the interview results, the mentor-mentee session and the shadow observation gleaned varying results. The mentor-mentee sessions revealed that novice principals were vulnerable and accepting of feedback. Whereas, the shadow observations revealed that the principals were confident and competent. I mentioned earlier that the interview was the most effective research design for gathering specific information about the participants experiences but the mentor-mentee session and shadow observation allowed me to see other personas of the principal. Which makes their role even more complex. The novice principal must, be confident, competent, accepting of feedback, trusting, vulnerable and knowledgeable, all at on time. Curry (2013) stated that the job of charter school leadership is not for everyone and requires a unique skill set and my research proves his statements.

### **Presentation of Data and Results**

As a review, I interviewed 12 novice charter principals in their natural setting and asked 27 interview questions (see Appendix A). All of the participant interviews were conducted in the principal’s office. Each principal office were clean, spacious and welcoming. Of the 27 questions I asked novice charter school participants, I categorized questions based on (a) their experience as a novice charter school principal and (b) on supports received. This section will also present the narrative form of the script observation from the mentor-mentee sessions and shadow observations.

In an effort to represent participants' voices, this section presents raw data transcribed from the interviews, shadow observations, and mentor-mentee observations in narrative form, organized into a section for each participant. This will allow the reader to view the participant voice as per my purpose of this study. After the review of raw data, the results and findings are summarized, as gleaned by the participant voices.

### **Participant 1: Segments of Transcripts and Notes**

**Path to principalship.** In my interview with participant 1, she revealed that she became a principal through the normal track: "I was in an administrator residency program, then I interviewed to become a principal. I was highly recommended for the principal role of our Charter Management Organizations Chief Executive Officer."

**Perceptions about principal position.** She described what she enjoys about her work and what is frustrating:

I really love being a principal. It is a stressful job because of the politics, but I would not change my position for anything. I have to be honest and say that I did not feel supported until this year and this is my third year as principal. What I like most about being a principal is that I can make a daily impact on instruction. As far as my typical day, I meet with people, conduct tedious paperwork, charter school oversight, observe teachers, and provide them with adequate feedback. I made it a personal goal of mine to be in classes more often, so I hired a dean to handle discipline and two additional assistant principals to support with parent complaints and required reports. If I had to state what I dislike the most about being a principal, I do not agree with the mandates placed on us by LAUSD. There is an apparent inequity between the requirements placed on charter school achievement and regular public school success. Charter schools are expected to raise

student achievement very fast. As a principal, the three characteristics that I possess: I am detail oriented; passionate about my services; and I can coach and connect with teachers, parents, and students. I am working to improve task delegation, having difficult conversations, and remaining social outside of work with my staff. I have children, and I am having a hard time balancing my family life and work life. My most difficult day as a principal was a teacher was accused of misconduct with a student. I cannot give you more specifics, but it was a difficult conversation that I had to have with the parent, student, and board member.

**Mentorship and support.** Regarding the support received during her novice years, participant 1 stated the following:

When I began my principalship, there was no new-principal PD. I was assigned an area superintendent who was not effective. However, by my second year, I complained to my CEO, and he changed my support provider, and I had the benefit of having a seasoned principal's support as a consultant. This is my third year as principal, and I am still supported by the paid consultant that my CEO assigned during my second year as principal. The paid consultant came on campus once a week and called or texted me every Friday. We would review my operational to do list, and she would help me create action steps to leverage my staff and their qualities. She would also coach me through difficult conversations, and we would role play the conversation and various responses to say to the specific stakeholder. My paid consultant holds me accountable. While I was worried about confidentiality, I am no longer worried. I know that what we discuss will not be shared with my CEO or other stakeholders. I think that accountability is most impactful for a mentor of novice principals. I would tell future mentors to advocate for

the principal they are supporting and really train them to have the difficult conversations. I will continue to use my paid consultant to sharpen my knowledge about budget, teacher trends, charter school ins and out, special education law, charter school compliance, applying for grants. As for any other support, during my novice principalship, I received support from a seasoned principal in my organization. Otherwise, I did not collaborate with any other principals in my charter management organization. We would talk about professional development but no real collaboration.

During participant 1's mentor-mentee session, I observed the mentor and mentee discussing confidential matters regarding employees. This observation was in the principal's office. The first mentor-mentee session, the mentor began by asking the principal, "How is everything going with employee x? Has he been adhering to your directives?" The principal answered, "No, I am ready to fire him." The mentor then responded, "If you truly want to fire him you have to prove that you have supported him and despite your support, he is still not adhering to your directives. Let's look at your last write up, how long ago was it, and what are the areas of follow-up?" The principal then printed a copy of the write-up, and they both read it quietly. After reading the write-up, the paid consultant stated, "I suggest within the next 2 weeks you document in writing via email the times you go into his classroom, and he is sitting at his desk, late, not following all of the items in your write-up. Then at the end of 2 weeks write him up again." At this point in the observation, the tone of the principal's voice was frustrated. "I do not understand why if California is an at-will state, why can't I just let him go?" The paid consultant calmly responded, "You have to create a paper trail to justify letting him go; that is the bottom line." During the second mentor-mentee observation, I witnessed the mentor-mentee's phone call. I was present during the call. The phone call lasted about 10 minutes. This

was a follow-up call 2 weeks later on the employee x. The mentor asked, “Ok, so where are we on employee x? It has been 2 weeks; how many emails have you sent him? Do you have any other forms of documentation to justify letting him go?” The principal then responded everything is going well with employee x. He is coming to work on time, asking me for help. He is turning in his lessons, and he even looks happy!” “That is great to hear. What do you think prompted the change?” The principal responded again, “ I think the write up helped a lot, but I went into his class after our last conversation, and he sincerely apologized that he was not meeting the demands of the job, and he let me know that he would try harder. I also have been using positive praise with him, anytime I see that he is improving.” “This is a great strategy; positive praise can improve employee work effort! Sounds great. Call or text me if you need anything.”

**Principal’s observed interaction with others.** During participant 1’s shadow observations, I observed her interactions with the staff during two professional developments on two different days. The first professional development was the opening year professional development. The principal was giving her principal’s message. She first began with a summary of her resume, and why she became an educator, then she said the following:

I had a lot of time to reflect over the summer regarding our school-wide instructional goals, and I plan to keep our goals the same as last year. Students need to be able to justify their responses with evidence or appeals, not matter in every subject matter. Over the course of this week, you will meet with your grade level teams and content teams to discuss how to reach this goal effectively. I will also request that you and your team develop an accountability system to monitor the progress of this goal. I am excited to begin this school year with you all!

After the principal's message the staff clapped, and the principal sat down. The assistant principal conducted the remainder of the meeting. The assistant principal led a true colors activity for the staff to complete. The principal conducted her true colors test and was identified as gold personality or *organized*. After the team building activity, the principal was called to the main office to meet with a potential donor.

The second professional development that I observed was a summer school PD and was solely informational. The principal did not lead the PD. I observed her sitting in the back of the room while her assistant principal led the summer school teachers in closing procedures. The principal spoke twice during the hour-long PD. The first was to support the assistant principal's decision to cut off student submission of work 1 pm the following Friday. She said, "Yes, that is fine." The other statement the principal made was, "I would like to thank all summer school staff for their support in bridging our student skill and content gaps. Please stop by my office before you leave next week."

## **Participant 2: Segments of Transcripts and Notes**

**Path to principalship.** Participant 2 was very forthcoming with information during his interview. He obtained his credential at Loyola Marymount University Credential program. After obtaining his credential, he became an assistant principal then became a principal. Participant 2 considers his transition into the principalship informal, because he had no principal mentorship and no extensive interview process. He was simply offered the principalship by his CEO.

**Perceptions about principal position.** He stated about his principalship, "I enjoy the level of ownership I have as a charter principal. I can design my specific plans to support students. I view my role as very specialized, and being a charter principal has allowed me to have more control over the direction of the school." When asked about the specifics of his

principalship, participant 1 stated, “I view safety and instruction as the two greatest aspects of my daily responsibilities. In these tasks I monitor staff and instruction, rigor, instructional coaching, assessment, and data. The majority of my time is spent on stakeholders. I see myself as a visionary leader, I care and lead from the heart. I lead by example, and I enable others to take ownership. If I had to say the qualities that I am working on, I want to be able to maximize my employees, set processes to measure goals, set long-term goals. When participant 2 was asked about his most difficult day, he discussed a day that he had to facilitate the school day when the electricity went out in the building. He had teachers and students that wanted to go home, but he had to find a solution. “So I kept students outside for the school day instead of in the building. I held an emergency meeting and coordinated water, ice buckets, and fans. My decision did not go over well; I received backlash from staff and parents. They felt that I should have sent everyone home. As a result of this event, I view the biggest challenge as a charter school principal to be facilities. However, “if another school called to offer a job I would not take the position.”

**Mentorship and support.** When I asked participant 2 about his experiences with his mentorship and support, he was also very candid.

During my first year as principal, I had an executive coach paid to consult me 3 days [per week] to provide onsite coaching on curriculum and instruction. I am not sure it was needed, because it did not help me. I became the principal of this school 3 weeks before the school year started, so I did not have the entire summer to plan as most principals do. However, by my second semester, I had truly fleshed out my master calendar, discipline matrix. The executive coach finally helped me by the third month to develop the Institutional knowledge to run a school. However, while she began to work out, my CEO had assigned me a second area superintendent, so I was receiving support from both

individuals. I advocated for a new supervisor, because my previous supervisor was judgemental and impatient with me. I worked on how to hire effective administrative level staffing support such as assistant principals and instructional coaches. My consultant and I communicated via phone, email, and in person. First, it was often, then less frequent as I needed less support. Principal mentors should understand the needs of the school and help the principal filter the political agendas and provide that information to the principal without making them [ask for it]. Even though I had two support providers, the second person was much more effective, but I had to advocate for myself to receive this support. Support is necessary, because there are so many elements to being a principal and principals have to have someone who has already walked that path to provide you guidance. I highly suggest that new principals learn to develop a calendar, hold weekly meetings with their leadership team, use the summer to plan your vision, mission, because once you engage stakeholders with the mission, everything else will follow.

