AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR'S ROLE IN THE DESIGN, SUPPORT, AND EVALUATION OF INDUCTION PROGRAMS IN RURAL, PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS IN NORTHWEST MISSOURI

A Dissertation

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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by

Tamara G. Lynn

Dr. Nissa Ingraham, Dissertation Supervisor

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled:

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR'S ROLE IN THE DESIGN, SUPPORT, AND EVALUATION OF INDUCTION PROGRAMS IN RURAL, PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS IN NORTHWEST MISSOURI

presented by Tamara G. Lynn

a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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Dr. Nissa Ingraham

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Dr. Timothy Wall

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Dr. Shantel Farnan

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Dr. W. Daniel Gordon

DEDICATION

To my Mom and Dad: You have always been models of hard work and integrity in all you do. I am blessed to have these characteristics shaped in me by you both. You have shown me how to set goals and to work relentlessly to achieve them to create the life I want rather than settling. Thank you for showing me how to "work hard, play hard." I can say I have finally mastered it! I hope my dedication to this work makes you proud. I love you and I am blessed by you.

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ABSTRACT

Novice teacher induction programs impacted teacher fulfillment and confidence (Coffey, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2003), and high-quality induction improved effectiveness of instruction and improved student learning (Brownell et al., 2010; Potemski et al., 2014; Strong, 2005). Administrators are challenged in their responsibilities to develop teachers, manage turnover, and retain teachers (Chan et al., 2019). This qualitative study provides awareness of the administrator's role, using the conceptual underpinnings of novice teacher induction, rural education, and leadership in public K-12 school districts. Fifty-nine school districts in Northwest Missouri served as the participant pool for surveys, interviews, and a document analysis of districts' induction materials. The lived experiences of administrators provided insight into their roles in the design, support, and evaluation of induction programs, and formal and informal roles emerged as the themes. Recommendations for practitioners included: (a) the design of a formal evaluation tool to make data-driven decisions (Newcomer et al., 2015), (b) a review of literature surrounding successful induction programs to guide decision making (Kaufman, 2007), and (c) a design of formal activities to reduce novice teachers' stress (Coffey, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2003) and to further create a sense of belonging within their new school districts (Schein, 2004). Recommendations for scholars include further investigation surrounding: (a) how administrators transfer the culture of growth mindedness (Dweck, 2016) during the novice teacher induction process, (b) how the administrators' modeled behavior supports novice teachers' social identities and their sense of belonging (Schein, 2004), and (c) tools available to administrators for formal evaluation of novice teacher induction (Newcomer et al., 2015).

SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION TO THE DISSERTATION-IN-PRACTICE

Research surrounding novice teacher induction programs have been found to impact novice teacher satisfaction and confidence levels (Coffey, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2003). Furthermore, Brownell et al. (2010), Potemski et al. (2014), and Strong (2005) found novice teacher induction programs made a positive impact on novice teacher instructional practices, the effectiveness of instruction, and students' learning outcomes. This section will provide an overview of the background of the study, the problem being investigated, and the purpose of the study. Additionally, this section introduces the research question being investigated, the theoretical framework and conceptual underpinnings applied to provide the lenses for viewing the study elements, and the design and methodology of the study. Lastly, this section will detail the efforts made by the researcher to support quality research, the key terms used in the investigation and the literature, and the significance of the study, which justified the researcher's completion of the investigation.

Background of the Study

Mentoring is a broadly used term to describe a personal or professional relationship, a model process, or a training method in many professions, and is defined in *Merriam Webster* (2021) as "the influence, guidance, or direction given by a mentor" (para. 1). Williams et al. (1991) explained, "The term 'mentor' first appeared in Homer's *Odyssey* and was associated with the role of modeling a standard/style of behavior" (p. 2). In the *Odyssey*, Mentor was an old man friend to Odysseus and was charged with looking over Odysseus' son but failed to successfully do so leading to the goddess Athena to disguise herself as Mentor (Roberts, 1999; Turner, 2004). In this role, Athena

served as the parent and peer role model (Knackendoffel et al., 2018), provided reassurance and a plan for handling predicaments (Roberts, 1999), and was an "expert, diagnostician, appraiser, and advocate" (Knackendoffel et al., 2018, p. 77). This led to the adoption of the term in many languages (Roberts, 1999). This idea of mentoring has continued to evolve throughout history to meet various personal and professional needs and industry standards (American Institutes for Research, 2015).

Apprenticeships are another method used for teaching someone with less experience in the professional arena (ACTE, 2019; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2020; Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Like the role Athena played teaching the son to handle predicaments through experiences, apprenticeship is modeling ways of learning through experience (Merriam & Bierema, 2014), where "apprentices work with their mentors and learn craftsmanship, not through language but by observation, imitation, and practice" (Nonaka, 1994, p. 19). Apprenticeship training is one the oldest methods of training (U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, 2021), dating back to early Egyptian and Babylonian times (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2020), and is historically a part of the fabric of our country. Apprenticeship has a long history in the United States, dating back to early colonial days with George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Paul Revere being among the first recognized apprentices (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2021). As early as the beginning of the United States in 1776, documentation of the use of apprenticeships were recognized as a successful method for teaching trade skills to boys, while girls were prepared in a similar fashion to take on teaching roles within their communities (Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), 2019). Apprenticeship training was rooted in agriculture

and the craft guilds, resulting in training in jobs, such as blacksmiths, seamstresses, and bakers, with oversight given to the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training under the Department of Labor in 1937 (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2020). After World War II, apprenticeships began to expand into firefighting, police, and other health and safety professions (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2021). "Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally-recognized credential" (U.S. Department of Labor, 2020, p. 1), and, in 2021, there were 28,000 recognized apprenticeship programs across the U.S. (U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, 2021). Apprenticeships consist of paid jobs, while apprentices complete work-based learning under supervised and experienced mentors combined with classroom learning in which apprentices complete portable, national credentials within industries (U.S. Department of Labor, 2020).

Apprentices are adults working to earn competitive wages during their training programs (ACTE, 2019), which consist of a training period of two to five years (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2020). Apprenticeships are used primarily in the skilled trades with the following criteria: (1) learned in a practical, structured, and systematic way; (2) clearly identified in the industry and through industry standards; and (3) workers acquired manual or technical labor skills and knowledge (U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, 2021). The length and complexity of programs often vary based on the trade or occupation, but the five key components have been consistent among all apprenticeship programs: (a) paid work, (b) on the job training, (c) classroom

instruction, (d) mentoring, and (e) nationally recognized credentials (U.S. Department of Labor, 2020). Apprenticeship training is unique in its approach because this training combines paid, work-based training under experienced mentors, and is combined with classroom learning, which leads to national credentials in the career pathway (U.S. Department of Labor, 2020). The U.S. is more globally competitive now than in early colonial days, emphasizing a need for more skilled workers to bolster our economy (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2020). Pratt's (1998) Apprenticeship Perspective endorsed andragogy and reflective practices, allowing apprentices to become experts in their fields through active, social, and authentic learning processes, and served as a theoretical understanding for contemporary adult training in various professions. Moreover, Nonaka, (1994) supported apprenticeship by writing, "Individuals accumulate tacit knowledge through direct 'hands-on' experience" (p. 21). The current education system uses the apprenticeship model along with other components from various training models to train student teachers (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2020).

Apprenticeships share similarities with vocational training (ACTE, 2019). Contemporary vocational training, known as Career and Technical Education (CTE), established through the Smith-Hughes National Vocational Act of 1917 (ACTE, 2019) to meet the nation's social and economic needs and currently, has focused programs of study in 16 career clusters, and more than 79 career pathways. It is estimated 92% of high school students have participated in CTE, in addition to millions who participated in post-secondary CTE experiences (ACTE, 2021). The current goal of CTE has been to train youth and adults in relevant career paths, which prepare them for high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand careers (ACTE, 2021). The foundations of apprenticeship training have

been embedded within CTE programs and have been considered “a flexible training model that can be customized to meet the needs of businesses across multiple industries including Information Technology, Healthcare, Hospitality, Cybersecurity, Construction, Energy, Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering, Transportation, and Financial Services” (U.S. Department of Labor, 2020, p. 2).

Educator growth and learning should be considered a developmental process, according to Kardos (2003). Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory supported the use of Pratt’s (1998) Apprenticeship Perspective principles in education, because it affirmed the impacts of the personal, behavioral, and environmental influences often built into induction programs for novice teachers. Nonaka (1994) emphasized the importance of high-quality experiences in knowledge creation, which might have redefined what is considered the “nature of the job” (p. 21). Schein’s (2004) work on organizational culture sets the stage for creating a learning culture within organizations defined by the values, beliefs and assumptions, norms and behaviors, and the aspects of how people think, feel, and function as a part of the organization (Gill, 2010). Furthermore, Gill (2010) wrote this culture was “passed on to new employees by what they are told and what they observe in the behavior, symbols, and documents around them” (p. 5).

Induction programs have helped novice teachers become successful in their new roles by teaching them about the profession, tools of the trade, and models used by school district officials (Kaufmann, 2007). Potemski et al. (2014) wrote, “An induction program is a larger system of support that often includes mentoring but also includes additional supports, such as help with curriculum planning and professional development” (p.1), and Darling-Hammond and DePaoli (2020) wrote these supportive community of practice

helped to better meet student needs. A sense of community is created within the induction environment and engages the novice teacher in the school culture, allowing the novice teacher to model the cultural and social sense of belonging for students (Dogan, 2017), which is essential for developing caring relationships (Leone, 2009). Furthermore, targeted training for novice teachers through induction programs supported the new teachers' growth, effectiveness, and retention (Billingsley et al., 2019; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Kaufmann, 2007) and connected pre-service training to the realities of teaching (Brownell et al., 2010; Eisenman & Thornton, 1999). An induction program typically includes the following attributes: "high-quality mentoring, ongoing professional development, access to an external network of beginning teachers, and standards-based evaluations of beginning teachers" (Kaufmann, 2007). These attributes also have been connected to strong coaching mentors, innovative research practices, and collegial discussion amongst mentors, mentees, and administrators (Watkins, 2005).

Mentoring is a common teacher training method found in most countries (Yirci, 2017), and Billingsley et al. (2009) found mentoring to be the most common induction practice used in school districts. Turner (2004) wrote:

> The word 'mentor' soon came to represent a wise and responsible tutor – an experienced person who advises, guides, teaches, inspires, challenges, and corrects, and serves as a role model. Mentoring is now a widely used and effective tool for personal and organizational development. (para. 1)

Healy and Weichert (1990) defined mentoring as "a dynamic, reciprocal relationship in a work environment between an advanced career incumbent (mentor) and a beginner (protégé) aimed at promoting the career development of both" (p. 17). Mentoring serves

as one component within induction programs, but the two terms often have been used interchangeably, and teacher induction has taken the form of mentoring without a full induction program (Potemski et al., 2014).