The first mentor-mentee session was over the phone. The mentor was supposed to come and meet the participant and myself but had car troubles and could not attend. The mentor asked “How are you doing?” “I am a bit tired.” “What do you mean you are tired; it is the summer, you should be working less hours.” “Well, I have some personal issues going on. My dad has been sick, and I have stayed with him overnight at the hospital. Other than that I am fine.” “Oh, wow.” The mentor’s tone was less judgemental and more sympathetic after he found out why the participant was tired.” Well let’s find a solution. I know there are a lot of items that you must complete prior to your counselor and staff coming back from summer break. Do you have any ideas of what you could do?” It was clear that the mentor was using questioning as a coaching

strategy. "I was thinking of calling in one of my instructional coaches who wants the experience to become an administrator to come and help with some of the items on my summer to-do list." The mentor said, "I think that is a good idea. Just call human resources and make sure that you do it, and then call your budget provider and make sure they include it in your budget. Hold on, I have another call." The mentor clicked over to the other phone call. When he came back on the line he said, "can you send me your summer to do list so that I can help you decide what to delegate to your instructional coach?" "Thanks. I will; that will be helpful." "Ok, I have to go." "I will be in tomorrow." I decided to seize the opportunity and conduct participant 2's mentor-mentee observation the next day. The supervisor stated, "Ok, let's pick up where we left off. What did human resources and budget say about bringing in the coach next week." "It was approved! So, I spoke to her and she is excited to come in and build her admin resume." "Ok, great. Looking at this list, I think you should have her research other school handbooks and see how we can make our handbook more detailed. Also, she should revamp the teacher expectations chart. I also think she should pre-screen interview candidates for you." "Yes, this will be very helpful." "I think you should look at your responsibilities list and delegate more responsibilities amongst your staff." The participant responded. "You are right. I appreciate your support helping me figure out how to delegate. I am used to being an assistant principal where I can't really delegate."

**Principal's observed interaction with others.** During participant 2's first shadow observation I made notes on his interaction with a 20-minute meeting with a parent. This was a follow-up meeting that the principal and the parent set up a few weeks prior. The principal began the meeting with an introduction of myself and notified her that I would be typing our conversation, but it would remain confidential. After the principal stated, "Let me bring up your

son's progress in the online summer school program. Ok, let see here. He is almost complete with the course! He currently has a C letter grade and three more quizzes to complete. This is a vast improvement from the school year. What could you attribute this to?" The parent responded, "I think it is because I have not been allowing him to hang out without completing his work." The principal responded, "Great, let's keep that up." The principal held up his hand to high five the parent and the parent and principal high fived each other. "I also received our Smarter Balanced test scores, and I want to review them with you. Here they are, your son's scored in the top five scorers! This is another vast improvement. I know all those times I called you and told you to bring him to Saturday school even if he was late paid off. How do you feel?" The parent responded, "I feel good. I want to thank you for your support helping him focus and succeed in his academics." "You are very welcome; this is a team effort." The parent and the principal shook hands and ended the meeting. The second shadow observation was supposed to be shadowing the principal as he observed classrooms; however, when I arrived, there was a staff member that appeared to be having to be an anxiety attack, so I scripted and observed participant 2's interaction during this time. Participant 2 sprung into action without hesitation. He first told the office clerk. "Call 911. We don't know if it is an anxiety attack." Then he said, "Lay her down and don't touch her." Then he told the office manager to pull her staff information and have it ready for the paramedics when they arrive." I then witnessed participant 2 get on the floor next to the staff member and conduct breathing exercises. "You have to calm down and focus on your breathing." The paramedics arrived within 2 minutes and began to check the teacher's vitals, and her breathing was not stabilizing so they took her in the ambulance. "Call her emergency contacts so they can meet her at the hospital." This shadow observation demonstrated

so much about the principal's bravery, and care for his staff member. He could have assigned someone else to take care of this incident.

### **Participant 3: Segments of Transcripts and Notes**

**Path to principalship.** Participant 3's interview was beneficial to the study. He discussed that he also took the normal track to becoming a principal. He also obtained his administrative credential from Loyola Marymount University, and then became an assistant principal for 5 years. This is his second year as a principal. He stated he would like to see more minority principals in Los Angeles.

**Perceptions about principal position.** Also, specific to his principalship, he took over his school from a principal whose beliefs he did not share. "I see my leadership style as very different than the previous principal. When I was an assistant principal, I could not wait to become a principal, so I would do everything in my power to learn the required decision making. I am not the principal that clocks in late and leaves early. I put in long hours. I attribute the long hours I am able to work to my work in the military." Participant 3 then discussed the specifics of his personal qualities.

I like the autonomy and manageability of being a charter school principal. I manage 600 kids and over 30 staff. I like that I am able to greet all of the students. I truly feel like I am making a difference each day. Many administrators see supervision as a chore, but it is my duty to greet the kids and check in with them in classes and at lunch. A few areas that I am working on are learning how to grow the capacity of my staff to be mini classroom leaders not just teachers who instruct but train students to think critically and be their own leader. If I had to describe a typical day, I give feedback to teachers regardless of year; joy in seeing people grow pushes me to want to do that everyday. I

have immersed myself in a learning environment. A few items that I do not like about being a charter principal are the politics supporting charter schools. For example, there is negotiation to unionize our teachers. If we unionize, then we will always be focused on stuff that has nothing to do with kids. Also, there is a lot of scrutiny put on charters for all the wrong reasons. None of the reasons have to do with students. The three leadership characteristics that I possess are honor, courage, and commitment from my military background, patience and drive. I also hate wasting time. I am eager to build capacity in my staff.”

Participant 3 then spent some time discussing his first year as principal and the differences between himself and the previous principal.

You see, last year was a transitional year. I had to ensure that all adults on campus did not take things personally over the students. I needed everyone on the same page. I felt that the previous principal would conduct personal attacks on staff members. However, I bit my tongue and did not engage in the negativity. If I had to change one thing about my school it would be to add a multipurpose room.

**Mentorship and support.** “I received support from my area superintendent. However, I required very little of her. She would specifically ask, “how can I support you?” In addition to the area’s superintendent, I also had a contracted successful former principal. This consultant has contributed greatly to my confidence and success. During the second year, I was able to select her based on the way we worked together during the first year. Upper management assigned both my superintendent and consultant. Our charter management organization’s CEO is great. Principal mentors must be trusted by the principal, and they must also need to be able to focus on what needs to be addressed instead of pretending to support the principal or act like they know it

all. My support providers would contact me every other day through text, email, and phone. We would not communicate much because both support providers had a principal that requires daily support. My support providers taught me to hold the line and hold me accountable for my decisions, even not knowing everything. They also helped me learn to communicate with my CEO without feeling like I should not be speaking up. Principal mentorship and support are important, because it will not only help the principal grow professionally, but it will also hold the principal accountable for growing the school. If I had to advise mentors, they should listen about 80% and give about 20% feedback....They have to coach the principal to the correct actions. If I had to advise principals, I would suggest work each day to grow your school and teachers through frequent check-ins.

Participant 3's mentor-mentee observation sessions were over the phone. The consultant was overseas supporting a principal in London, so she was only available over the phone. After the consultant asked how the principal was doing, the principal said, "Ok, let's dig right into it. I think I made a bad decision. I invited a teacher back for next school year. I have been receiving parent complaints, and they are calling regarding concerns that I suspected, but I had no evidence of." The consultant responded, "Ok, is the reason concerning student safety or professional responsibilities?" "Well, both." "This is something you have to involve human resources in. I think because you gave him the contract you may have to adhere to it. What I would suggest is getting the parent's statements and concerns on paper and then call him in and write him up and put him on a contract." The principal responded, "That sounds like a good idea. I will follow-up." The participant later stated to me, "I did not want to have a teacher that I need to get rid of this year." Ending the session, the principal and the consultant then began to engage in small talk about the consultant's trip. While this does not pertain to my study, it demonstrates the necessity

to build relationships. The second mentor-mentee session occurred 2 weeks later, and the consultant said, “How is your summer credit recovery program going?” “It is going well. I am having difficulty motivating the soon-to-be-seniors.” “Hmm, have you thought about bringing in outside guest speakers to motivate the students?” “That is a good idea! There is a member of my church that is attempting to start a motivational speaking business. But do you have any ideas for what I could do now? I was thinking of doing an incentives plan for the remainder of the summer. Maybe weekly gift card drawings for students that report to summer school on time, pay attention, and behave well.” The consultant then praised the principal for thinking of positive behavior support systems instead of consequences.

**Principal’s observed interaction with others.** As a result of the mentor-mentee sessions, participant 3 and I set up observation sessions surrounding the areas he was working on with his consultant. The first shadow observation session consisted of me observing the principal meet with the teacher regarding parent concerns. The principal called him in on his break and said, “I received several parent complaints at the end of the school year.” The teacher turned to look at me as the shadow observer and said, “I would prefer if she left.” I gladly left. After the meeting, I stayed to discuss the results of the meeting with the principal. He said, “the teacher took my concerns very seriously; I won’t be writing him up.” I was a little disappointed with this observation, but I understand that a lot is confidential. The next day I went back to observe the principal supervising students at lunch. I kept my distance from the students as to not study them, but I was able to hear the principal tell one young man, “You did not complete your online credit recovery. What are your plans? I am concerned about your progress towards graduation.” This was directly tied to the conversation he had with the consultant. The principal put his hand on the student’s shoulder and said, “I am here for you; tell me what you need. I would give you the shirt

off my back.” The principal shook the student’s hand and walked over to his stationary spot in the lunch yard. A few minutes later summer lunch was over.

#### **Participant 4: Segments of Transcripts and Notes**

While I received a lot of information from participant 4’s interview, her interview was rushed, and she was unfocused at times. For example, she checked her cell phone at least five times during our interview, and she also answered calls on the walkie-talkie at least three times. I began the interview like I did the previous three interviews.

**Path to principalship.** Participant 4 was a teacher for 5 years, then she became a teacher leader. While a teacher leader she received a taste of what it was like to be a part of the decision-making process, and she loved it. She then took the California administrator tests and received her California administrative credential. She became an assistant principal before her current position as principal.

**Perceptions about principal position.** “Now as a new principal, I love my job, because every day is different, and that keeps my position exciting and fun, in a weird way. I am good at organizing people and processes. To stay organized I arrive to work at 7 a.m., check my emails, make a schedule for my day. My daily schedule consists of classroom observations, meeting with vendors, teachers, students, or parents. The principalship is a very political role. I have to be organized and form relationships with teachers, parents, and students. A few qualities that pertain to me are: I am a hard worker, I have a great understanding of charter school budgets. However, I am working to be better at leaving work at work, not allowing my emotions to get to me. My worst day as a principal was the day a student brought a gun to campus. I had to give the student the federally mandated consequence for the crime. This was a difficult time, because I dreamed about guns for days. When I spoke to my family about it, they were wondering if I should go to

counseling. It eventually passes; I tried to think about police officers who go through much worse. Aside from this gun experience, if I could wave a magic wand, I would wish to have more money for our school.

**Mentorship and support.** This participant was positive about mentorship she received: I am supported by a paid consultant. I attribute most of my professional development to her support. I met with my consultant daily during my first summer as principal. We co-planned everything regarding the school. This was so helpful because the beginning of my first year was a success. While my consultant was assigned to me, she supported me with the basic transitions and political aspects of the job. For example, she trained me on how to respond to the local district's requests without giving them items to say that I was doing incorrectly. One other aspect that I was thankful for in my professional relationship with my consultant was that she helped me communicate with my CEO. For some reason, he was unsatisfied with my work, but he never told me what I was doing wrong. She was also hands-on, available, and knowledgeable. We developed trust because of her skill set. I confided in her. Then the weirdest thing happened. My CEO told me that she threw me under the bus to him, and I believed him. Reflecting back on it now, I am not certain I should have believed him. He may have wanted to get in the way of our professional relationship. His statement ruined our relationship. A mentor should listen to their mentee and support their specific needs. If I had to suggest to incoming principals, I would suggest that the principal be cognizant of their political relationships, because political mistakes are career suicide.

I was able to view two mentor-mentee sessions where the consultant and participant 4 were discussing the budget. The first mentor-mentee observation session lasted 30 minutes. The

principal and the consultant were reviewing the expected budget for teacher salaries. “According to our back office provider, we will be over budget \$100,000 on teacher salaries. What do you suggest I do?” The consultant responded with a question, “What do you think you should do?” “I think I should cut other areas of the budget instead of cutting a teacher. I know it is summer, but if teachers find out that I cut a teacher at the beginning of the school year, we could start off with low morale.” “You may be right. What do you suggest cutting?” “I think I need time to think about what specifically that I need to cut.” “You are right, but you need to decide by next week.” The next session occurred the following week, the exact deadline the consultant suggested the principal make a decision. The principal began the meeting by saying, “I know what I need to cut! I am going to cut the janitorial staff to one person instead of two. I am also going to have each teacher apply for a Donors Choose project and cut supplies.” “That could work. I also noticed that your budget for field trips are really high. I think you can tease it out and create a budget for each field trip. You could even do two field trips per grade level to make it fair.” “Can we do that together now?” For the next 15 minutes, the consultant and principal planned.

**Principal’s observed interaction with others.** I conducted two shadow observations of participant 4. The first shadow observation was of her “welcome back” professional development. Participant 4 comes alive in front of her staff. She was energetic and positive during her welcome back speech. She began her speech by discussing her summer break. She said, “Last year we had a difficult time with teacher turnover, and as a result student behavior. This is the 2017-2018 school year, we are fully staffed, and I am proud of our current staff! Let’s make it a great year!” I anticipated that participant 4 was going to stay in the professional development after her speech, but she left and went outside to the parking lot to smoke a cigarette. I waited in the PD about 15 minutes, and I had gathered enough about her interactions

with her staff. The next shadow observation occurred later that day. I was invited to observe the staff at a staff social. The social took place at the bowling alley near the high school. The staff was extremely friendly and welcomed me as if I were an employee of their school. During my shadow observation of the principal, I observed her as a social butterfly. She spoke to every teacher at least twice. She made jokes, and was having an overall great time.

### **Participant 5: Segments of Transcripts and Notes**

It was difficult to draw out information from participant 5; her responses were short. It appeared as if she did not want to give too much information. About halfway through the questions, I stopped her and said, “It is ok for you to provide me with more detail, your name and school will remain confidential.”

**Path to principalship.** Participant 5 also took the usual track, like the previous 5 participants. She was a teacher then became a teacher leader and took classes at California State Dominguez Hills. She then became an assistant principal for 2 years then a principal.

**Perceptions about principal position.** Participant 5 stated, “I love being a principal; I am good at all aspects of being a principal. Specifically, I participate in frequent meetings, conduct class observations, and I spend time getting to know students during my supervision times. My biggest pet peeve about my principalship is working with parents, teachers, and other staff who don’t attempt to find solutions. I am organized, I have good relationships with students, and I reflect daily. I have been working on budgets, adding more community resources, and not taking work home. The worst day of my principalship was when I had a student that I worked personally with to improve his behavior distribute alcohol to other students during lunch. If I had to wave a magic wand, I would wish for a better facility.

**Mentorship and support.** Participant 5 stated the following:

My supervisor and I met once a month, so I did not receive a lot of support. My supervisor sometimes would check in, or we would talk about a parent concern or student progress. But there was no real mentorship since he was managing his duties. We also would discuss staffing challenges I had. For some reason, this year and last year teachers were not buying into a vision and mission, even though they were receiving a paycheck. My supervisor was a former principal, so we discussed spent time managing and matching our expenses and future spending with the school budget support. I only trusted him with my professional life because he was available. If I had to advise a future principal and mentor I would say that every day is going to be a rollercoaster. There will be highs and lows, but use the support provided for you.

During participant 5's mentor-mentee session I observed the supervisor and participant's reflection on the principal's progress from last year. As a note, after the observation I asked the principal if she was evaluated using an evaluation tool, and she said, no, it is an informal reflection. During the observation, she stated that she was proud that she was able to move student Lexile levels this school year. This meant that they had improved the reading, which would support their performance in Common Core English. The supervisor did not say much or coach the principal. He listened and said, "What are your plans for next year?" It appeared that the relationship was effective for the needs of this principal. She just needed someone to bounce ideas off. The second mentor-mentee session was held in the supervisor's office. The supervisor and the principal scheduled the call to discuss a parent complaint about the principal. The meeting originally was going to be a budget meeting, but the supervisor said he received a parent complaint. "The suspense is killing me; what did the parent say about me?" "She said that you were short with her when she called to ask you about the quality of teachers." "I do not

remember that call, but do you have an example of how I can improve? Should I call her and apologize?” “I do not think she wants an apology; she wants you to be mindful of your interactions. If you can do that you will be fine.” “Ok, thank you; I can be more mindful.”

**Principal’s observed interaction with others.** I observed the principal in a potential science teacher interview. The interview was held in the principal’s office with a panel of teachers. The panel consisted of a parent, a student, a teacher, and the principal. The science teacher came into the interview and shook everyone’s hand and introduced himself. The principal opened the interview saying “thank you for interviewing with our school. The specific position open is a 9th grade Biology. We each are going to ask you a question. Please try to provide specific examples to prove your point. Please begin by summarizing your resume.” Each interview team member asked a question. The principal’s specific question was, “If I directed you to do something that you did not agree with, what would you say to me?” I am certain the principal asked this question for a reason. She wanted to see if he would be able to follow her directives. The other shadow observation was the following week. This was an informal observation. The principal had no scheduled obligations for the week, so I literally shadowed her for about 30 minutes. I stayed in her office and worked as she worked. She was working on her goals for the school year. She took three calls during the observation. The first was a teacher who called on her work cell phone to tell her that she would not be working the first week of school because she had scheduled her vacation days. She stated, “I want to make it clear that you would not have any [during the school year].”

#### **Participant 6: Segments of Transcripts and Notes**

**Path to principalship.** This interview was conducted at the start of participant 6’s second year as a novice principal. Like many of the other participants, she took the normal track to

become a principal. She worked her way up from a teacher, to a teacher leader, then to an assistant principal, then to a principal.

**Perceptions about principal position.** She stated the following:

Since I have just completed my second year as a principal, I am still deciding if I like my position. I am just not sure yet. That could be because this is a difficult position, and I am new at it. My first year as a principal consisted of many meetings to get to know parents, students, teachers, and the school community. I enjoyed the meetings and I tried not to make too many changes. This was advice I received from one of my college professors about being a new principal, and I took the advice. As for the summer, I use my summers plan for the school year....But I do not regret being hired. So, if I had to go back to your early question. I do like being a principal.

When I asked Participant 6 what she believe her strengths and areas of growth were, she stated the following: “I am a hard worker, organized solutions based and I am passionate about my role as principal.”

**Challenges.** I continued with my line of questioning and learned more about participant 6.

My first day of my principalship last year was difficult. Half the staff quit on me! So I had to hire an all-new staff. This was difficult, because the previous principal did not leave anything for me. Not interview procedures or interview questions or anything....It is just a tough job that some days I want to quit, but I try to look at each day as a new day. At this particular school we have a low parent involvement rate. Parents simply do not have the time to come in and volunteer. I plan to hire a parent liaison to strictly call parents and schedule time throughout the year to volunteer with the school. I think

closing my student's achievement gaps could be accomplished with more parent participation.

**Mentorship and support.** This participant stated the following:

Regarding support that I received, I was supported by my supervisor who was the person who hired me. He did not start supporting me until August of 2016. He began by letting take the lead, but after a month or so he noticed that I needed support. I did not have any support during my first month as a principal. He has been very supportive in helping me grow as a principal. We talk every other day by email, phone, or in person. It depends on what the item that needs to be discussed is; he is also available for anything I need. He is currently supporting me with having difficult conversations with people and finding a solution for the problem. I appreciate that he is helpful and nonjudgemental. If I had to advise mentor and novice principals, I would say provide the support whenever your mentee needs it. To the novice principal, I would say, do not give up on your desire to be a principal. You can do it; use your mentor for support. The harder you work, the more results you will receive with your development.

One of the shadow observations was participant 6's involvement in the school's board meeting. This was a summer board meeting, and the school did not have a quorum at the meeting. The board president facilitated the meeting and called it to order at noon. The principal presented a Powerpoint presentation at the time for public comment. She was discussing the need to hire a parent liaison. I was excited to see this, because she had briefly discussed this in her interview, so it was great to see her turn her concerns into a solution. Her powerpoint cited authors of parent involvement in schools. She used their research to provide the rationale behind hiring a parent liaison. She also laid out the specific job responsibilities of the liason. There was

only one question from the board members about a parent liaison. They asked, “how do you plan to monitor the progress of the parent liaison?” She replied, “That is a great question. I would conduct two evaluations a year just like I do for teachers and out-of-class personnel. The evaluations would look at the evidence to support that he or she is meeting a goal.” She said the board member seemed satisfied with the response. So she ended with, “With your approval, I would like to schedule a meeting with the budget provider and human resources to make this position official.”

I was also fortunate in this interview that the mentor-mentee sessions tied directly to the principal’s new initiative for student achievement. The supervisor had a phone conversation with the principal about the idea to implement the parent liaison. “I support you wanting to increase parent volunteer and awareness to increase student achievement. Let’s collaborate with human resources and develop a solid job description.” The next mentor-mentee observation was reviewing the job description for the parent liaison. The supervisor began by saying, “I like the job description. I suggest we include the evaluations in here. We expect that you raise parent engagement by 50% more than last school year. Then maybe a bonus if he or she meets the goal.” The principal questioned the supervisor, “Do you think giving a bonus is a good idea? I am afraid that it will cause other employees to ask for bonuses.” “Good point! Let’s table the bonus then.”

**Principal’s observed interaction with others.** The second shadow observation consisted of the principal doing rounds at grade level team meetings at professional development. We walked into four different teams. In the first three, she simply listened to what they were discussing and did not make a comment. However, by the time we walked into the 9th grade team meeting, the principal spoke up. She said the 9th grade year is extremely important. If

students are failing, absent, or misbehaving, we need to meet as a team with their parents to support them, because this behavior could be the pattern that they follow for the rest of their high school career.