Many research studies have been conducted on urban school induction programs or have focused on novice teacher perceptions of mentoring (Cornelius et al., 2018; Cullingford, 2016; Potemski et al., 2014; Yirci, 2017). Literature abounds around administrators' roles as leaders with multiple responsibilities (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bolman & Deal, 2017), but has been lacking a targeted focus on the administrator's perspective and role in induction programs (Brock & Grady, 1998; Protheroe, 2006, Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Additionally, there has been a need to understand how administrators designed, supported, and implemented novice teacher induction programs in rural Missouri. The foundational principles of mentoring, apprenticeship, and vocational training have evolved over time to shape novice teacher induction programs, necessitating a greater understanding of the possible evolution of the administrator's role in induction programs to meet novice teachers' needs.

Statement of the Problem

The problem this researcher sought to investigate was the lack of information around the administrator's role in how novice teacher induction programs are designed, supported, and implemented at the school district level in rural education. Mathur et al., (2013) found:

> "Research supports previous findings that the effectiveness of mentoring partnerships depends on (a) the frequency of contact with beginning teachers and (b) the matching of new teachers to veteran teachers with similar teaching

assignments who are located in the same school building (Fletcher et al., 2008; Parker et al., 2009; Strong, 2005; Whitaker, 2000)" (p. 161).

Moreover, there has been a lack of research surrounding the process administrators underwent to design induction programs. Dogan (2017) writes culture creates "the best environment for facilitating teaching and learning programs and also engage staff with the school" (p. 256), and the administrator has many responsibilities for instilling this culture in people. Furthermore, Black (2004) wrote many administrators recognized the excitement of novice teachers as they started their new careers, but found they were "ill-equipped" (p. 46), and novice teachers are expected to fulfill the same demands as experienced teachers, indicating a gap in the literature surrounding the administrator's role in the culture of the learning environment within the novice teacher induction process. The types of supports offered to novice teachers in urban areas have been investigated (Israel et al., 2014), however, indicators of quality induction programs consistently addressing the needs of rural novice teachers have not been identified, leaving novice teachers from rural areas reporting feelings of being unprepared to perform in their job (Irinaga-Bistolas et al., 2007). Mathur et al. (2013) wrote about the value of collecting district level data to evaluate mentor/mentees' assignments, roles, and structures within the induction process. The problem of practice was the lack of information surrounding the administrator's role in the design of induction programs, the support administrators give to induction programs, and how administrators evaluate novice teacher induction practices in rural education at the district level. For the purposes of this study, the term "induction" was used in place of the term "mentoring" utilizing

Potemski et al.'s (2014) definition of induction programs, which included mentoring as one component of the overall induction of novice teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, bounded case study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020) was to further the existing literature surrounding the administrator's role in the design, support, and evaluation of induction programs in rural, public K-12 schools in Northwest Missouri. Newcomer et al. (2015) wrote, "Leaders and managers also want to make evidence-based policy and management decisions, informed by data evaluating past program performance" (p. 7), and underscored the importance of administrators making data driven decisions in leadership. Darling-Hammond and DePaoli (2020) wrote teacher stress, burnout, and inadequate skills contribute to teacher attrition and shortages, furthermore, "A strong, stable, diverse, and well-prepared teaching and leadership workforce is perhaps the most important ingredient" impacting the school district culture (p. 10). Furthermore, MacNeil et al (2009) wrote the administrator focusing on the school culture development is essential for enhancing teacher morale. Considering the impacts of barriers uniquely experienced within rural education, administrator decision-making is influenced when only one building administrator is often responsible for all decision making and personnel support. Protheroe (2006) determined administrators played roles in the participation in novice teacher induction programs, but the extent of the administrator's participation, particularly as it applies to the rural school administrator, was not investigated. Therefore, the problem this study will address is the lack of research surrounding K-12 administrator's role in the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher induction programs in rural, public K-12 schools in Northwest Missouri.

Research Question

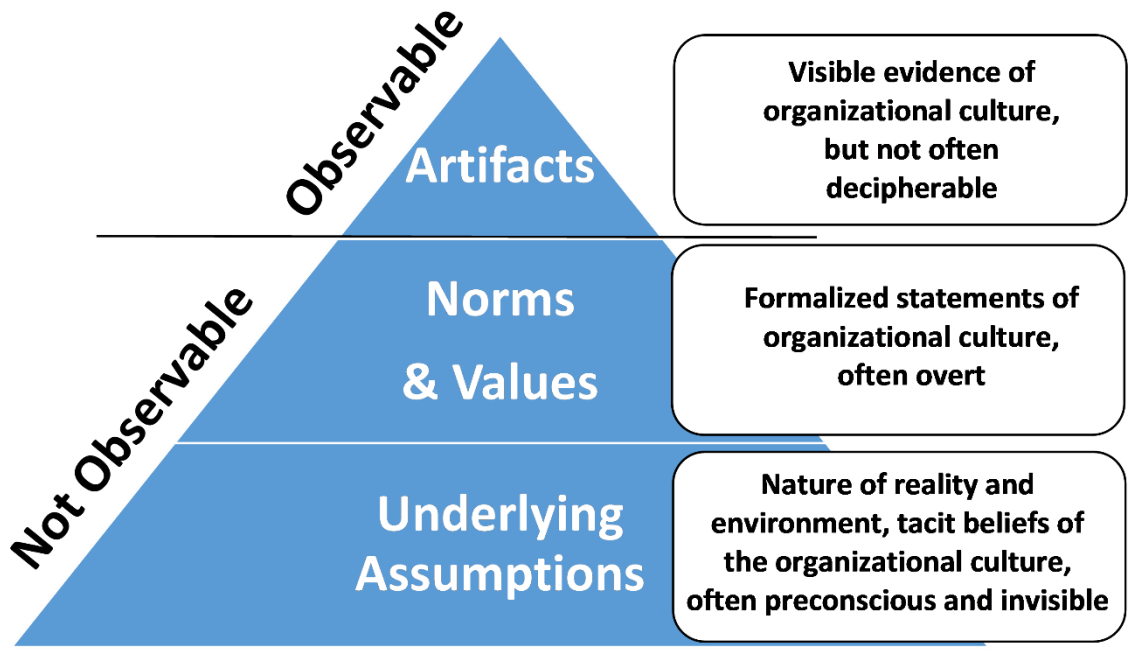
The overarching research question guiding this study was: What is the role of the school administrator in the design, support, and evaluation induction programs in rural, public K-12 schools in Northwest Missouri?

Theoretical Framework

Culture in an organization is an ever-changing phenomenon all-encompassing impacted by behavior and interactions, while also affecting the norms and behavior of those within organizations (Schein, 2004). Stoll (1998) defines culture as manifests in customs, rituals, symbols, stories, and other artifacts, and Kutsyuruba et al. (2020) write, "Humans learn to organize their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors based on shared norms, beliefs, values, customs, and traditions that are common to a group of people" (p. 692). Culture is abstract and difficult to define but can be a practical means for creating profound change in an organization. Schein (2004) defined organizations as "social units" (p. 11), with defining characteristics and shared histories. Furthermore, Schein (2004) identified categories used to describe culture from a multitude of research on organizations, "Observed behavior regularities, group norms, espoused values, formal philosophy, rules of the game, climate, embedded skills, habits of thinking, mental models, and linguistic paradigms, shared meanings, root metaphors or integrating symbols, and formal rituals and celebrations" (p. 13). The critical elements shared in organizations' cultures were the following: "Structural stability, depth, breadth, and patterning or integration" (Schein, 2004, p. 14). Schein's (2004) Levels of Culture (see Figure 1) were used in this study to provide a lens for viewing organizational culture, the evidence, and the representative symbols of culture.

Figure 1

Schein's Levels of Culture



Note. This figure was modified from Schein's (2004) *Organizational Culture and Leadership.*

Conceptual Underpinnings

Three conceptual underpinnings were used to provide a framework for this investigation: (a) Novice Teacher Induction, (b) Rural Public K-12 Education, and (c) Leadership in K-12 Public Education.

Novice Teacher Induction

The detailed process of learning and teaching novice teachers to promote the navigation of the profession is referred to as novice teacher induction (Brownell, et al., 2010; Wong, 2005). Black (2004) wrote, "Beginning teachers do not enter the classroom as finished products" (p. 46). The novice teacher induction process, which may include mentoring as an interchangeable term to describe the process (Potemski et al., 2014), is

used to help new teachers develop a sense of belonging (Schein, 2004) within the educational system (Cullingford, 2016). Induction programs have been multi-year processes for training and acculturation (Wong, 2005) used to introduce new teachers to the teaching profession, tools, and models needed to be successful in their new careers (Kaufmann, 2007), and a system of induction is required for novice teachers in forty-eight states (Hirsch et al., 2009). Improved quality of instruction, effectiveness of instruction, and improved student learning are all outcomes associated with high quality induction programs (Brownell et al., 2010; Potemski et al., 2014; Strong, 2005). Furthermore, induction programs have been found to impact the novice teachers' levels of fulfillment and confidence (Coffey, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2003), and teachers in induction programs had an increased likelihood of participating in future professional development opportunities (Carr & Evans, 2006). Varying definitions for defining induction, in addition to the impact of induction programs on student outcomes and teacher satisfaction point toward a need for a deeper look into novice teacher induction practices (Brownell et al., 2010; Potemski et al., 2014; Strong, 2005; Wong, 2005).

Rural Public K-12 Education

For the purposes of this study, Ratcliffe et al.'s (2016) definition, written on behalf of the U.S. Census Bureau, were used for the definition of rural education. Rural regions, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, are the remaining spaces not included within urban areas, which consisted of areas with more than 50,000 people and suburban areas of more than 2,500 people, thus, rural areas in the U.S. consisted of places with less than 2,500 people counted in the population (Ratcliffe et al., 2016; Robson et al., 2019). Other definitions of rural areas have existed in the literature, so it was recommended

further research in this area occur which included an evaluation of the definition of ‘rural’ before attempting to replicate this study.

Rural schools can be found across the United States (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021), and one out of every four students in the U.S. attend schools in rural areas (Bellwether Education Partners, 2021). Rural, public K-12 education experienced distinctive challenges different than their urban equivalents (Bellwether Education Partners, 2021; Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). Challenges of rural schools contrasting those schools in urban centers include: (a) greater gaps in achievement of white students (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021), (b) lower educational attainment (Robson, et al., 2019), (c) tight budgets, (d) low staff salaries, (e) scarce resources, (f) underfunded districts, (g) limited access to advanced courses such as Advanced Placement classes (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021), (h) lower staff salaries (Showalter et al., 2019), and (i) challenges in rural areas due to the lack of social activities for young teachers (Mcardle, 2019). Furthermore, challenges also occurred in the areas of: (a) teacher turnover when teachers work for a few years to gain experience before moving on (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021), (b) teachers spending more time planning lessons (Desjardens et al., 2021), (c) isolation and limited collaboration (Tooley & Prescott, 2021), (d) teacher resignations at a rate of 25% after three years and 39% after five years (Heller, 2004), (e) uncertified substitutes filling teaching shortages (Banghart, 2021; Mcardle, 2019; Tieken & Montgomery, 2021), and (f) need for professional development to support the diverse needs of learners (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). Berry et al. (2011) found these factors may have increased the attrition rates for teachers in rural areas and identified areas where professional development was needed.