### **Participant 7: Segments of Transcripts and Notes**

**Path to principalship.** This principal was very candid in his responses. Participant 7 is a male principal who completed one year so that he would be beginning his second year as a principal. Like other participants, participant 7 took the normal track to becoming a principal. He was a teacher, then became a teacher leader, then became an assistant principal, then a principal.

**Perceptions about principal position.** He stated the following about his principalship:

I love being a principal. For the most part, there is a lot of management that I must do day to day, also a lot of school meetings, class observations, time with students. If I had to pinpoint what I do not like about being a principal is the politics. What I mean by politics is that many people do not agree with charter schools existing. I do not get those people.

Charter schools are there to support students. In regards to my qualities, I believe that I am great at everything. If I had to grow I would like to be more solutions-based.

Sometimes, if it appears not to work out, I do not go out of my way to find a solution. An example of this is that we are an independent charter school, and I have been a bit disappointed with our financial status. I suggested to my CEO that I spend time researching grants, and he told me that he would hire someone to search for funding. I could have pressed the issue, but I did not. The solution to our budgetary problems is for us to seek those funds. I also want not to take things that occur personally. I had a parent that was very supportive during our one-on-one meeting about last years behavior, then when we met as a group, she blamed the school for the student behavior. I also, probably

like a lot of other principals, I need to leave work at work, but there are many times I go home and I am frustrated, and it affects my relationship with my wife. I think she is getting tired of listening to me always talking about work. My worst day as a principal occurred when a student broke another student's nose in a fight. This was a difficult day. The parent threatened me and said that she was going to press charges against the student. I was conflicted, because I would not want to involve police in school matters. However, I had to advise the parent that it was her choice to file a police report, that the school would not press charges, and both students would be suspended for a week. The fight was equal participation. The best day of my principalship was when a difficult parent apologized for his or her behavior. The parent was rude and threatened that she would pull the student out of our school because she wanted transcripts. I walked into the office and instructed the office manager to print the document. When she received the transcripts, she apologized to all of us. This was not the first time that she made a scene in the main office, so I was happy to see her humble herself. While I do like being a principal, I am actively seeking another position. If I were offered one right now, I would take it.

**Mentorship and support.** Participant 7 was the only candidate that blatantly stated that the support he received from his assigned consultant was not effective. "You see, we got off on the wrong foot. She was very judgemental, and I did not appreciate her tone with me. I also felt like she questioned every single decision I made. So there were many times where I ignored her calls. We were scheduled to meet once weekly every Friday. So, to be completely honest with you, I packed my schedule on Fridays with things I could not get out of, like teacher evaluations and parent meetings. As a result, I did not learn anything from her. I believe the consultant was a

spy from my supervisor. If I had to advise future mentors, I would tell them not to be judgemental know-it-alls. If I could advise future principals, I would say, advocate for a good mentor that will help you.”

Participant 7’s mentality of mentorship and support could further be studied, because I was able to observe that the mentor was attempting to support him, but he was the one that was not receptive to the feedback. As a result of participant 7’s dissatisfaction with his consultant, I was very aggressive in my requests to view their interaction. I needed to see what the consultant was doing during the sessions. My persistence paid off. I was able to observe two separate in-person mentor sessions. The second mentor-mentee session occurred a week after the first session. Both mentor-mentee observations were of Participant 7 and the consultant reviewing principal staff surveys regarding his performance. The first session was strictly a review of the results. The consultant shared that the teachers gave him low ratings. The first session was a strict review. I could tell from the body language that this was a very vulnerable topic. However, the consultant did not allow the principal to focus on the emotional aspect of not being liked by the staff. The second session the consultant gave him specific tips on improving staff satisfaction, and they created a plan. The consultant began with a question, “What can you commit to doing differently to improve your relationship with your staff? I hope you had a chance to think about it. Our goal for this session will be to create an action plan with a timeline.” “I was thinking of scheduling more events that show them who I am as a person. I was thinking of the first event taking place at my house the Friday before school returns back in session. Maybe a backyard barbecue.” “That could be good, but what will you do during the event?” “I plan to walk around and talk to each staff member, ask them about their summer, and

their plans for the school year.” “Ok, I think that is a great start. How can you stay engaged with them throughout the school year?” “I was thinking of scheduling monthly check-ins with them.

**Principal’s observed interaction with others.** I also observed participant 7’s interview of a potential new teacher during the shadow observation. I observed that participant 7 was very firm yet friendly during the interview. There was one question that this interview did not answer about classroom management strategies, and instead of allowing him or her not to answer the question, it was rephrased three times until the interviewee answered the question. Participant 7 asked, “What is your classroom management style?” The principal repeated the question as, “What are you like in the classroom?” I could tell participant 7 was not impressed with the candidate, so he ended the interview after asking a question, “What common core strategies do you implement in your class?” The other shadow observation consisted of participant 7 meeting with the IT staff member of the school. “Please present your timeline of events for the school year?” The previous week, the principal gave the IT person the task of creating a weekly and monthly schedule to service computers. He also asked him to create a powerpoint to train a teacher on troubleshooting computers at a PD in August. The meeting lasted 30 minutes, and the participant 7 and the IT person were on topic the entire time. I did not witness participant 7 make a joke or ask the IT person any personal question.

### **Participant 8: Segments of Transcripts and Notes**

Participant 8 is a second year principal at a charter management organization. He had just returned from a 2-week vacation when we scheduled he was interviewed. This created a positive setting for his interview because he was relaxed and ready to be interviewed.

**Perceptions about principal position.** As opposed to participant 7 who loved his role as a principal and was dissatisfied with his consultant, participant 8 disliked his principalship but

felt the support he received from his consultant was effective. He specifically stated the following:

I am looking to change careers because of the demand of the principalship, our school does not have much money, as opposed to the other charter school in my CMO. I am usually a positive person, but I feel that the principalship is turning me into an unhappy and cynical person. I try to be solutions-based, but there are so many opportunities for school growth that I do not feel as if I am making an impact. I would not leave the school high and dry, so I will be continuing this year. This year my personal goals are to be more organized and listen more to others. The most difficult day I had as a principal was when a teacher touched a student on the shoulder and the student and parent said they felt violated. I had to launch a full investigation of the teacher with human resources. It got ugly because the teacher and parents got lawyers, so we had to involve our lawyers as well. This still hasn't been resolved. The best day was when I heard the news of a student who was severely credit deficient had gained all his credits to walk the stage.

**Mentorship and support.** As stated earlier in this section, participant 8 found the support from his consultant effective.

Every time we received the consultant's invoices for services I felt guilty. We don't have much money, and the fact that we were spending money on professional development for me really bothered me. I could have been putting this money back into my staff. I had this conversation with my consultant, and she reminded me that my professional development directly impacts the success of the school, because when I grow the school grows. I am not sure if that was just a business standpoint to retain my business or if she truly meant it. Anyhow, she was overall very effective.

I continued with my line of questioning, and participant 8 revealed that he used his consultant to bounce ideas off of “whenever I needed.” Participant 8 also utilized the consultant once a week because “I did not need much support.”

I also trusted my consultant, wholeheartedly. We had many difficult conversations about everything, teachers, my relationships with my superiors, budget and my reports at the board meetings. There was one board meeting that she came to view my presentation and she stated that I was unorganized. She didn’t think that the board noticed, but she suggested I review my board presentation before each presentation. She also taught me how to hold people accountable by setting clear expectations and not micromanaging. I would encourage principal mentors to be available, understanding and solutions based like my consultant was. I advise principals to communicate their needs to their supervisor or mentor for accurate support.

During one of the mentor-mentee sessions, participant 8 and his consultant discussed the recent facilities survey. “One of our LCAP goals is to have facilities in good repair. So as you know, we conducted the facilities survey. Here are the results.” Participant 8 handed her the results of the facilities repair. “I know that I had no choice in where our charter school was leased, but I have to make sure the facility is in good repair.” The consultant responded, “Yes, but let’s see what specifically needs to be fixed. I see there are a few easy fixes that you can repair before the beginning of the school year. For example, the light fixtures and exit signs that need to be replaced are easy fixes. I can support you in calling a few companies that provide discounts in facilities repair for schools.” At the beginning of this mentor-mentee observation, participant 8 was disappointed in himself for not doing a better job of maintaining the facilities. After the consultant’s positive redirection to create a plan for the facilities. The second mentor-

mentee session was a working session between the consultant and participant 8. There was not much dialogue. I was able to view the document they were working on. They were modifying the English learner action plan. They had 15 tasks that needed to be done by the end of the school year. After they reviewed them, the principal placed calendar invites to remind herself of what needed to be done.

**Principal's observed interaction with others.** Participant 8's shadow observations allowed me to see the response to an action of the facilities survey. Participant 8 was determined to not receive a lot of items to fix. One of the shadow observations was an interview of a facilities manager. The duties of this person were to oversee the day to day functioning of the facilities. The interviewee did not know to bring his resume. I could tell participant 8 was annoyed by this, by the long breath he took. "Ok, let's begin by summarizing your resume." The participant had worked as a facilities manager for several other schools, but he had only stayed for a year at each location. After summarizing his resume, the principal said, "I have heard enough. I would like to thank you for your time." This abrupt ending was shocking to myself and the facilities manager, so the principal explained, "While you seem like a nice person, I need a facilities manager that can help our school grow, and based on your employment record that person may not be you." "Ok, that is understandable." The ending of the interview intrigued me, so I requested observing the next candidate scheduled the following week. The next candidate was 15 minutes late. His excuse was that he could not find parking. The principal refused to see him. While I did not receive much from these observations, they demonstrated the conviction the principal has in his rules. I could tell that he wanted quality employees and won't settle for anything less.

## **Participant 9: Segments of Transcripts and Notes**

**Perceptions about principal position.** This principal participant is a male who just completed the first year of his principalship. He said the following in his interview:

I love being a principal. I love seeing students grow each year. My day is comprised of meetings, time building relationships with students, and class observations. There is nothing that I would change about my principalship and my skills as a principal. I am detailed oriented. I lead from my heart and am a servant leader. I do want to learn to leverage my staff, stay solutions based, and learn more about the budget. My most difficult day as a principal was when I had to let go five staff members because we were under-enrolled. Another challenging day was when a student was shot off campus, and I was responsible for relaying the message to parents and students. There were many questions about what I was going to do about gangs in our school. Other than that, that has been my only bad day. Each day is a bad day. If I could wave a magic wand, I would wish for a better facility.

**Mentorship and support.** Regarding the support he received, participant 9 stated:

I was supported by both a consultant and supervisor. Both were assigned to me. They both supported me in interpreting the budget. My supervisor was strictly evaluative, but my consultant supported me on the items that needed support. For example, I knew nothing about high school budgets. I could tell that my supervisor was displeased with this fact about me. However, we worked to review specific line items on the budget. I found this support very effective because, by the end of last year, I had a clear picture of the budget. I also appreciated the daily communication from my consultant. She sent me encouraging emails, and we brainstormed solutions on many items. I also learned to

always have a plan as a principal. I would recommend my consultant to other aspiring principals. If I had to give advice, I would say it is important to listen to one another so that you can work together as a team.

I was able to view participant 9's mentor-mentee session with his consultant and another with his both his supervisor and consultant. The first mentor-mentee session was a meeting about the principal's job description and the assistant principal's job descriptions. The supervisor was very clear about the goal of the meeting. "I noticed that you were tired by October and then again in February. I think you should hire a second assistant principal this school year. You saved some money and could afford it." The participant responded. I think that would be good, but I would rather hire an instructional coach so that they can focus solely on improving teacher instruction. This would free up the amount of time I spend improving instruction. Now, don't get me wrong. I enjoy spending time in classes, but there are a least three teachers that could benefit from the extra, targeted support. During the observation, the consultant listened and took notes. This was interesting, because I expect her to offer support. The second observation was of the consultant and participant 9 reviewing that earlier meeting and talking about the budget. "I have to disagree with your supervisor. You may have saved money last year, but I do not think it is enough to fund an entire position. Let's look at the budget again." They went through the budget line item by line item. They were not adding any new teachers, and the salaries were staying similar. "You are right." "What I suggest you do is, we can work on ideas for fundraising, and we can split up the teachers that need support between you and the current assistant principal." "Ok, so how do we notify my supervisor?" "I will help you draft an email."

**Principal's observed interaction with others.** Participant 9's shadow observations consisted of her meeting with her current assistant principal and a growth plan meeting with a

struggling teacher. I observed the principal and the assistant principal in the principal's office. The principal was reviewing her concerns about the three teachers that needed support with classroom management and instruction. "Ok, let's look at their evaluation results from last year and see how we can support them this year." "Teacher Z scored low on transitions and routines and procedures. I remember in her lesson evaluation she did not have a routine for collecting homework. At least three students should be allowed to pass back the papers." The principal responded, "Do you want to work with her this year or do you want me to take her?" "You can take her. I can work with the other two teachers since you have a lot on your plate." "Ok. Let's formalize our level of support, so that we are on the same page. Let's set up meeting with them and create a growth plan for teacher improvement. Then let's monitor their progress with the three critical areas of support. We can observe them daily but give them specific feedback weekly. I will calendar 4 days throughout the year for you and I to debrief the results. This way we maintain accountability." The meeting was very collaborative, but the principal took the lead on the meeting. The second shadow observation that I viewed was the principal meeting with the teacher that she would be providing support of. "Hello, teacher Z; you have been called to meet with me regarding your classroom management." "Oh man, I knew I was in trouble." "No, no, I called you in because I want to support you in your development. How would you say your year went?" It could have been a lot better; I felt as if I were fighting to teach. There were so many chaotic days." The principal then responded politely, "I know that you can turn your class around. Here is my suggestion: we will work weekly together to observe and discuss best practices. First we will begin today with starting a growth plan. I will share this document with you, and we can work on it together." The principal shared the growth plan, which was a chart that had three areas of focus and action steps for monitoring progress. "I have pre-populated your

lowest evaluation scores. Let's talk about how you can improve them. Let's start with routines. What specific routine could you implement?" "I am not sure. Is it possible that I can have time to work out the growth plan alone and can meet to discuss what I wrote?" Participant 9 responded, "Of course; fill it out by next Monday and we can meet after school." The teacher responded, "deal." The principal was confident during the meeting. This could be attributed to the direct support he received from his consultant.

### **Participant 10: Segments of Transcripts and Notes**

The interview with participant 10 was rushed. When I arrived on site to interview, she told me that she had double booked her schedule and pushed back the other meeting so that we could meet. However, the next appointment arrived early, so the responses were rushed but sufficient to answer the question.

**Perceptions about principal position.** During her interview, she stated the following: I consider my role instructional leadership. My administrative program focused on not managing people but being an instructional leader. So, I have embedded this into my philosophy as a principal. For example, my daily schedule is comprised of only 1 to 2 meetings that do not pertain to instruction. I am in classes every day, coaching teachers and focusing on student learning. I also do an intentional job of valuing my stakeholders, so I listen to teachers and parents about their concerns about their child's learning. I am also a hard worker and I have high integrity for student learning. For the most part, everyday is rewarding. But my most challenging day occurred when I found out a student ran away from home. Her mother told me where she was so I went to find her. She was at her boyfriend's house and was refusing to come home. I tried to talk her returning home, but she refused. You know they say educators are more than just teachers. This is an

example of that. I was so disappointed that I could not help her. Unfortunately, we had to drop her from our enrollment. I need to call her mom and check on her to see if she went back home or if they are keeping in contact. One thing I am working on is maintaining organization, how I can see a change faster ,and work on my patience, because I hate wasting time, especially when it does not directly affect student learning.

**Mentorship and support.** In regards to the support that participant 10 received, she stated the following:

I found the support I received from my consultant effective. We did a lot of planning together. I really found the instructional rounds that we did helpful. Every time my consultant came on campus, we observed classrooms and debriefed on each class. She would tell me what she saw, and I would tell her what I saw. Then I would email the teacher the areas of strength from each meeting. I felt this was helpful for myself and the teacher. I was sharpening my observation and feedback skills. My consultant visited once weekly, and we would email or call each other throughout the week. We had a collaborative relationship. As a result of our collaboration, I trusted her and I was able to grow. If I had to provide advice to other mentors and mentees, I would tell them to build a relationship, get to know each other, because then trust will be developed. Also, schedule times to meet until it becomes second nature to meet.

Participant 10's mentor-mentee sessions were both phone meetings. Participant 10 stated that this lack of face-to-face meeting was not typical for their meetings, but the consultant had increased her caseload and was observing a novice principal at another site that needs to turn around the school. "Let's discuss your plans for the school year." "Well, I have prioritized my goals for the next 2 weeks. I first want to meet with all teachers and do an individual check in

with them. Nothing formal. I also want to meet with students that are on probation.” “Ok, that will work. Is there anything else going on, anything else that is pressing?” “No, not at this time.” “Ok, let’s meet in 2 weeks to debrief.” I sat in on the next mentor-mentee phone observation. They discussed the specifics of the meetings. This was even shorter than the previous meeting. However, the consultant gave the principal advice about an angry parent. “What solution does the parent expect? Her son was injured during basketball practice, and they signed a waiver that the school is not responsible for the injuries. What I suggest is that we respond to her in writing. She seems as if she would try to sue the school.” The participant responded, “Ok, I will draft it and send it to you as a google document so that you can make edits.”

**Principal’s observed interaction with others.** I shadowed participant 10 on two separate days that he calendered to meet with stakeholders. The first shadow observation was with a meeting to discuss a teacher’s increase in test scores, “Your test scores improved 50% from last year! I want you to present at our next teacher PD on your strategies.” The teacher responded, “I am not comfortable speaking in front of teachers. Can I help you prepare a few strategies and send them to you?” Participant 10 responded encouragingly, “I know you may be nervous, but your shared practices can benefit your colleagues and in turn impact student achievement. If you want, I can present with you.” They agreed to do a shared presentation. The other shadow observation consisted of me observing a parent meeting. I did not stay in this parent meeting long; the parent asked if I could leave because she did not feel comfortable. The principal granted her request, and I stepped out. I did retrieve the following from the shadow observation. “We are holding this meeting because your daughter had 20 absences last year, so we will be placing her in an attendance agreement....Yes, there is something that I would like to

talk to you that is personal regarding her absences.” I asked the principal if they found a solution and he said, “Yes.”

### **Participant 11: Segments of Transcripts and Notes**

This particular principal’s interview was very lively. His personality was fun and welcoming. Like other participants, he became a principal using the normal track.

**Perceptions about principal position.** He stated, “My school’s Smarter Balanced scores increased 35% in each English and math. While I know it could have gone up higher, I am happy that it did not drop from last years’ scores. I try to balance my time between meeting with parents, students, and teachers community members, and observing and evaluating teachers. If I had to change, one thing about my principalship it would be politics. Smarter Balanced result is an example of the politics. We have to show growth each year. I know that test scores are important, but they are not the only way of measuring student success. But hey, you can’t fight this system. It has been around longer than you, and I have been alive. I am working to be more patient, give more choice and give fewer directives. So, I guess I am working on being coaching. I had one incident with a teacher who raised his voice at me. I wanted to fire him, but at the same time, I had to accept his feelings and identify my impact on the teacher’s reaction. I could have solved this by using coaching.

**Mentorship and support.** This participant stated the following:

I am working on the coaching with my consultant. We email each other daily and meet twice a month. If I could meet with her weekly, it would have been great, but we are both busy people. She has been modeling coaching dialogue with me. The mentor-mentee session that I want to invite you to is our instructional observation and coaching feedback. If I had to give advice to future mentors and mentees, I would tell both of them

to challenge each other and hold each other accountable but at the same time, to not take the feedback personally.

In mentor-mentee observation for participant 11 (an independent charter school principal), his supervisor wanted to focus on the schoolwide goal of “improving the quality of instruction by implementing varied instructional practices.” So, the three of us conducted instructional rounds of summer school classes. We utilized the informal observation tool that the consultant and principal developed together during our classroom observations. After we observed each class, the consultant pretended that she was the teacher and participant 11 had to give her immediate feedback. The consultant gave the participant feedback after each observation. After the mentor-mentee observation, I asked participant 11 if he found it effective and he said, “Yes, I wanted to learn how to give constructive feedback to improve teacher instruction.” The second mentor-mentee session was a coaching session where the principal and the consultant practiced how to address concerns with the executive director. “Do not use any *you* statements. Only use *I* statements. Let’s practice.” “Hello, Ms. X. I would like to discuss a few things with you and get your feedback on my concerns. I would like to request an additional week before the school year to train my teachers. I know this is a unique request. I specifically want to spend 1 week strictly on classroom management and the other week strictly on curriculum and instruction. The 5 days that we currently have are not enough. I know this would impact teacher salaries and agreements, but I think it will be a beneficial change... How was that?” “That was great. I think you should go back and count the number of referrals you received as data to prove your rationale for needing the five extra days.” “Ok, I can do that. I don’t know why I am nervous.” “It is normal to be nervous when speaking to superiors. If there

is nothing else, I am going to take a call and then check back in before I leave, which should be in the next hour.”