Literature abounds surrounding rural communities and rural education. The research base highlighting additional needs in rural areas, which impacted the communities and schools include: (a) declining rural populations, (b) shortages of qualified teachers, (c) internet access issues, (d) racial disparities in student discipline (Mitchell, 2021), (e) lack of availability of jobs, (f) public transportation, (g) healthcare, (h) high-speed internet infrastructure, and (i) fresh food (Bellwether Education Partners, 2021). In addition, other social issues were common in rural areas and included: (a) poverty rates at one in four children increasing the need for resources such as free and reduced lunches, social, and medical services (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021), (b) access to early childhood learning and childcare (Hartman, 2021), (c) limited transportation options (Hartman, 2021), (d) limited access to fresh food at grocery stores and healthcare (Mcardle, 2019), (e) lack of mental health support (Hartman, 2021), and (f) similar rates of abuse, domestic violence, and food shortages with fewer resources available to address the issues (Hartman, 2021). These challenges accentuated the need for further foci on rural, public K-12 education, and indicating a need for professional development tailored to the rural educator (Desjardens et al., 2021).

Leadership in K-12 Public Education

Leaders in K-12 public education take on many roles in school districts, and there can be much variance in job titles and responsibilities of educational leaders across the country. For the purposes of this study, the research will focus on leaders in K-12 public education more specifically those in administrator roles with direct charge over novice teacher induction programs. School building administrators in the U.S. assume many responsibilities which have included: (a) strategy and planning, (b) student instruction,

(c) budgeting, (d) law, (e) personnel management, (f) community relations, and (g) other school business (Leithwood, 2007; Marzano et al., 2005). In addition, Barbara and Grady (2007) found leader responsibilities included even more tasks, such as (a) determining the mission and vision of the school, (b) motivating employees, and (c) making decisions, and Dogan (2017) wrote the school culture influences the way administrators "think, feel, and behave" (p. 253). Within these responsibilities, building administrators reported challenges leading teachers to develop their professional skills, high turnover, retention issues, certification issues, and lack of training and professional development to fit the needs of teachers (Chan, et al., 2019). Despite these challenges, Chan et al., (2018) found building administrators found it professionally fulfilling to witness teachers growing professionally, reported it was a "great achievement" (p. 52) and "satisfying to see good teachers that you hire really do a good job and become effective educators" (p. 52), and Pearson (2015) found a solid organizational culture provided a structure to affect employee behavior. Furthermore, school leaders in rural areas had more responsibilities than their urban peers due to the shared responsibilities amongst multiple administrators in larger school districts (Tooley & Prescott, 2021).

The impact of the multitude of responsibilities on administrators in the U.S. (Leithwood, 2007; Marzano et al., 2005) has been known, awareness has surrounded the challenges in rural schools which were further impacted by shortages of qualified teachers in rural areas (Mitchell, 2021), focuses on the administrators' responsibilities to create learning environments which develop teachers and increased student achievement was understood (Watkins, 2005), and the impact of creating and influencing the school culture has been studied (Dogan, 2017). All of these indicated the need for further

research surrounding K-12 administrators' roles in the design, support, and evaluation of rural novice teacher induction programs.

Design of the Study

A qualitative bounded case study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020) served as the foundation for the examination of the administrator's role in the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher induction in rural, public K-12 school districts in the region of Northwest Missouri. This design allows for the understanding of the administrator's role in novice teacher induction practices and provided voice to the lived experiences and professional practices of current practitioners in rural Northwest Missouri (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). According to Creswell (2014), Merriam and Tisdell (2016), and Mertens (2020) in a qualitative study, achieving trustworthiness as a researcher should be at the forefront of the design and implementation of the study. Trustworthiness in qualitative research is made up of four components: (a) credibility, or the confidence in the study, and was achieved through triangulation of the three data sources; (b) transferability, the ability to apply the study's findings to contexts, situations, and populations; (c) confirmability, the neutrality of the study, free of bias, addressing ethical issues through the use of audits and member checking; and (d) dependability, which allowed for another researcher to repeat the study and to discover consistent findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Each of these four components of trustworthiness are addressed in the following sections.

Setting

The setting of this study was rural, Northwest Missouri and consisted of administrators from school districts served by region five of the Northwest Regional

Professional Development Center (NWRPDC) (NWRPDC Region Five School Sites, 2021). Robson et al. (2019) wrote 30% of Missouri's student population lived in rural counties. The U.S. Census Bureau defined rural as areas not urban, and the definition of urban was applied to towns of 2,500 people or more, and those with fewer than 2,500 were considered rural (Ratcliffe et al., 2016). Using the Ratcliffe et al. (2016) definition of a rural school, fifty-nine of the schools served by NWRPDC met the population threshold to be considered a rural school (See Table 1). The researcher conducted the research digitally or face-to-face based on the preference of the participants.

Table 1

School District Participant Pool and Town Population Size

School District	Town	Town Population
Albany R-III	Albany	1,679
Avenue City R-IX	Cosby	124
Braymer C-4	Braymer	737
Breckenridge R-I	Breckenridge	258
Buchanan Co R-IV	DeKalb	220
Cainsville R-I	Cainsville	283
Cowgill R-VI	Cowgill	168
Craig R-III	Craig	105
East Buchanan C-1	Gower	1,526
Fairfax R-III	Fairfax	648
Gallatin R-V	Gallatin	1,821
Gilman City R-IV	Gilman City	329
Grundy Co R-V	Galt	168
Hale R-I	Hale	375
Hamilton R-II	Hamilton	1,690
Jefferson C-123	Conception Junction	198
King City R-I	King City	799
Kingston 42	Kingston	290
Laredo R-VII	Laredo	156
Lathrop R-II	Lathrop	2,086
Livingston Co R-III	Chula	195

Marceline R-V	Marceline	2,123
Maysville R-I	Maysville	1,095
Meadville R-IV	Meadville	415
Mid-Buchanan R-VI	Faucett	831
Mirable C-I	Polo	509
Mound City R-II	Mound City	1,004
New York R-IV	Hamilton	1,690
Newtown-Harris R-III	Newtown	113
Nodaway-Holt R-VII	Graham	171
Norborne R-VIII	Norborne	634
North Andrew R-VI	Rosendale	143
North Daviess R-III	Jameson	73
North Harrison R-III	Eagleville	275
North Mercer R-III	Mercer	263
North Nodaway R-VI	Hopkins	532
North Platte Co. R-I	Dearborn	496
Northeast Nodaway R-V	Ravenwood	440
Orrick R-XI	Orrick	753
Osborn R-O	Osborn	374
Pattonsburg R-II	Pattonsburg	314
Polo R-VII	Polo	509
Princeton R-V	Princeton	1,166
Ridgeway R-V	Ridgeway	372
Rock Port R-II	Rock Port	1,278
South Holt R-I	Oregon	837
South Nodaway R-IV	Barnard	221
Southwest Livingston R-I	Ludlow	111
Spickard R-II	Spickard	222
Stanberry R-II	Stanberry	1,129
Stewartsville C-5	Stewartsville	733
Tarkio R-I	Tarkio	1,508
Tina-Avalon R-II	Tina	139
Tri-County R-VII	Jamesport	559
Union Star R-II	Union Star	380
West Nodaway R-I	Burlington Junction	537
West Platte Co. R-II	Weston	1,641
Winston R-VI	Winston	229
Worth Co R-III	Grant City	859

Note. This table demonstrates the participant pool of rural school districts as defined by Ratcliffe et al. (2016) which are situated in towns of 2,500 people or less. The school district may include other smaller surrounding communities, municipalities, townships, or boroughs, though all are smaller than those housing the identified school district.

Participants

Participants in the study were selected as a purposeful, convenience sample (Fink, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020), which included school administrators from the fifty-nine school districts identified as rural in the Northwest Missouri region (NWRPDC Region Five School Sites, 2021) willing to participate in the study to reflect on current and past novice teacher induction practices within their school district. The NWRPDC was a regional branch of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) with a mission to "build the capacity of educators and schools to maximize student performance through high quality professional development" (NWRPDC Welcome, 2021, para. 1), and their partnership helped facilitate the initial communication efforts with the researcher and participants. Participants were administrators from elementary, middle, high school, or the district level, and some participants supervised some overlapping combination of grade levels, such as K-12 or middle/high school. The method of participation varied based on the participants' experiences and consisted of a combination of surveys (see Appendix C), interviews (see Appendix F), and novice teacher induction program document analysis conducted by the researcher. Initial contact was made through an email (see Appendix A), using a contact list provided by the director of the NWRPDC (NWRPDC, 2021).

The initial contact email contained the link to the electronic survey. The electronic survey also collected demographics such as the average years of administrator experience, in addition to building level supervised, and other factors which helped frame the understanding of the administrator's role (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Once administrators are identified as willing participants, further contact was made through email (see Appendix D), phone calls (see Appendix E), and/or face-to-face contact to schedule and to conduct interviews, and to receive documents for the document analysis. Participation was voluntary, and approval from a district level administrator or members of participating schools' boards of education were needed for some of the administrators to participate. Convenience sampling from the population was used due to the researcher's desire to investigate rural school districts in Northwest Missouri and the availability of the participants within those districts, and data collected through the survey, interviews, and document analysis continued to be collected until saturation was achieved (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). The sample size was determined by the ability of the administrator to participate and their roles or lack thereof in the district level induction programs. Informed consent (see Appendix B) was received from all participants, which included the option to opt out of the study at any time (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020).

Data Collection

A qualitative approach was used to collect data in this investigation. Data collection involved electronic surveys of administrators, administrator interviews, and analysis of documents identified by administrators reflecting the various districts' induction practices (Creswell, 2014; Newcomer et al., 2015; Mertens, 2020). Efforts to

support ethical data collection were made by following the process standards outlined in the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Code of Ethics (2011). In this study, achieving trustworthiness through the data collection process was essential (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Trustworthiness in qualitative research is made up of four components: Credibility, Transferability, Confirmability, and Dependability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020).

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research is the confidence in the study created by using three or more data sources (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020), and the researcher's self-awareness was a critical component (Koch, 1994). Thorough engagement with the participants and data sources created support for the credibility of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Mertens (2020) wrote the use of three data sources provided trustworthiness and validity to research findings through triangulation of the data. Credibility was addressed through the triangulation of data, and the use of three data sources verified all three sources supported the same findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). The use of three data sources in the form of electronic surveys of administrators, administrator interviews, and analysis of documents identified by administrators reflecting the various school districts' induction practices provided triangulation to ensure a credibility of the study and supported the comprehensive understanding of the problem of practice being investigated (Patton, 1999). Following the recommendations of Yin (2014), the researcher found the document analysis did confirm the details found in the other data sources. The document analysis included the following novice teacher induction artifacts from districts: (a) policy manuals, (b) training manuals,

and (c) any other resources used for novice teacher induction as identified by their building administrators. For some participants, the school administrators or board of education were the gatekeepers to the various documents, so the researcher communicated via email, phone, digitally, and/or face-to-face during the interview processes to obtain the necessary documents (Newcomer et al., 2015). The documents were reviewed alongside the survey and interview data to determine if support of induction programs aligned with the perspectives of the administration and allowed for triangulation and added credibility to the investigation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Additionally, credibility was addressed through member checking throughout the data collection process, ensuring accuracy, as the researcher strived to make meaning and sense of the data collected from participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020; Seidman, 2019).