**Principal’s observed interaction with others.** Participant 12’s shadow observation was during two summer school sessions. It was very difficult to schedule shadow observations with participant 11, so I reiterated that I needed to see him in his normal setting. I observed him conducting a classroom observation and meeting with the custodian. Ten classes were occurring. He spent the most time with the incoming sixth grade classroom. There were some challenging behaviors, and he addressed all of the students. “Do you know why I work as a principal? I want to see you learn. Education is the one thing that someone cannot take away from you, so you should cherish it.” There was one student that commented under his breath, and I witnessed the principal take him out of the classroom to speak to him one on one. I did not follow him because I did not want to intrude on their conversation. When the student came back inside the classroom, he sat down and pulled out his notebook and waited for the teacher to begin talking. This observation demonstrated confidence and knowledge of how to interact with students for the student’s benefit. The second shadow observation occurred a week later, and the participant was meeting with the head janitor. It was a short meeting but meaningful. “I noticed that you clocked out 2 hours later than your 8-hour shift. I need you to approve all additional hours for me before you stay later.” “Ok, I just knew you wanted the floors waxed before the opening day. I have also been cleaning walls since you said you wouldn’t be painting.” “You are right. I have to match the staff payroll with our budget and last month we were over.” “Ok, I will let you know if I need additional time.”

## **Participant 12: Segments of Transcripts and Notes**

This was the last and final interview that I conducted. By this time I was familiar with the questions, and I was anticipating similar responses, but participant 12 was very confident. Like the other participants, she likes being a principal. She has reached the end of her novice years as she completed the third year of her principalship.

**Perceptions about principal position.** Participant 12 stated the following:

What keeps me going is the joy I feel seeing the smile on a parent's face when their child is doing well. This makes some of the difficult conversations, things I deal with, worth it. I would say that I have mastered my schedule. I spend time each morning planning my day out; I get to work earlier. I live my daily calendar. I have even notified my office manager and assistant principal that parents need to make an appointment to meet with me, especially if they have a complaint. I need to be able to get my thoughts together before I can speak to them. It is nothing personal; I like to be prepared. Also, even though I am very tied to my schedule, I make sure to form relationships with all people still. I am patient and good at managing the budget....I would like to improve professional development at my school....For the most part, I find each day regarding, but my toughest day was firing a teacher, I cannot state the reason because it was confidential. If I could wave a magic wand and fix anything about my school it would be to improve our facility.

**Mentorship and support.** This participant was able to improve an initially difficult relationship with a supervisor:

I have received support from my supervisor for the past 3 years. Our first year was a bit rocky because of our communication. We went out for happy hour one evening after

work, and we had a heart to heart about how we could improve our working relationship. Since that day, we have worked well together. He became available and worked on campus at least once a week. As a result of our work, I have finally gotten to a place where I truly feel like I am making a difference in my school. As mentioned earlier, the first few years of my principalship were difficult, but with the help of my supervisor, I have improved, I am more organized and thoughtful in my decision making....If I had to provide my thoughts on the mentorship for novice principals such as myself, trust and solutions-based interactions are needed. Those are two of the most effective support that the supervisor or consultant could give. I would consider myself lucky because I was able to fix my relationship with my supervisor so that we could attain student success.

The first mentor-mentee observation was an in-person meeting. I observed them reviewing a planning list that the principal put together that needed to be done to plan for the upcoming school year. She opened the meeting by saying, "I just used the document that I used last summer. There is no sense in recreating the wheel. I shared it with you last week; did you have a chance to look at it?" The supervisor responded, "Yes, this looks good, we reviewed the master schedule with the changes in the course list. When will your counselors begin programming?" "They will return August 1st and begin working." "Where are you with hiring a math teacher?" "Well, I posted the position on Edjoin, and I contacted a few local universities." "Ok, we do not want to begin the year with any vacant positions, so I would say that this is a priority. Alright, this was a good check-in. Let's set a date for a web conference in 2 weeks. I can meet for 30 minutes on my vacation to check in with you. Also, text me if an emergency occurs so that I can help you." I came back to observe the webconference. They met for 20 minutes instead of 30 minutes. They talked for about 5 minutes about the supervisors trip. The principal

gave her supervisor updates on her plans for the summer. She has specifically updated the PD calendar with her assistant principal over PD and revised the handbook to add a plagiarism policy. They also brainstormed other options for finding a math teacher since the principal still had not found one. They ended up deciding to post the position on another job website to receive more candidates possibly. The meeting was effective despite the fact that they did not meet in person.

**Principal's observed interaction with others.** The first shadow observation that I observed was of participant 12 viewing her opening PD with her staff. She began the meeting, "Ok, I have reviewed everyone's contribution to the PD agenda and powerpoint. What can we do to make PD fun?" One of the assistant principals spoke up, "What if we had raffles throughout the PD. We could order supplies from staples and small tokens to present to staff. We could also design awards to give to staff at the end of each year." Participant 12 responded. "I like the way you think! Who can take the lead on this?" The same assistant principal said they would take the lead. The principal demonstrated confidence in her staff that they could take the lead on events. The meeting ended with the principal setting a deadline of Wednesday to have all aspects of next week's PD planned. The second shadow observation was of the principal at the PD they were planning for next week. During this observation, participant 12's supervisor was present during her professional development. I observed him nodding and smiling in her direction as she was speaking. This displayed a mutual level of trust. The supervisor was trusting the novice principal and displaying it publicly. Participant 12 made eye contact with her supervisor twice during her presentation, and it was evident that she was appreciative of the support. I also observed participant 12's interactions with her staff. She was confident during her welcome speech. Participant 12 was presenting the 2016-2017 school year data to her staff. Her tone was

informative yet encouraging. For example, the math scores dropped from last year, and she stated, “I am confident that with continued data-driven instruction we will be able to bring the scores back up.”

### **Conclusion Regarding Narrative Data**

This section was designed to demonstrate participant voice and experiences with their novice principalship and supports received. There were many similarities and trends within the participant interviews, mentor-mentee sessions, and shadow observations. Since I left the observations fairly loose in requirements, I was able to capture unique experiences that I may not have received if I made strict criteria. I sought to investigate the type of formal support novice charter school principals in Los Angeles received and the effectiveness of that support. The next section will reveal the results of these findings.

**Finding 1: Effective mentor support involves trust.** The first finding emerged from the raw data from the shadow observations and interviews. For example, one interview question that the participants answered was to “describe effective support” from their consultant or supervisor. All of the participants were eager to give their perspective on the topic. Several of the participants identified trust a key factor. Participant 5 stated that, “The principal is a lonely job; you don’t know who to trust. I need my supervisor to be someone that I can trust.” Participant 3 stated that “Trust and accountability are key factors to receiving effective support.” Participant 12 also stated, that “Trust and a solutions-based manner” is the most effective support that the supervisor or consultant could give. Participant 7 did not state trust explicitly, but the underlying trait was trust, since he wanted to ensure that the “consultant was not a spy” that his supervisor sent.

This finding that effective support entails having a trustworthy supervisor or consultant is also evident in the mentor-mentee observations. During my observations of the mentor-mentee relationship, it was evident that the novice trusted the supervisor or consultant with confidential information. For example, Participant 3 expressed concerns with a delicate matter; the participant wanted to terminate a teacher and was seeking advice from the supervisor. The supervisor stated that he needed to document every infraction and clearly demonstrate the rationale for terminating the employee. Participant 9 also shared confidential information with the supervisor regarding the school's budget. During the mentor-mentee observation, Participant 7 and the consultant were reviewing principal staff surveys regarding his performance and the consultant shared that the teachers gave him low ratings. I could tell from the body language that this was a very vulnerable topic. However, the consultant did not allow the principal to focus on the emotional aspect of not being liked by the staff. He gave him tips on improving staff satisfaction.

Each of the principals and their mentors discussed various school-related topics, but no matter the topic, situation, or question, the novice principal has to feel a level of trust with their mentor or supervisor. In all cases observed, the mentor or supervisor gave quality advice that directly answered or was relevant to the novice principal's question or situation.

As for the shadow observations, there was only one shadow observation in which the supervisor was present. It was not a requirement of the study for the support provider to be present. Participant 12's supervisor was at the professional development and I observed him nodding and smiling in her direction as she was speaking. This displayed a mutual level of trust. The supervisor trusting the novice principal and displaying it publicly. Participant 12 made eye contact with her supervisor twice during her presentation and it was evident that she was

appreciative of the support. Other than this example, there were no other examples that would reveal that trust was evident in the shadow observations.

**Finding 2: Novice charter school principals receive support from a supervisor or consultant.** One question in particular, “Who has supported you the most during your novice principal years?” led to Finding 2. The 12 participant interviews and site observations revealed the data for this finding. During the interviews the participants discussed the specifics of the type of support they received, the frequency of meetings, and the topics of the support that he or she received. Participant 1 and Participant 9 were the only two novice charter school principals to receive support from both a supervisor and consultant. During the interview both participants revealed that they had a very difficult time adjusting to their new principal role and required more than 8 hours a week of combined support. Participant 1’s supervisor visited campus once a week and called every Friday. They discussed the principal’s operational to-do list and supported the principal with strategies on how to meet student needs. Participant 1’s consultant was on call for daily support. Participant 9, on the other hand, required the support of both the supervisor and the consultant on a daily basis. Both supporters helped the participant find solutions for the many situations that were going wrong in the school.

Participant 4 and 8 were the only two participants that received support from a consultant and not a supervisor. They stated this was because their supervisors had not been educators and could not support them on educational solutions and professional development. These two participants utilized a varied degree of support from the consultant. Participant 4 received support from a consultant very often. They discussed basic transitions and political aspects of the job.

Participant 8 utilized the consultant once a week because less support was needed. All of the other eight participants received support from their supervisors. The frequency varied from daily,

often, or when needed. These nine participants discussed that there were some issues they did not share with the supervisor because they did not want it to impact their evaluation at the end of the year. They received support on instruction, reflective practice, and budget. These findings further demonstrate that principals do need support. However, while all participants received support, the extent to which they received support varied and could be studied further.

I also asked the participants to identify other supports that they received throughout their novice principalship. The responses varied. Many participants stated that they did not receive support from other sources. A few stated that they received support from the Charter School Association or other principals. It is evident from the narrative above that charter school principals receive support from a supervisor or consultant.

The shadow observations revealed that the support was effective because the participants were confident and competent in their interactions with parents, staff and teachers. For example, I observed Participant 5, conducting yard supervision during summer school. The Participant was walking around the lunch area freely, talking to students about what they were learning in their summer school course. Participant 3 was also observed giving directives to his assistant principal about what the next steps were for hiring teachers. As stated, the novice principals were confident in the field, which demonstrated that their socialization was effective.

In terms of the mentor-mentee observations, the novice charter principals received, effective support. These observations allowed me to view these first-hand. I mentioned earlier a few examples that demonstrated support with specific topics. An additional example, during Participant 11's (an independent charter school principal) mentor-mentee observation, his supervisor wanted to focus on the schoolwide goal of "improving the quality of instruction by implementing varied instructional practices." So, the three of us conducted instructional rounds

of summer school classes. We utilized the informal observation tool that the consultant and principal developed together during our classroom observations. After we observed each class, the consultant pretended that she was the teacher and Participant 11 had to give her immediate feedback. The consultant gave the participant feedback after each observation. After the mentor-mentee observation, I asked Participant 11 if he found it effective and he said, “Yes, I wanted to learn how to give constructive feedback to improve teacher instruction.”

**Finding 3: Novice charter participants views their support as effective.** Now that we know the type of support that the 12 novice charter school principals received, it is important to decipher whether or not they deemed the support as effective. Participant 2 and 8 had a perspective that is important. Both of them felt the support they were receiving was not effective, but they advocated for themselves and stated to their Chief Executive Officer that the support was not effective. They then received another supervisor with more experience. The other nine participants felt their support was effective, because the support provider gave them specific strategies and solutions that could be implemented to improve their transition into the principalship.

One of the interview questions was as follows: “Do you feel the support you have received from your mentor or supervisor has been effective?” All but one participants responded “yes.” Participant 7 in this case can be considered an outlier. The participant spoke very negatively about all stakeholders, including the support provider, and further did not have a solutions-based mindset.

#### **Chapter 4 Summary**

This chapter discussed the data collected from the single-case study. The chapter began by reviewing the research questions and study design then summarizing the findings. Narratives

of the novice charter school principals' perspectives regarding the support they received and their evaluation of the effectiveness were outlined in this chapter. I studied 12 novice charter school principals with 0 to 3 years of principal experience. The participants were a 50/50 ratio of male and female participants. I utilized several qualitative methods in order to answer the research questions: interviews, shadow observations, and observations of the mentor-mentee coaching sessions. The interviews were the most beneficial research method because novice charter school principals were able to express their perspectives on their role as a principal and on the supports they received. All but one expressed that while there were challenging days, they enjoyed their role as a charter school principal leader. It was clear through the various shadow observations presented that their appropriate socialization impacted the school and student achievement. The principals were competent and confident in the shadow observations and vulnerable and accepting of feedback in the mentor-mentee observations. Both observations were necessary in viewing the full case of the novice charter participants.

It is evident from the data collected that novice charter school principals in Los Angeles received effective support from their supervisor or consultant. This support helped the novice charter school principal accomplish their roles and responsibilities. These findings provide answers to the research questions posed in Chapter 1. Chapter 5 will discuss the results pertaining to the literature reviewed, policy, practice, and theory. While Van Maanen and Schein's (1977) foundation research on socialization was published 40 years prior to the present study, it is still cited to support principal socialization, and this study supports this theory.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion**

In this study I sought to discover the type of support novice charter school principals in Los Angeles receive then understand their perspective on the effectiveness of the support as they socialized into their new roles. The participant interviews revealed that they did receive effective support. While this was a positive outcome to the question, that was not anticipated, it still allows for further discussion and extended research. The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the results, discuss the implications of the results as pertaining to the literature, and discuss the implications of the results as pertaining to practice, policy, and theory. This chapter also concludes the research study and gives recommendations for further research. It is my intention to state the necessary implications and conclusions that could support another researcher interested in studying novice charter school principals in Los Angeles or in another American city.

### **Summary of the Results**

Two research questions were developed to obtain specific information regarding novice charter school principal supports and their effectiveness. It was important to study novice charter school principals, because there were few studies conducted that pertained to them. In fact, most of the research in this study pertained to traditional public school principal role and the types of support and training they received. The lack of research demonstrated a need for the research, consequently posing a need for further research.

I utilized socialization theory as a lens to research novice charter school principal support. Van Maanen and Schein (1977) originally discussed organizational socialization 40 years ago, stating that organizational socialization is “the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role” (p. 3). Most

recently, Bodger, (2011), Grodzki (2011), Joppy (2013), also utilized socialization theory as a conceptual framework to demonstrate a need for principal support. This studies' literature review investigated the specific manner in which previous authors conceptualized principal socialization. I researched the type of formal support that principals received and the effectiveness of the support received.

The research methodology consisted of qualitative interviews, shadow observations, and mentor observation sessions of 12 Los Angeles charter school principals to assess their experiences with support. The dataset yielded several findings. First and foremost, the novice charter school principals viewed effective mentor support to involve trust. Every participant interviewed stated that they need to be able to trust the mentor with confidential and private information. In addition to trust, novice charter school principals received support from a supervisor or consultant. I anticipated that a few would receive support from a mentor, but instead they received support from a consultant that his or her supervisor paid for additional support. Lastly, all but one novice charter school principal interviewed in Los Angeles felt their support was effective. While these findings appear simple and straightforward, there are many implications for the findings. The remainder of this chapter will discuss the implications of these findings.

### **Discussion of the Results**

Per my literature review, it was evident that due to the demands of the charter school principal role, novice charter school principals need support. Garza (2010) posited that charter school leaders are constrained by time, and most of their time is spent addressing managerial issues instead of instructional issues. I definitely found examples that supported Garza's statement. Novice charter school principals discussed that most of their time was spent "putting

out fires” and addressing personnel matters. As a result of my initial research, I was not expecting that all but one of the novice charter school principals in Los Angeles would find the support they received effective. I anticipated that at least several would not find their support effective, and I would be able to make suggestions for further support. On the contrary, novice charter school principals feel supported. It was clear through the various shadow observations presented that their appropriate socialization impacted the school and student achievement.

Most of the charter school principals interviewed received direct support from their supervisor. This is positive because it demonstrates a relationship between the supervisor and the novice that could improve the principal socialization. However, I did find that half of the novice principals received support from an outside consultant. While it is positive that the novice charter school principals are receiving support from an outside consultant, it raises a concern about spending and the charter school budget. Charter schools in California receive less funding than their public school counterparts because of less enrollment, fewer funds that are based on enrollment, and payments to their authorizing district. It is interesting to note that a charter school Chief Executive Officer would spend funds that do not directly impact students. One may argue that the charter school principal does directly impact student achievement, but that is debatable.

The novice charter school principals viewed effective support as the supervisors’ or consultants’ ability to brainstorm solutions, provide feedback on personnel matters, and review budgetary questions as needed. The “as needed” portion of effective support is subjective to the novice’s needs. While all principals’ years of experience ranged from 0 to 3 years, they all needed differing frequency of support. Some needed it daily, and some needed it weekly. What was important to the novice was that the supervisor met their need and provided him or her with

effective support. According to Rothwell and Chee (2013), mentoring “involves what we call “uplifting behaviors”—namely inspiring, motivating, and encouraging. Its core purpose is to enable the mentee’s growth” (p. 6). More than uplifting behaviors, the participants focused on effective advice for practical matters.

## **Limitations**

I stated limitations in the first chapter and the methodologies sections. I used the limitations of the study to plan for the participant selection process, interviews, and other data collection. Only one of those limitations held true. The following two original limitations revolved around the study population and not the qualitative study itself.

1. The participants’ biases toward their principal socialization could impact the findings of the study; they may feel that their socialization to their position was effective because they did not need the specific support.
2. The novice principals will not want to make their organization look unprofessional, so the participant will not give candid responses about their socialization.

The above proposed limitation was not a problem. All of the novice charter school principals spoke candidly about their role as novice charter school principals and the support they received from their supervisors. It was good to go into to the study with this potential limitation in mind, because it made me take notice of participant body language.

In addition to the original limitations, one additional limitation was the fact that I conducted the participant interviews at the participant’s school. My rationale for conducting the interview at the principal’s school site was to view their interactions with stakeholders, but instead, holding the interviews at the participants’ school was a distraction. There were many interviews that were interrupted constantly and were rushed. If a researcher were to replicate the

methodologies in my study, I would suggest holding the interview off-site if convenient for the principal, for uninterrupted discussion. In addition to limitations, there is a major delimitation that must be stated. As the primary researcher, I have chosen to only study charter schools in Los Angeles. This is a delimitation that could affect my study's findings as my findings were specific to Los Angeles charter schools.

### **Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature**

In this section, I will analyze how the results relate to the literature. I will review key sections from my literature review. After the brief review, then I discuss the implications of the research findings as it pertains to the literature section. Socialization theory and the conceptual framework directly relate to the research findings.

**Socialization theory.** I utilized socialization theory as a major argument for novice charter school principal support. Van Maanen and Schein (1977) originally discussed organizational socialization 40 years ago, stating that organizational socialization is “the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role” (p. 3). This “process” that Van Maanen and Schein discuss is necessary to the research supporting novice charter school principals.

This research study investigated the principal socialization strategies of consultants or supervisors that novice charter school principals interacted with. The findings of this study demonstrated that novice charter school principals receive effective support from their supervisors. This was a key finding as it was not an anticipated outcome. This finding also demonstrates the need for continued effective novice chapter principal support. There was only one novice charter school principal in Los Angeles that felt effective support was not received.

At first, I was not certain if I should utilize Van Maanen and Schein's (1977) socialization theory as a lens to view novice charter school principal socialization and support, because it was written in the 1970s and we are currently in 2017, but after further research I realized that many researchers like Joppy (2013) and Bodger (2011) also used this theory as a foundation for their own research. It also proved to be worthwhile for discussing novice charter school principal supports. The socialization theory provided multiple examples of socialization practice for new recruits to an organization that was similar to the support that novice charter school principals received. Future researchers could utilize Van Maanen and Schein's (1977) socialization theory when discussing principal supports, but it is important to include current literature.

**Conceptual framework.** Socialization theory was used as means to develop the conceptual framework for the study. The conceptual framework demonstrated that novice principals must have knowledge and be able to apply their skills. But knowledge and application are foundational. I researched and identified the supports principals need, and aligned that to the research questions. The novice principal must receive supports from their mentor, supervisor, credential program, and professional development. The framework is a foundation of support. The conceptual framework supported my exploration of other researchers' perspectives on socialization theory and the implication for novice charter school principals. The findings of the participant interviews and observations demonstrated that novice charter school principals received effective support from their supervisor. In addition to this finding, all of the participants discussed participating in all of the support strategies on the conceptual framework. The socialization theory and conceptual framework informed my study, and the findings validated the study.

**Demands of the charter school principal.** I also researched the specific demands of charter school principals in order to determine the need for novice charter school principal support. My initial academic research revealed that the demands of the charter school principal are daunting and multi-faceted with a large political influence. Curry (2013) posited many of the facts regarding the demands of the charter school principal. He posited that the principal's abilities to adapt, align, and stay in tune with student and parent needs and expectations are crucial.

In addition to Curry's (2013) research, my interviews with novice charter school principals and my observations of their interactions with stakeholders on campus also demonstrated this demand. The principals revealed that their facility conditions, political interactions, and staffing needs were a large challenge. The participants confirmed that they needed support in these areas from their supervisors and mentors.

The result of my initial research and my participant interviews directly demonstrates the need for novice charter school principal support. The result of this study provides information for mentors and supervisors on what specific supports novice charter school principals in Los Angeles need and receive.