Transferability

Transferability is the degree in which the investigation can be copied, repeated, and applied through the methodology and findings to reproduce comparable results in other contexts, situations, and populations (Mertens, 2020). A thorough description of the research context, assumptions, positionality, and limitations occurred through detailed methodology, quotes in the findings, and a rich, thick description of the context of the study to support the transferability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). The study context and methodology were clearly outlined to address the transferability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020), which allows the readers of this study to make connections and to transfer their understanding to their own professional practices and contexts. The context of the study is outlined in detail in Section Two. Thick, rich descriptions describe

the methodology, the behavior of the researcher, and the context to make meaning for the reader (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Furthermore, saturation amongst all data collection added to the transferability of the findings and implications for both scholarly and practitioner practice (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020).

Confirmability

Confirmability in qualitative research is represented through the neutrality of the study, ensuring the study was free of bias and addressed ethical issues (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Ethical research standards, as outlined by the American Educational Research Association (AERA Code of Ethics, 2011), were followed to ensure the participants' voices were heard without imposition from the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Additionally, audits were conducted to review transcripts, field notes, and coding procedures to ensure greater confirmability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020; Saldana, 2015; Seidman, 2019). The first source of data were an electronic survey used to collect initial perspectives from administrators about the induction practices in their district and identified perceived gaps in the programming (Fink, 2017; McDavid et al., 2019). The survey was sent via email directly to district administrators as identified as a rural district using the list of administrators provided by the NWRPDC (NWRPDC Region Five School Sites, 2021) using *Qualtrics*^{XM} *(*Qualtrics, Provo, UT, 2020*)* with a plan to receive the results used for analysis within fourteen days.

Informed consent was obtained from participants through the embedded agreement within the first page of the survey, allowing participants to opt in to continue or to opt out of the study, and no participant was able to take part without giving consent

(Fink, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). The informed consent outlined the potential benefits and risks for the administrators participating in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Demographics were collected to determine factors which may affect the administrators' experiences (Fink, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). The survey consisted of semi-structured and open-ended questions (Fink, 2017). Because the survey was sent to the participant group, there was no representative sample. In this qualitative study the ultimate measure of confirmability was to reach saturation (Fink, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). In addition to the survey collection, structured interviews of participants were used to capture the lived experiences of the administrators surrounding their induction program role (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017; Seidman, 2019). Participants for the administrator interviews were selected purposefully to allow the researcher to flesh out further details and experiences gleaned from the survey responses identified by the researcher as those of interest (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). Seidman's (2019) guidelines were used to design the interview questions to ensure they were bias free and open ended which supported the confirmability of the questions. Participants were informed the interview would last 30-45 minutes (Seidman, 2019). Informed consent was obtained again from participants during the interview process through a written form with their signature, and participants could choose to not answer questions or to opt out of the study at any time (Fink, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). To address issues with confirmability, verbatim transcripts were used, and member checks were conducted following all interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020; Seidman, 2019). The researcher audio recorded the interviews and then created verbatim transcripts using a media transcription service, creating an audit

trail for the study. Member checking followed the interviews to ensure participants' voices were heard accurately as the data were processed to make meaning (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020; Seidman, 2019). Confidentiality of participants was maintained throughout the study through anonymity of the survey responses, and the use of pseudonyms for participants and school districts' names (AERA Code of Ethics, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020), and quotes were used to make connections in the results by using rich data (Elo et al., 2014). Lastly, data were protected and stored, using a double-authenticated password-protected online storage system to prevent the distribution of confidential research materials (AERA, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2017; Seidman, 2019).

Dependability

Dependability in the study is an important supporting factor to the overall trustworthiness of the study as it allows for another researcher to repeat the same study and to have consistent findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Because of the social and changing nature of qualitative research, it was important to fully outline the setting and design to protect the dependability of the study, ensuring accuracy and consistency, allowing for stepwise replication and through a thorough and detailed coding procedure (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The replication of the process of data collection and the coding procedure ensured bias and error was reduced, so the researcher was not making assumptions or implications not founded within the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability audits were conducted to ensure accuracy as patterns appeared in the data and the patterns were documented appropriately, allowing other

researchers to replicate the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). The coding procedure for this study is further outlined in the data analysis section.

Data Analysis

All data were qualitative in nature, and a process was used to ensure research ethics were followed, and trustworthiness was achieved (AERA, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). A process for coding the documents and interview notes allowed the researcher to identify themes as they appeared from the data (Creswell, 2014). Explicit logic was used, and a chain of evidence was documented, outlining how data were tracked to the source to ensure confirmability and allow for the replication of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Inductive coding through the procedure of open coding (line-by-line) was used for the survey, as well as data from the interviews and document analyses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020; Saldana, 2015). The data from the survey were coded first, allowing the researcher to determine the interview questions which needed to be expanded upon. McDavid et al. (2017) wrote the flexible and fluid nature of the data collection, and the analysis process allows for "eliciting ideas on interpretation of existing information, perspectives that may have been missed, or ideas about how trends and the internal and external context affect both unmet needs and possible solutions" (p. 78). Following the open coding, the responses to all three data sources were axially coded, which is the process of identifying relationships or linking data together through categories and subcategories and resulted in the identification of categories of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020; Saldana, 2015). Lastly, the data were organized using constant comparative methods into themes which appeared in the coding process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldana, 2015). This

process of coding the data were an ongoing and continuous process until saturation was reached, producing a rich, thick description of the investigation using quotes in the findings, which added to the credibility of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Efforts to Support Quality of Research

In this qualitative study, efforts to support quality research and achieve trustworthiness were addressed in several ways, striving to meet the four requirements of qualitative study: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) confirmability, (d) dependability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained before data collection began to meet ethical research standards (AERA, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). The researcher made efforts towards supporting quality research by addressing potential limitations of the study, delimitations used to enhance the quality control, assumptions made by the reader, and bias of the researcher which may have influenced the outcomes of the study. Mertens (2020) defined limitations are influences outside of the control of the researcher, such as conditions which influenced the methodology used and conclusions made from the data collected in the study. In any study, the researcher must make choices as to the boundaries of the study, thus, these delimitations must be addressed to ensure quality in the research (Mertens, 2020). Assumptions are the plausible truths made or accepted by other researchers who read this study (Mertens, 2020). Lastly, bias from the researcher can influence the results of the study and are further addressed in this section (AERA Code of Ethics, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020).

Limitations

Because this was a qualitative study, the results collected were limited to the participants' experiences. When collecting data from participants about their individual experiences, there was a possibility the participants were not forthcoming and/or were incomplete in fear of impacting themselves or their school districts in a negative way, which in turn could have impacted the results of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Efforts to address this potential limitation were made by the researcher by ensuring confidentiality of participant responses through the informed consents (see Appendices B & F), and through the application of pseudonyms in place of participants' given names.

Another limitation was the participants may not have played a role in the districts' induction practices, which could impact the results based on the administrators' knowledge of the districts' induction practices. Additionally, the researcher may have had limited access to information for the document analysis due to these documents being provided in good faith by the district administrators. Every effort was made by the researcher to secure all district documents for the analysis to ensure this limitation was being addressed appropriately.

Lastly, time could be considered an issue when data were collected due to the administrators' busy schedules. The researcher addressed this limitation by conducting interviews based on the administrators' preference either digitally, by phone, or face-to-face to ensure the administrators were given flexibility to participate based on their schedule limitations.

Delimitations

In this study, the researcher made decisions on the boundaries of the study in relation to the participant pool and scope of the study to make meaningful conclusions ensuring research fidelity and overall trustworthiness. Administrators within rural school districts were the selected participants using Ratcliffe et al.'s (2016) definition of a rural area, and the focus of the study was to examine their roles in the districts' novice teacher induction practices. The job titles and positions of the administrators varied from district to district. Participant responses were collected and sorted based on the administrators' title and position within the district to have a better understanding of how novice teacher induction practices and responsibilities were distributed across the district's administrators. Participants in the study ranged from superintendent, principal, assistant principal, or other district administrator as outlined in the key terms and were referred to as 'administrator' throughout the study. The study was limited to the districts serviced by the NWRPDC Region Five, and the participant pool consisted of 59 rural school districts as identified by using Ratcliffe et al.'s (2016) definition of a rural area due to the scope of the data collected, the nearly 200,000 students in a multitude of rural districts across Missouri (Showalter et al., 2019), and the focus on novice teacher induction.

Assumptions

In this study, the researcher assumed the participants were forthcoming with their responses with the researcher and provided accurate information in the survey and interviews regarding district induction practices for novice teachers. Another assumption made by the researcher was that the administrators who participated in the study were in

fact the administrators who played roles in the design, support, and evaluation of the districts' induction practices for novice teachers.

Bias

It is essential the researcher provides transparency surrounding the influences with potential impact on the study's design, the sense making process, and the implications of the study. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and Mertens (2020), researcher bias can be conflicts of interests, dual relationships, and/or lack of disclosure. Because the researcher was a previous administrator and has provided professional development for novice teachers, confirmation bias was a concern (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). The researcher addressed confirmation bias by using accurate and verbatim transcripts from the participants' interview, which were member checked, and a researcher from outside of the field of novice teacher induction and administration was used to check for potential bias throughout the coding and sense making process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). There were no apparent neutrality issues identified or social justice of human rights concerns to indicate a need for transformative criteria for addressing issues of fairness, authenticity, community, use of voice, positionality, critical reflexivity, reciprocity, or social change (Mertens, 2020). Furthermore, a branched question was utilized to begin the survey, allowing the administrator to comment 'yes' or 'no' to the first question referring to their involvement in the novice teacher induction program within their districts (Fink, 2017). If the administrators answered 'no' to their involvement in the program, they were not allowed to continue with the survey. The branching of this question allowed for the researcher to

eliminate potentially biased responses from participants who should not have been in the participant pool based on their roles or responsibilities (Fink, 2017).

Definition of Key Terms

This study utilized terminology specific to novice teacher induction in rural school districts. The following terms were defined for the purpose of reader interpretation.

Administrator. Administrator was defined as a principal, assistant principal, special education director, career education director, assistant superintendent, superintendent, or other in a formal leadership capacity within a school district responsible for providing instructional leadership and developing, implementing, and evaluating district and school systems and policies (American Institutes for Research, 2021; DESE, 2021).

Attrition. Attrition was defined as teachers who leave teaching altogether through retirement, staying home, going back to school, or who take positions outside of the education field (Billingsley, 1993).

Mentoring. Mentoring was defined as a common induction practice used in school districts (Billingsley et al., 2009), which functions as a part of the larger school district induction program (Potemski, et al., 2014; Wong, 2005).

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). DESE was defined as a state-run organization with working with educators, Missouri representatives, government agencies, community leaders, and citizens to reach the vision and mission of "Improving lives through education and providing access to opportunity" through the core values of commitment to excellence, future focused, and dedication to

serving others, in recognition of priority areas: Early learning and early literacy, success-ready students and workplace development, safe and healthy schools, and educator recruitment and retention" (DESE Show Me Success, 2021, para. 1-2).

Novice teacher. Novice teachers were defined as new teachers, or beginning teachers, with five years or less classroom teaching experience (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

Novice teacher induction. Novice teacher induction was defined as the detailed and comprehensive process of training and guiding novice teachers to promote the navigation of the cultural, social, and technical aspects of being a new teacher, while systematically helping them to assimilate to the school district and teaching profession (Brownell et al., 2010; Cullingford, 2016; Potemski et al., 2014; Strong, 2005). A logical and continuous professional development process (Wong, 2005).

Rural area. A rural area was defined as an area situated outside of an area defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as urban, thus a rural school district is a rural area with less than 2,500 people counted in the population (Ratcliffe et al., 2016; Robson et al., 2019).

Rural school district. School districts were defined as a rural school district when they were situated inside rural areas defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as areas with less than 2,500 people counted in the population (Ratcliffe et al., 2016; Robson et al., 2019).

School building administrator. "An employee or officer of an elementary school or secondary school, local educational agency, or other entity operating an elementary school or secondary school" and who is (b) "responsible for the daily instructional leadership and managerial operations in the elementary school or secondary school building" (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015, p. 297).

Significance of the Study

This study provides significance by seeking to contribute to the scholarly literature and practitioners' knowledge of the administrator's role in novice teacher induction in rural, public K-12 districts in Missouri.

Scholarly

The important contribution of this study is the identification of the role of the administrator in the design, support, and evaluation of induction programs for novice teachers in rural, public K-12 school districts in Missouri. This study contributes to the literature surrounding administrators' roles in novice teacher mentoring and induction programs in rural Northwest Missouri. Lastly, this study has implications for higher education institutions to further emphasize the importance and development of training on effective novice teacher induction as a learning component in leadership preparation programs.

Practitioner

This study contributes to practitioners' knowledge of novice teacher induction, mentoring, and support given by administrators in K-12 rural school districts in Northwest Missouri. Through the investigation of novice teacher induction practices and the administrators' role', practicing building administrators can make improvements to building level novice teacher induction programs, mentor matching, and mentor support to improve novice teacher retention and instructional outcomes. Lastly, this study has implications for rural school district building administrators in other states, as novice teacher induction programs are developed or revised to improve retention efforts and instructional classroom practices.

Summary

Mentoring is a broadly used term, which first appeared in Homer's *Odyssey* (Williams et al., 1991), and used to describe the guidance, direction and influence given by a mentor to another (*Merriam Webster*, 2021). Turner (2004) wrote that a mentor is one who "advises, guides, teaches, inspires, challenges and corrects, and serves as a role model" (para. 1). The premise of mentoring has developed from various forms of training, including apprenticeships and vocational training (ACTE, 2019). Mentoring is a teacher training method (Yirci, 2017) commonly used in induction programs for novice teachers (Billingsley et al., 2019; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Kaufmann, 2007), and the most common induction practices used in school districts (Billingsley et al., 2009). Thus, novice teachers undergo an acculturation process within their organization (Schein, 2004) which consists of learning to navigate the profession and is referred to as novice teacher induction (Brownell, et al., 2010; Wong, 2005). The problem this study investigated is the lack of understanding about how novice teacher induction programs at the district levels in rural education are implemented, and the purpose of the study was to further the existing literature surrounding administrator's role in the design, support, and evaluation of mentoring relationships and induction programs in rural, public K-12 schools in Northwest Missouri. The research question which served as the guide for the study was:

What is the administrator's role in the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher induction practices in rural, public K-12 schools in Northwest Missouri?

A qualitative-bounded case study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020) served as the structure of the study, using the following conceptual underpinnings for the investigation: (a) novice teacher induction (b) rural, public K-12 school districts in

Northwest Missouri, and (c) the lived experiences, current practices, and administrator's role in novice teacher induction (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Furthermore, Schein's (2004) Levels of Culture was used as the theoretical framework for viewing the administrator's role in the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher induction practices in rural, public K-12 school districts in Northwest Missouri.

Trustworthiness was achieved through the study design and data analysis (Creswell, 2014), through an audit trail, so other researchers can repeat the study with consistent findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). The researcher followed ethical standards by the American Educational Research Association (AERA Code of Ethics, 2011). The setting was rural, Northwest Missouri and participant pool consisted of school administrators from fifty-nine possible school districts served in Region Five by the Northwest Regional Professional Development Center (NWRPDC) (NWRPDC Region Five School Sites, 2021) as part of a purposeful, convenience sample (Fink, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and informed consent was received (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Convenience sampling occurred until saturation was reached (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020), and contact was made through email, phone calls, and face-to-face contact. Data collection included an electronic survey of school administrators, a document analyses, and individual school administrator interviews (Creswell, 2014; Newcomer et al., 2015; Mertens 2020), allowing for triangulation of the data for transferability purposes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020).

Interview questions were written to be bias-free and open-ended; audio recordings were obtained from the interviews, interview transcripts were member checked (Seidman,

2019), and the documents identified for the document analyses were used to determine if support of induction programs aligned with the perspectives of the administration, which supported the credibility of the design through triangulation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A process of open coding, and then axial coding, using constant comparative methods into themes was used (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldana, 2015), until a rich, thick description was reached (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Efforts to achieve credibility, transferability, confirmability, dependability were addressed in the study methodology and analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020), which included IRB approval and a chain of evidence (AERA, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). This study sought to contribute to the scholarly literature the identification of indicators of effective induction programs for novice teachers and the administrator's role in rural, public K-12 districts in Missouri. This study could also be used to highlight the need for higher education institutions to embed novice teacher induction as a learning component in graduate level leadership preparation programs. Likewise, the study will be used to contribute to the practitioners' knowledge of novice teacher induction programs, mentoring, and support provided by administrators in K-12 rural school districts in Northwest Missouri by investigating induction practices and administrator's role towards the improvement of novice teacher retention and instructional outcomes.

This section provided an overview of the background of the study, the problem being investigated, and the purpose of the study. Furthermore, the researcher provided the research question guiding the investigation, the theoretical framework and conceptual underpinnings used as the lenses for viewing the study elements, and the design and methodology of the study. Additionally, detailed efforts were made by the researcher to

support quality research, key terms used in the investigation and the literature were defined, and the significance of the study justifying the researcher's completion of the investigation were established. The following section will introduce the context for the study.

SECTION TWO – PRACTITIONER CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

The Background of the Context

This investigation was dedicated to understanding the administrator's role in the design, support, and evaluation of induction programs in rural, public K-12 schools in Northwest Missouri. The researcher viewed novice teacher induction programs through the lenses of rural, public K-12 education and leadership in K-12 education. This section provides a focus on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) organization who benefited from the results of this study. Section two includes the history of the organization, organizational analysis, a leadership analysis, and the potential implications for the Missouri DESE and practitioners who interact with this study.

History and Policy of the Organization

The Missouri State Constitution established the policy surrounding novice teacher induction in Missouri. The most recent Missouri State Constitution (2021) was written in 1945, with amendments made periodically. The Missouri State Constitution outlined the following policy:

> The supervision of instruction in the public schools shall be vested in a state board of education (2021, Article IX, § 2a.), giving authority of public education to the State Board of Education. There are eight State Board of Education members are appointed by the Governor and must be confirmed by the Missouri Senate. (DESE About the State Board, 2021)

In addition to the constitution's established policy for governing novice teacher induction in Missouri, the Missouri State Constitution (2021) also outlined the requirements for the

establishment the Missouri State Board of Education. The Missouri State Board of Education provides:

> Oversight of preschool to post-secondary/adult educational programs (excluding private, parochial or home schools), and fulfill the following duties: 1) Appointing the Commissioner of Education and setting policies for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2) Defining academic performance standards and assessment requirements for public schools, 3) Accrediting local school districts, 4) Establishing requirements for the education, testing, assessment, certification and recertification of all public school teachers and administrators, 5) Operating the Missouri School for the Blind (St. Louis), the Missouri School for the Deaf (Fulton), and the statewide system of Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled, 6) Overseeing federal education programs and the distribution of federal funds to school districts, 7) Establishing regulations for school bus safety and for fiscal management in local school districts, 8) Submitting annual budget recommendations for education to the Missouri Legislature, and 9) Administering the state's Vocational Rehabilitation and Sheltered Workshop program, which provide services for adult Missouri citizens with disabilities. (DESE About the State Board, 2021, para. 5)

As a part of the Omnibus State Reorganization Act of 1974, the Missouri State Board of Education established Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, or DESE, to serve as the administrative body (Official Manual for State of Missouri, 2020). This state-run organization was dedicated to supporting Missouri

teachers and administrators with a mission of "Improving lives through education and providing access to opportunity" (DESE Show Me Success, 2021, para. 1).

In the Show Me Success (2021) document, which outlines DESE's mission, vision, and purpose, the organization explained their core values were:

> Commitment to excellence, future focused, and dedication to serving others, in recognition of priority areas: Early learning and early literacy, success-ready students and workplace development, safe and healthy schools, and educator recruitment and retention. (para. 4)

Furthermore, novice teacher induction has been connected to the function of teacher retention as outlined in DESE's mission statement, which indicated DESE as the organization impacted by this study.

The state of Missouri entity, DESE, is required to follow the Missouri State Code of Regulations (MSCR), which outlined the requirements for the governance of novice teacher induction (MSCR, 2021). Two parts outlined in the Missouri State Code of Regulations (2021) were the: Mentoring Program Standards (5 CSR 20-400.380) and Beginning Teacher Assistance Program (5 CSR 20-400.385). These regulations stated mentoring programs can be provided by school district officials, organizations, or organizational leaders, but must meet the criteria outlined in the Missouri State Code of Regulations. The Beginning Teacher Assistance Program (BTAP) was established by the Missouri State Code of Regulations as a requirement for teacher certification in the state of Missouri (DESE Office of Educator Quality, 2021), and outlines the "minimum requirements for an effective BTAP" (p. 24).

The Missouri State Code of Regulations for Mentoring Programs (2021) "clarifies the standards for school districts and charter school mentoring programs" (p. 21), which consisted of:

> (1) A successful school district and charter school mentoring program shall include, but may not be limited to, the standards listed below: (A) An introduction to the cultural environment of the community, school district and charter school, school building, and classroom, (B) A systemic and ongoing program review/evaluation by all stakeholders, (C) An individualized plan for beginning educators that aligns with the school district's and charter school's goals and needs, (D) Collaborative selection of and support for mentors, (E) Comprehensive mentor training and support, (F) A complete list of responsibilities for the mentor, beginning educator, and administrator(s), and (G) Sufficient time for mentors to observe beginning educators. (p. 21)

In addition to the Mentoring Program Standards, the Missouri State Code of Regulations for Beginning Teacher Assistance Program (2021) required all teachers in the first or second year of teaching must participate in a BTAP program aligned with the novice teacher's professional development plan for the first two years of teaching. Therefore, mentoring and BTAP have served as the two methods for novice teacher induction being investigated in this study.