**Charter management organizations and independent charter schools.** In Chapter 4, I reported my findings on the support that novice charter school principals at Charter Management Organizations received versus the support that novice charter school principals received. I found there was no noticeable difference in the support received at the two organizations. Prior to conducting this study I assumed that there would be a difference. Disaggregating the data and findings to make this determination was important, since this type of research has not previously been conducted.

**Permanent whitewater.** I researched the idea of permanent whitewater as a factor in novice charter school principal socialization. I found that this was true. The novice charter school principals that I studied utilized their support provided to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate permanent whitewater. This is significant for the further study of novice principals, as the majority of them will encounter permanent whitewater.

**Consultant or supervisor.** I also disaggregated the research data to view whether or not novice charter school principals received support from a consultant or a supervisor. I found that half of them received support from a paid consultant as opposed to their supervisor. This poses a problem because of budgetary restrictions that chart schools face. This is an expenditure that could be avoided if completed by the supervisor.

**Charter professional networks.** In addition to socialization theory and the conceptual framework, my literature review also discussed the other principal supports. It is important that, in addition to supervisor and mentor support, novice charter school principals identify professional development and networking opportunities. This was expressly stated in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 of this study. The other principal supports are a direct extension of the conceptual framework, which depicts principals' support by mentor, supervisor, credential program, and professional development. I researched professional networks as an additional option for professional development that novice principals in Los Angeles can join in order to improve and support their own principal socialization.

Since other novice principal supports were a sub-section of my research, there was only one question that I asked the participants regarding the other supports. I asked them in the interview "What other supports" did they implement during their time as a novice. The findings from that question demonstrated that they did seek other supports to contribute to their own

socialization. This is important to note because if for some reason the novice principal received an ineffective supervisor or mentor, they would have other means of support. The only means of support that the participants did not use was peer-to-peer collaboration. This is significant to research on novice principals, because these other supports could be identified and researched.

### **Implication of the Results for Policy, Practice, and Theory**

The findings reveal that novice charter school principals received effective support. These findings demonstrate several implications that have been separated into policy, practice, and theory. In this section I discuss the implications of my findings of my initial foundational theorist Van Maanen and Schein (1977) and other theorists, such as Woolsey's (2010) mentor-mentee support.

**Policy.** The findings were that the novice charter school principals in Los Angeles received support. However, it was clear that the types of support and frequency were varied. It might be beneficial for novice charter school principal supports in Los Angeles to be standardized. Woolsey's (2010) research on principal mentorship found five consistent themes in previous research. They were (a) planning and implementation, (b) mentor selection, (c) mentor/mentee pairing and relationships, (d) mentor/mentee training, and (e) time to meet and reflect. While, I did not implement Woolsey's strategies, I was able to gather information about the manner in which the novice principal participants experienced these strategies. For example, there was already a plan in place of support for them. They were either going to be supported by the supervisor or a consultant. In some cases, the supervisor was too busy and had to hire a paid consultant to supervise the novice. Most of the participants were not able to select their supervisor or consultant, but they were able to advocate for themselves to change the supervisor or consultant when needed. Once item that was not implemented was the mentor-mentee

training. There was no finding of training for any of the individuals as pertaining to support and how to effectively communicate support. The last of Woolsey's strategies—time to meet and reflect—were followed by the organizations. Woolsey's strategies would be recommended to implement for support providers and the mentor-mentee relationship pairing. This incorporation of the strategies would have to be implemented at the organizational level, across charters in Los Angeles. If implemented, it would heighten the mentor-mentee relationship and support for novice charter school principals.

**Practice.** In addition to standardizing the frequency of meeting, as stated in Woolsey's (2010) theme, novice charter school principals should be able to change their supervisor or mentor. Participants 2 and 8 shared a perspective that demonstrated this claim, because both of them felt the support they were receiving was not effective. However, they advocated for themselves and stated to their Chief Executive Officer that the support was not effective, and then received another supervisor with more experience. These five strategies would allow for a successful new principal mentorship. In the implementation phase, a planning team should be established in which the specific terms of mentorship are defined. Caution should be used when selecting mentors because of the confidential nature of the mentor-mentee relationship. In the third and fourth phase the mentor-mentee pairing and relationships should be matched appropriately, then mentors should be trained by the implementation team on how to communicate. In the fifth phase, mentorship programs must determine meeting times to communicate and reflect on the duties of the principal position.

**Theory.** There are a few applicable implications that the findings have revealed concerning previous research and Van Maanen and Schein's (1977) theory. Once I started the my literary review, it was evident that there was limited research on novice charter school

principals in Los Angeles. However, I was able to align the previous research on socialization theory and general principal supports to that of novice charter school principals in Los Angeles.

This study also illustrated Van Maanen and Schein's (1977) socialization theory, demonstrating that despite the 40-year difference, it is still relevant. Their theory can also be utilized as a foundation for research on organizational socialization. In addition, Van Maanen and Schein (1977) does not discuss the manner in which the individual maintains accountability for his or her own socialization. I will discuss this idea in the recommendation for further research.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The results of my findings demonstrated that novice charter school principals in Los Angeles receive effective support from their supervisor or consultant. These findings are significant for Los Angeles charter school principals. However, I only studied one aspect of novice charter school principal socialization. Novice charter school principals can receive support using several strategies, such as professional development, joining a professional network, clearing their credential, and collaborating with colleagues.

If another researcher wants to add further studies about novice charter school principals, they could study principals in different cities with high numbers of charter schools, like New York or Texas. In addition to expanding to different cities, it would prove beneficial for future researchers to conduct a study based on the following questions:

1. When do novice charter school principals no longer need support? I considered novice charter school principals to be 0 to 3 years, but do veteran principals also need support?
2. What skills do novice charter school principals lack? I also briefly touched on this information when I reviewed novice charter school principal strengths and weaknesses

during interviews, but it would be beneficial to be able to identify the specific skills that novice charter school principals lack and need support with.

3. What do charter school principals do to monitor their own socialization? I also briefly touched on this in my “other supports” section of Chapter 2, 3 and 5, but it would be beneficial to research what other novice charter supports principals utilize to adequately socialize into their organization.
4. In what ways do charter school principals support each other? This would be interesting to see if there is a need for a charter school principal-to-principal network. This could also be in the form of a blog or association. Chitpin’s (2013) research and website noted that they were not able to measure the effectiveness of the website for principal support. This could be a useful area for an upcoming researcher to explore.
5. Should the supervisor be responsible for novice charter school principal socialization?

While charter schools are new to education reform and will continue to be authorized, it is essential to continue to study their leaders in order to improve education. After my research, I suggest that the researcher utilize qualitative methods to attain a full participant perspective that a quantitative study may not be able to attain.

## **Conclusion**

As a novice charter school principal in Los Angeles, it was my intent to explore whether or not my peers were receiving effective support to carry out the demands of their job. I first established familiarity with previous literature regarding principal socialization, charter schools, mentorship, and qualitative research methodologies. Bodger, (2011), Grodzki (2011), and Joppy (2013) also utilized Van Maanen and Schein’s (1977) foundational literature regarding organizational socialization as a conceptual framework to demonstrate a need for principal

support. While there was limited research on novice charter school principal support, I was able to use the research of traditional public school principals and the support they receive to inform my study. I implemented a single-case qualitative study that included participant interviews, mentor-mentee observation sessions and shadow observations of the 12 novice charter school principals in Los Angeles. The participants were able to determine whether or not the support from their supervisor and consultant was effective. It was evident from the novice principal interviews and observations that they needed support with budget, solving political issues, and day-to-day issues within their school. I also found that novice charter school principals felt that in order for the support to be effective, they needed to be able to trust their support provider with confidential and private matters. While I met the objective of my study, I realized that further data could be investigated in relation to defining the novice charter school principal role in their own socialization.

Now that the research has been completed and the findings have been stated, it is important for me to refer back to the anecdote in my introduction. When I began my novice charter school principal role in Los Angeles, I was excited. I felt I would be able to make a larger impact on the Los Angeles community than I would have been able to do as a high school English teacher. However, once the excitement ended, I realized that I was in charge of over 250 students and 20 teachers, and the decisions I made would directly impact them. I desperately needed support. I was fortunate to receive effective support from an outside consultant like many of the novice principals in Los Angeles that I interviewed. It was my intention to seek the perspectives of my charter colleagues and shed light on the support they received. Now that I have accomplished this, it is my hope that this study will continue to inform novice principals and their support systems in regards to the need for effective support from all parties.

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## Appendix A: Interview Questions

### *On the novice charter school principal role*

1. What was your process on becoming a principal?
2. How are you enjoying your novice charter school principal role?
3. What do you like about being a charter school principal?
4. Describe a typical day as principal here?
5. What do you dislike about being a charter school principal?
6. What 3 leadership characteristic traits do you feel you possess that have made you successful at your job?
7. What 3 leadership character traits do you feel you need to work on?
8. Describe your most challenging day as a principal. How did you overcome that day?
9. Describe your most rewarding day as a principal?
10. If you could wave a magic wand and make a change at your school what would it be?
11. If another school called you to become a principal at their school would you take the offer? Explain.

### *On supports received*

1. Describe the process from the time you were hired to your six months as a new principal at this school?
2. Who has supported you the most during your novice principal years?
3. Was this person assigned to you or did you get to select them?
4. Does upper management assign you a supervisor or mentor? Has this person been providing you with support?
5. What specific support has your supervisor or mentor offered you?
6. What specific support do you seek from your supervisor or mentor?
7. How do you and your mentor/supervisor communicate? How often do you communicate?
8. Do you feel comfortable sharing your darkest days with your supervisor or mentor?
9. Has support lessened since your first year as a principal with this organization?
10. What is one thing your mentor or supervisor taught you during your first year as a principal that still resonates with you today?
11. Describe effective support from a supervisor/mentor.
12. Do you feel the support you have received from your mentor/supervisor has been effective? Explain.
13. What advice would you offer to your mentor/supervisor for ways to support you?
14. Do you feel that support for novice charter school principal is necessary? Explain.
15. What advice would you give to aspiring novice charter school principals?
16. What other supports have you received?

## Appendix B: Observation Tool

Shadow Observation Tool

Participant:

Date:

Stakeholder Group:

Observation Start Time \_\_\_\_\_ Observation End Time \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Script	Stakeholder Script

### Appendix C: Mentee-Mentor Observation Tool

Participant:

Date:

Observation Start Time \_\_\_\_\_ Observation End Time \_\_\_\_\_

Mentee Script	Mentor Script

## **Appendix D: Statement of Original Work**

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously- researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

### **Statement of academic integrity.**

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

### **Explanations:**

#### ***What does “fraudulent” mean?***

“Fraudulent” work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one’s own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate’s final work without full and complete documentation.

#### ***What is “unauthorized” assistance?***

“Unauthorized assistance” refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another’s work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University- Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.
2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*

*Monique Woodley*

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Digital Signature

Monique Woodley

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Name (Typed)

March 12, 2018

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Date