Organizational Analysis

Bolman and Deal's (2017) four metaphorical lenses provided a framework for holistic thinking, which provided a better understanding of organizations or experiences and can be used to analyze an organization. The four frames outlined were: (a) human

resource, (b) political, (c) structural, and (d) symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 2017). The structural and political frames were used for the organizational analysis to examine the role the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education assumes in Missouri novice teacher induction practices. By understanding the role of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, readers will be able to navigate the complicated nature of the policies, structures, and leadership impacting novice teacher induction practices in schools around the state of Missouri.

Structural Frame

Analysis through Bolman and Deal's (2017) structural frame focused on the communication and alignment organizations created through the formal patterns and policies resulting from the organizational structures. Formalized organizational structure can assist in strategic planning and coordinated resources within an organization (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Organizational charts provided some visual structure to show the roles and responsibilities within organizations, in addition to the flow of information and operations (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Mintzberg, 2005).

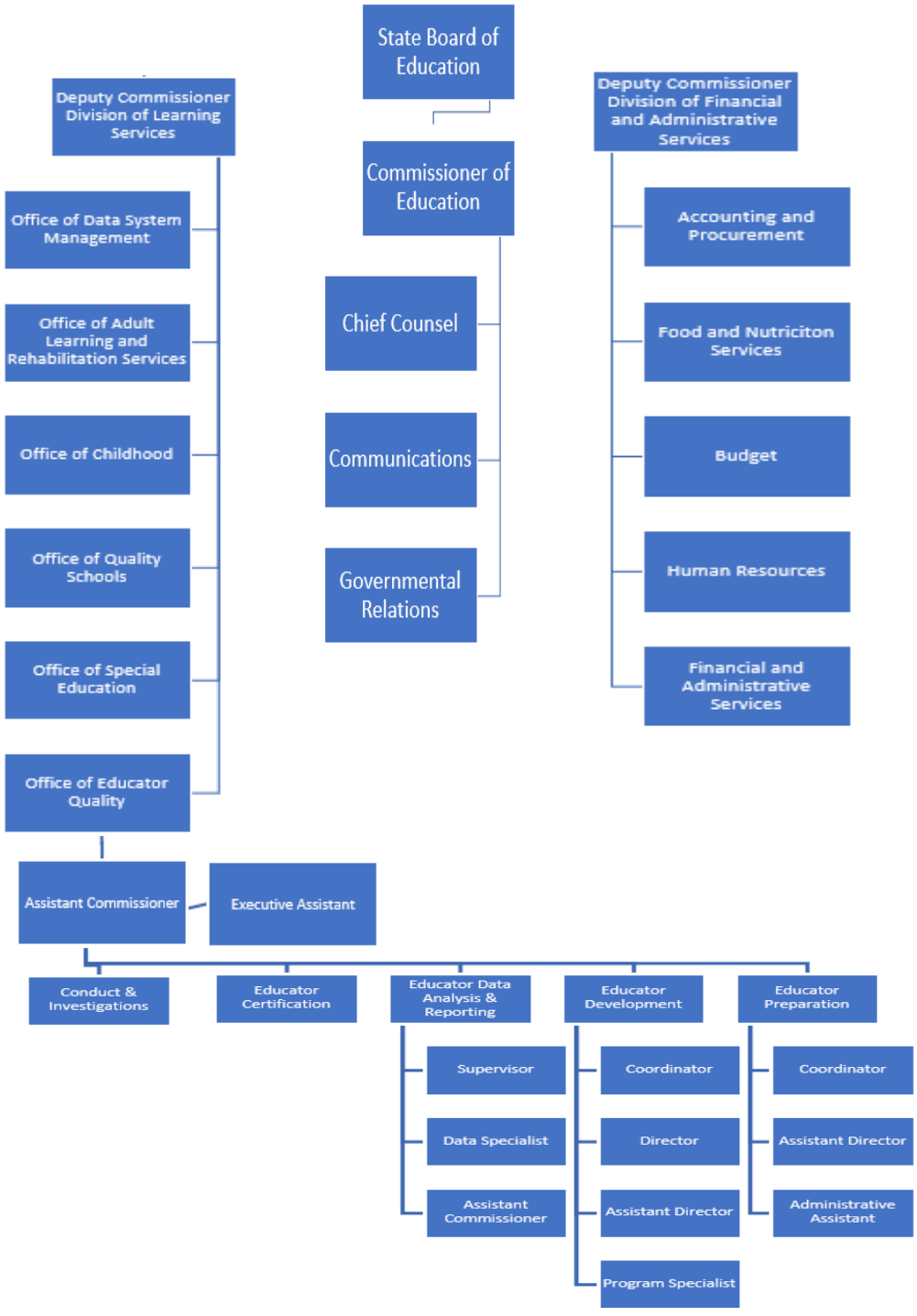
The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's organization chart consisted of multiple branches (see Figure 2), with the oversight of novice teacher induction programs falling under the Office of Educator Quality (DESE Office of Educator Quality, 2021). This office within DESE has provided the administrative oversight for novice teacher induction programs with the development of novice teacher induction program standards and the design of induction programs facilitated through the Regional Professional Development Centers, which fall under the branch of Educator Development (DESE Office of Educator Quality, 2021).

Additional administrative oversight has been assigned under the branch of Educator Certification, wherein, teachers submitted evidence of their Beginning Teacher Assistance Program (BTAP) for teaching certification in the state of Missouri (DESE Office of Educator Quality, 2021). The structure for the Missouri DESE (DESE Organizational Chart, 2021) (see Figure 2), and the flow of information and communication to the various branches within the Educator Quality Division.

The Assistant Commissioner of Educator Quality is the signatory for all educator quality programs and oversees the two entities responsible for novice teacher induction. Novice teacher induction programming is under the Educator Preparation division and Novice teacher induction documentation of completion is under the Educator Certification division (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Organizational Chart



Note. This figure was recreated to demonstrate the organizational structure from DESE (2021).

Political Frame

Bolman and Deal (2017) introduced the political frame as coalitions whose power or control by stakeholders in an organization create political forces at play helping to define and influence an organization. Political power on organizations and their leaders is sometimes easy to recognize and can be viewed as a negative aspect impacting an organization, however, Bolman and Deal (2017) pointed out the positive impact of having various and diverse perspectives and input from stakeholders, and the powerful impact coalitions can make on organizational change. French and Raven (2005) wrote about five types of social power at work in organizations and the influence of each type of power: (a) reward, (b) coercive, (c) legitimate, (d) referent, and (e) expert power. Crozier and Friedberg (1977) wrote about power as a "daily mechanism of our social existence" (p. 32). Problems can arise when power is concentrated in the wrong places or is too broadly dispersed, but leaders can bring parties of different interests together for organizational successes (Bolman & Deal, 2017).

The dynamic differences in organizations were described as relating to "jungles" (p. 18), where members of coalitions bargain or "jockey" (p. 184) for change. Mann (1986) refers to these as "constituted of multiple, overlapping and intersecting networks of power" (p. 1). Additionally, Johnson's (2018) work on diversity and Levi's (2017) research on successful teams supported the need for coalitions within organizations, because these "enduring differences in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perceptions of reality" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p.184) between coalition members served as a positive factor impacting the organization and prevented negative outcomes such as 'groupthink'. Groupthink was coined by Janis (1971) when the author referred to the

congruent thinking of groups which led to ignoring additional factors needed to understand a group's holistic decision making. The concept of groupthink has led to many organizational disasters as Janis (1971) highlights. Furthermore, Janis (1971) goes on to posit that organizational disasters can be avoided if teams and groups have members who challenge the status quo and do not cave for the sake of group conformity. Thus, diverse coalitions are the foundation of the political frame, as presented by Bolman and Deal (2017).

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's power over novice teacher induction was concentrated in the Educator Quality Branch but included two separate positions within the organization (see Figure 2). The power to oversee the development of novice teachers' induction program standards and the induction programs facilitated through the Regional Professional Development Centers across the state was controlled by the head of Educator Development (DESE Office of Educator Quality, 2021). Secondly, teachers submitting evidence of their Beginning Teacher Assistance Program (BTAP) completion was controlled by the Educator Certification leadership (DESE Office of Educator Quality, 2021). Lastly, one should not ignore the various outside coalitions which held social power over the novice teacher induction programming in Missouri, which have influenced the novice teacher induction process in Missouri, such as, Missouri State Teachers Association (MSTA), Missouri National Education Association (MNEA), Regional Professional Development Centers (Missouri Teacher Development System, 2021). These groups will be discussed in further detail in Section Three.

Leadership Analysis

Transformational Leadership was defined by Northouse (2016) as the transformation of people through change and development. Transformational leadership is a process rather than event, situation, style, or approach (Northouse, 2016). The process of transformational leadership begins when a "person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower" (Northouse, 2016, p. 164), and administrators can leverage the natural connections made with novice teachers through the induction process, making the most of the motivation of the novice teacher. Motivation plays a foundational role in transformational leadership (Northouse, 2016). Motivation was defined by Maslow (2005) as the inherent nature of humans to reach their full potentials, or what Maslow called 'self-actualization'. Furthermore, transformational leadership is comprised of four factors: Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Idealized influence can be related to the notion of a role model (Northouse, 2016), and inspirational motivation indicated a need for someone to serve as a role model for novice teachers when they begin the induction process. Furthermore, continued learning and development of the novice teacher which occurs throughout the induction process could be designed by the leader to be intellectually stimulating (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Northouse (2016) explained leaders can use transformative leadership to provide the individualized consideration which is represented through "a supportive climate" (p. 171), and Sezgin et al., (2020) wrote this sustainable climate is a collective effort with administrators being the leader in school enculturation efforts, which includes

welcoming, recognizing, introducing, and integrating the teacher, furthering the sense of belonging. Finally, the guidance DESE has provided gives direction for administrators charged with supporting novice teachers, and it has been crucial administrators are invested, involved, and supportive throughout the process as it serves as transforming learning opportunities for novice teachers.

Implications for Research in the Practitioner Setting

This investigation of the administrator's role in the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher induction programs could help benefit the Missouri DESE by offering new suggestions related to novice teacher induction programs in rural, K-12 public schools. The possibility of new information could lead to an opportunity for DESE to recommend revisions to the current policy guidance and the institution of evaluation efforts for Missouri novice teacher induction programs. Additionally, DESE recommendations could impact legislative policy for novice teacher induction programs outlined in the Missouri State Code of Regulations. This new information may also lead to key stakeholders collaborating to have significant dialogue surrounding the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher induction programs in Missouri. By using the structural and political frames to analyze the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Department's role in novice teacher induction programs, role clarification, restructuring of the organization, and/or involvement of various coalition members may be a result of this study.

Merriam and Bierema (2014) explored the impact stakeholder's buy-in had on practice. Additional stakeholders in this study are administrators in leadership roles in rural, public K-12 Missouri school districts. As a result of this study, school district and

building administrators may be prompted to have a deeper, more meaningful interest in the design, support, and evaluation of their own novice teacher induction programs. The awareness brought forth by this study may lead rural, public K-12 administrators to be more reflective when considering their novice teacher induction practices. Furthermore, these administrators might find connections to the lived experiences in this study, leading to a more informed approach towards novice teacher induction practices. By being more informed, administrators may make changes to the program or approach for novice teacher induction within their own districts.

Summary

This investigation was conducted to provide a better understanding of the administrator's role in the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher induction programs in rural, public K-12 schools in Northwest Missouri. Novice teacher induction programs were viewed through the lenses of rural, public K-12 education and leadership in K-12 education. This section provided a focus on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) organization as the leading organization who will benefit from the results of this study. The history and structure of the organization, an organizational analysis using Bolman and Deal's (2017) frames, a leadership analysis, and the potential implications for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and practitioners who interact with this study also were analyzed in this section.

Section Three of this dissertation in practice provides clarification for the scholarly context surrounding this study. The literature and current research for the context will be explored in-depth, and gaps in the literature will be discussed.

SECTION THREE – SCHOLARLY CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

There was a lack of information surrounding district level teacher induction program design, support, and evaluation in rural, public K-12 education. Legislation over the last 60 years has put an increased focus on educator quality (Young et al., 2017). Currently, induction programs and mentoring requirements vary from state to state (Hirsch et al., 2009), and school districts are required to implement the requirements as they see fit, leaving inconsistencies in the induction and mentoring processes for novice teachers throughout the country (Guise, 2013). In rural areas, administrators often serve in a multitude of roles including leading, designing, and implementing the professional training and development of novice teachers (Chan et al., 2018; Leithwood, 2007; Marzano et al., 2005; Tooley & Prescott, 2021). The purpose of this investigation was to fill a gap in the research regarding the administrator's role in the design, support, and evaluation of mentoring practices and novice teacher induction programs in rural, public K-12 schools in Northwest Missouri.

Educator Quality

Educator quality has been consistently addressed in U.S. legislation dating back to the early 1960's (Young et al., 2017). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 was the beginning of an extensive line of legislation targeted at teacher improvement and effectiveness. Although the original focus of ESEA (1965) was a part of an effort to address poverty and other complex societal issues within the U.S. by increasing student achievement, two major tenets of ESEA (1965) were funding for collegiate research to improve teaching and learning and professional development for teachers (Kilty, 2015; Paul, 2016). The ESEA (1965) was successively reauthorized into

the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA) of 1981, which deregulated education further, giving state officials more control and focused less on classroom instruction (Puma, 2000).

In 1983, the National Commission of Excellence in Education conducted a review and wrote *A Nation at Risk*, revealing U.S. students were not achieving as prominently as other countries around the world in the areas of reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and technology (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983). As a result, the report renewed focus on federal oversight into teacher quality and introduced merit pay for teachers, pay based on teacher quality and student achievement as measured by assessment scores (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983).

Under the new administration in the 1990s, the ESEA (1965) was reauthorized into the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) of 1994 with a call to improve teacher training and experiences as Riley (1995) wrote: “Professional development for teachers, principals, and other school staff is critical to creating and sustaining the learning environments necessary to help all students reach higher levels of achievement” (para. 4). Furthermore, Riley (1999) identified the three tenets of the IASA (1994) which emphasized educator quality:

> 1) Sustained, intensive, high-quality professional development tied to challenging state academic standards, 2) State, district, and school plans will outline strategies for providing teachers, administrators, other school staff, and district-level personnel with the kind of professional development they need, and 3) Professional development programs to promote high-quality instruction for limited English proficient students. (para. 4)

The IASA (1994) was reauthorized in 2001 into the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (Schwartz et al., 2011). The NCLB (2001) legislation again emphasized the importance of teacher quality based on the idea that teacher excellence has a direct impact on enhanced student achievement (Glazerman et al., 2010; Rice, 2003). As Lee (2014) explained, NCLB redefined teachers' roles in improving student achievement by narrowing the focus on teacher quality in four areas: Students of color, students in poverty, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency (Lee, 2014).

In 2015, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law allowing NCLB (2001) to expire ending a long era of the reauthorization of the original ideas laid out in ESEA (1965) (Young et al., 2017). The ESSA (2015) did not focus specifically on educator quality, training, and professional development, but did have increased accountability for change in low performing schools and expanded access to high quality preschool programs (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Because ESSA focused on the learning environment—sense of safety and belonging, identified as elements of culture by Schein (2004), educational reform conversations shifted as Darling-Hammond and DePaoli (2020) wrote this focus "helps reduce the negative effects of poverty on academic achievement" (p. 7). Furthermore, Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) directed federal funds to the professional development of school building administrators and other education leaders in recognition of research surrounding the impact of school level leadership on leading the organization, people, vision, instruction, and student learning (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Legislation, such as ESEA (1965), NCLB (2001), and ESSA (2015), have made it difficult for schools to meet staff quality requirements due to a lack of certified teachers (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). The Teach for America Research Brief (2021) provided a critical look at the policy writing and found education degree and passion were not enough to be a good teacher in impoverished schools, thus, continuing the focus on educator improvement. Increased accountability requirements stemming from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) and the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) have placed additional pressure on school administrators for improving teacher quality and student academic achievement (Chan et al., 2018). Student academic achievement (Palo & Padhi, 2005) and instructional leadership (Munro, 2008) are now at the forefront of the administrator's role. Chan et al. (2019) found student performance and safety in school is the foci of building administrators in the United States writing, "The focus has to be on student achievement" (p. 48). Emphasis on teacher quality because of this legislation has implications for leaders overseeing novice teacher induction, as Watkins (2005) wrote, "Effective teaching is not intuitive" (p. 83).

Novice Teacher Induction

Novice teachers are new teachers or beginning teachers with five years or less classroom teaching experience (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Every new teacher has different experiences throughout those beginning years, however, commonalities exist in novice teacher experiences with transitioning into the new profession, working with the unknowns of teaching, socializing within their new work environment, and navigating the district and education system structures (Corcoran, 1981; Olson & Osborne, 1991). Novice teacher induction is a comprehensive process "sustained training and support for

new teachers" (Wong, 2005, p. 41), of learning and teaching assists novice teachers in navigating the complexities of the profession and begins to develop a sense of belonging within the education system, the districts, and the school buildings (Cullingford, 2016), while also helping them socialize into the school culture (Achinstein & Davis, 2014; Harrison et al., 2006). Yet, Kozikglu (2018) found novice teachers did not feel their first years of teaching met their expectations. Well-planned, high-quality induction programs have been found to increase the quality and effectiveness of novice teachers' instruction and to improve student learning by linking educator preparation to real-world professions (Brownell et al., 2010; Potemski et al., 2014; Strong, 2005), while also improving the novice teachers' overall job satisfaction and confidence (Coffey, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2003). Additionally, a solid framework for induction was not only beneficial for the novice teachers, but also created a continual professional learning culture for all staff (Watkins, 2005).

Induction Programs

Induction programs are introductions for novice teachers to the profession, tools, and models needed to be successful in the new career through a comprehensive program aimed at meeting teacher performance standards (Kaufmann, 2007), and should be viewed as the development of a teacher who can have positive returns to their school district (Wang et al., 2008). The support and instruction provided through induction programs were targeted to support novice teacher growth, effectiveness, and retention (Billingsley et al., 2019; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Elements of an induction program included: "high-quality mentoring, ongoing professional development, access to an external network of beginning teachers, and standards-based evaluations of beginning

teachers" (Kaufmann, 2007, p. 2). Watkins (2005) wrote robust induction programs created learning communities emphasizing three important activities:

> An induction program that assigns a strong coaching mentor who can grow professionally as much as those they mentor, an induction program that supports and extends innovative practice through active research, an induction program that supports collegial discussion and learning among experienced staff, new staff, and the principal through rigorous study groups. (p. 84)

Moreover, comprehensive induction programs improved teacher retention (Kaufmann, 2007) and the quality of instruction provided by bridging the gap between pre-service training and the realities of teaching (Brownell et al., 2010; Eisenman, & Thornton, 1999). Wong (2005) wrote:

> Induction programs have clearly articulated goals, administrative supervision, long-term objectives, networks that allow for structural and nurturing collaboration, demonstration classes where teachers can observe and be observed, portfolio assessments to assess pedagogical knowledge and skills, and effective mentoring. (p. 54)

Furthermore, the American Institutes for Research (2015) recommended an infrastructure for induction be articulated to include: How novice teachers were supported, the mentor selection process, standards for the program, and how the induction program were evaluated. Three elements were common in all effective novice teacher induction programs: (a) Comprehensive, (b) Coherent, and (c) Sustained (Wong, 2005).

Federal and State Novice Teacher Induction Requirements

Guise (2013) found great variations amongst mentoring and induction programs across states and school districts when investigating the structure and resources available. Forty-eight states within the United States have mandated mentoring programs as part of the induction process for novice teachers (Hirsch et al., 2009). Furthermore, after reviewing induction requirements for all fifty states, Bay and Parker-Katz (2009) found significant differences in the type of support, legal mandates, targeted inductees, mentor qualifications, funding for induction, length of programming, and the evaluations of programs.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) sponsored Project: RAISE, the first federally funded research grant from 1987-1990, with the purpose of investigating mentor outcomes (Williams et al., 1991). Since then, no further research has been conducted by the federal government and no federal policy guidance exists, allowing mentoring and induction programs to have great variance at the state level (NCTQ Research Rationale, 2017). Although mentoring has been mandated in forty-eight states (Hirsch et al., 2009), 20 states still do not have mandated policy regarding comprehensive induction programs for novice teachers (Kaufmann, 2007). The lack of consistency from state to state indicated a need for more specific mentoring requirements to compensate for insufficient federal guidance towards state policy to ensure districts provided new teachers with quality mentoring experiences (NCTQ Research Rationale, 2017).

Mentoring

Mentoring has been defined as the “collaborative partnership in which individuals share and develop mutual interests” (Tillman, 2005, p. 611). The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) (2017) found novice teachers feel overwhelmed and under-supported in their jobs, and mentoring serves as a “rite of passage” (para. 2), allowing the novice teacher to make sense of their experiences and how they should respond (Weick, 1995). Furthermore, Whitaker (2000) wrote mentors can help novices reduce their stress and anxiety. Potemski et al., (2014) explained, "The terms mentoring and induction are often used interchangeably, however, mentoring is one-on-one support and feedback provided by an experienced veteran teacher to a new or struggling teacher” (p.1), and the terms often were misapplied (Wong, 2005), indicating a need to examine mentoring separately from induction of novice teachers. This mentoring relationship has also appeared in the literature coined as ‘peer coaching’ (Robbins, 1991). The history of mentoring in education, mentoring practices in education, mentoring outcomes in education, and Missouri novice teacher induction and mentoring will be further explored in this section.

History of Mentoring in Education

"The term 'mentor' first appeared in Homer's Odyssey and was associated with the role of modeling a standard/style of behavior" (Williams et al., 1991, p. 2). Mentoring became a method for supporting new teachers in the 1980’s (Wang & Odell, 2002), and has taken the form of face-to-face interactions, whole group meetings, electronic follow-up (phone, online, and discussion forums), and modeling (Dempsey et al., 2009). Knowles’ (1980) principles of adult learning, termed ‘andragogy’, promoted mentoring in

education through the knowledge acquisition and reflective practices found to enrich the learning process for novice teachers. Schon's (1983/1987) work on reflective practices provided an additional framework for creating skilled novice teachers through mentoring with the promotion of self-reflective practices supporting learning and fostering autonomy through the adult learning process. The mentoring process, as defined by Knowles' (1980) 'andragogy', promoted mentoring for knowledge acquisition and reflective practice, while Bandura's (1986) focus on the self-reflective agency and capability underscored the roles of the mentors in developing these critical skills of novice educators, and further explicated the impact a mentor can have on the mentee in this critical career development stage.

Healy and Weichert (1990) wrote mentoring "is a dynamic, reciprocal relationship in a work environment between an advanced career incumbent (mentor) and a beginner (protégé) aimed at promoting the career development of both" (p. 17). The mentoring process as defined by Eisenman and Thornton (1999) focused on increasing the novice teachers' abilities to reflect on teaching practices, to critically think within the professional role, and to implement best practices in various career requirements, and when properly designed can lead to a rigorous learning opportunity for the new teacher (Zalaznick, 2021). Eisenman and Thornton (1999) also wrote mentoring increased the novice teachers' reflective practices, enhancing critical thinking and the implementation of best practices, and built on prior experience which connected to the learners' abilities to problem solve (Jarvis, 2010; Knowles, 1980). American Institutes for Research (2015) also promoted mentoring to improve the beginning teachers' uses of evidence-based practices and the use of data-driven instruction.

Mentoring Practices in Education

Chambers (2015) wrote mentoring is a structure of social interactions and power, and the American Institutes for Research (2015) wrote these mentoring relationships helped novice teachers to negotiate the intricate nature of the organization and politics. Mentoring functions as a part of the larger school districts' induction program (Potemski et al., 2014), and was the most common induction practice used in school districts (Billingsley et al., 2009), but Wong (2005) found mentoring was often conducted in isolation and often did not coherently connect to a school district induction process. Additionally, Potemski et. al (2014) continued, "An induction program is a larger system of support that often includes mentoring but also includes additional supports, such as help with curriculum planning and professional development" (p. 1), and Watkins (2005) added mentoring on its own did not constitute the whole induction process, thus, mentoring needed to serve as one piece of the induction process for novice teachers.

Because mentors often have different roles and attitudes regarding their responsibilities to novice teachers (Cornelius & Sandmel, 2018; Ingersoll, & Strong, 2011), there are implications the mentoring responsibility went well beyond one person assigned the job of helping novice teachers (Gehrke & McCoy, 2007), further impacting the effectiveness of mentors, and indicating a need for mentor training (Billingsley et al., 2009; Bhindi, 2003; McKenna, 1998; Yirci, 2017). Mentoring novice teachers was a commonly used practice for training novice teachers (Johnson, 2002; Portner, 2003), but Watkins (2005) found the mentors' roles can look different based on stakeholders' perceptions. American Institutes for Research (2015) outlined how mentors assisted in the development of novice teachers by helping them make connections in context,

teaching them to reflect on their practice, using various instructional approaches, informing their practice using student work, and testing their assumptions against new knowledge. Likewise, common elements of effective mentoring programs found in Griffin et al. (2003) are: A culture reflecting shared responsibility, interactions amongst novice and experienced teachers, on-going professional development opportunities, less focus on evaluation, transparent goals, and differentiated training content.

Mentoring Outcomes in Education

Mentoring of novice teachers has shown to improve the reported quality of the job satisfaction and the confidence of novice teachers (Coffey, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2003), their self-esteem, and their problem-solving skills (Hobson et al., 2009; Mathur et al., 2013). Moreover, novice teaching was often an emotional experience which affected teacher retention (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019), and mentoring encouraged new teachers early on in their roles, helping to avoid burnout and keeping teachers in the profession (Knackendoffel et al., 2018), but the Alliance for Excellent Education (2004b) found mentoring, itself, was not robust on its own to make a claim regarding the retention of teachers. Espinoza et al. (2018) identified high-quality mentoring and a culture of collegial practice are two elements which address teacher attrition. Furthermore, Billingsley et al. (2009) added mentoring often played a role in the socialization of novice teachers into the school politics, routines and practices, and the social/emotional norms of school cultures, contending what Kozikglu (2018) described as social pressure from school personnel on novice teachers. Zalaznick (2021) recommended mentoring focused on instructional improvement, increased effectiveness with training and tools, and programs aligned with district and school goals, and mentor feedback should guide

and improve practice through the process of coaching and building a trusting relationship between the novice teacher and the mentor (Watkins, 2005).

Missouri Novice Teacher Induction and Mentoring

As outlined in the Missouri State Code of Regulations (MSCR), there are two policies governing novice teacher induction and mentoring in Missouri: Mentoring Program Standards (5 CSR 20-400.380) and Beginning Teacher Assistance Program (BTAP) (5 CSR 20-400.385). These policies are supervised by the Office of Educator Quality through the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE Office of Educator Quality, 2021). Rather than facilitating programs for novice teachers, DESE has turned the facilitation of teacher development programming to the Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDCs), which functioned under the division of Educator Quality within DESE (DESE Office of Educator Quality, 2021), though RPDCs were located throughout Missouri rather than at DESE headquarters in Jefferson City, MO (Northwest Regional Professional Development Center, 2021). The Missouri Teacher Development System (MTDS) is the program through which RPDCs conducted novice teacher induction on behalf of the Educator Quality division of DESE (Missouri Teacher Development System, 2021). Furthermore, DESE allows for the administration of novice teaching induction, mentoring, and BTAP to be designed, implemented, and evaluated by school districts and other organizations, such as the Missouri National Education Association (MNEA), the Missouri State Teachers Association (MSTA), and others so long as the program met the state regulations (DESE Office of Educator Quality, 2021; Missouri State Code of Regulations for Mentoring

Programs (2021). This leaves sole discretion surrounding all novice teacher induction program decisions up to the individual school district administration.

Kaufmann (2007) found Missouri required a beginning teacher assistance program within each district for those novice teachers who held a four-year initial professional certificate, and each novice teacher must develop a professional development plan for the first two years of employment. Subsequently, the plan was required to identify instructional concerns of the novice teacher and to address those through in-service or other development opportunities (Kaufmann, 2007). While Missouri mandated the existence of a district induction program, individual districts have been given the autonomy to design, implement, and evaluate their own beginning teacher assistance programs. The mechanisms, length of program, trainings, and strategies utilized for the induction program have been left up to district interpretation, but all Missouri school districts must address four components during the first two years of the beginning teacher's career: "classroom environment, student engagement and motivation, professional communication, and education related law" (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2019, p. 1). Consequently, mentoring practices vary from district to district (Billingsley et al., 2009; Guise, 2013; Sparks et al., 2017). Furthermore, Bay and Parker-Katz (2009) found twenty-six states provided funds to support novice teacher induction, but it was unclear at the time of the investigation if Missouri was identified as a state providing funding towards the administration of induction programs.

Rural Education

When thinking about rural areas, varying understandings and perceptions exist. Tieken & Montgomery (2021) wrote,

> Two fictions dominate the media: One is the nostalgic, romantic image of rural America (think *The Andy Griffith Show*); the other, very different fiction is the backwoods-and-backwards myth depicted in the movie *Deliverance* (1972) and in the more recent reality TV or news stories of opioid crisis and rural decline. While neither perception is completely accurate and true, rural areas are usually more diverse than they are portrayed. (p. 7)

Differing perceptions of rural areas existed, yet 60% of counties across the nation were considered mostly or completely rural (Robson et al., 2019), and 9.3 million students attended a rural school (Showalter et al., 2019), making the need for a common definition and understanding of rural life more necessary than ever. Furthermore, multiple definitions of rural areas exist, with the federal government using fifteen different definitions, and some states using their own definitions (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). This section will further explore the definition of rural, role of rural schools, challenges in rural education, barriers and poverty rates in rural areas, and access to resources in rural areas.

Definition of Rural

Varying definitions of rural areas were found in the historical literature and continue to change indicating a need to define rural areas. Rural areas tended to be less dense, have sparser populations, are not industrialized, and were distanced from more urban areas (Ratcliffe et al., 2016). The U.S. Census Bureau defined rural as areas not

urban, meaning what was left over after urban areas were defined (Ratcliffe et al, 2016). In the early 20th century, the definition of urban was applied to towns of 2,500 people or more, and those with fewer than 2,500 were considered rural (Ratcliffe et al, 2016). Over time, the U.S. Census Bureau has evaluated using population thresholds, population density, land use, and distance between areas to define rural and urban areas (Ratcliffe et al., 2016; Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). In 2000, urban areas were defined as areas with 50,000 or more people, introducing urban clusters which consisted of more than 2,500 people, but less than 50,000 people (Ratcliffe et al., 2016). The definition of rural was driven by the U.S. Census and has been updated every 10 years as census numbers change, adding to the varying definitions of rural areas, which has hindered research in rural education (Robson et al., 2019; US Department of Education, 1995).

Role of Rural Schools

Rural schools have existed everywhere across the U.S. and have played a vital role in communities (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). Rural schools are close in proximity to the community, but are geographically isolated (Miller et al., 2006.). Mcardle (2019) wrote, “Rural schools often are the nerve center of rural communities” (p. 1). Furthermore, Miller et al, (2006) wrote rural schools are the “focus of community attention; often one of the largest buildings and highly visible” (p. 39). Those not accustomed to rural life often misunderstand the role the local, rural school plays in the community, the feeling of pride and unity the rural school can create for the community (Mcardle, 2019), and the social nature the rural school plays in communities. As Tieken and Montgomery (2021) wrote “Rural schools can knit the social fabric of rural

communities" (p. 8). Bellwether Education Partners (2021) agreed in rural communities the "greatest assets are their people" (p. 43).

Challenges in Rural Education

Rural education is unique from urban education in their student diversity profiles, graduation rates, and educational attainment. Rural areas in the U.S. comprise 19.3% of the population (Ratcliffe et al., 2016; Robson et al., 2019). The National Center for Education Statistics estimated one-third of public schools are in rural areas, and one in five students are educated in rural schools (Showalter et al., 2019; Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). Estimates indicated 20% of the approximately fifty million rural population are people of color, which included Native people on tribal lands (Mcardle, 2019; Tieken & Montgomery, 2021), making the diversity profiles of rural areas different than their urban counterparts. Rural high schools reported higher graduation rates than urban schools, but despite higher graduation rates than urban schools, greater gaps in achievement test scores and graduation rates existed for rural, white students compared to their equivalents (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). In addition, rural students tended to have lower educational attainment than their urban peers (Robson et al., 2019).

Rural districts often experience issues with budgets, salaries, staffing shortages, teacher retention, and diverse staff to meet the needs of all learners (Bellwether Education Partners, 2021; Mcardle, 2019; Robson et al., 2019). When rural schools have been tasked with serving a small number of students in geographically dispersed regions, school districts experienced difficulties in providing quality educational programs (ACTE Rural Career and Technical Education's Role in Rural Education, 2015). Darling-Hammond and Podolsky (2019) wrote,

> The supports teachers receive in the critical first years of teaching—both mentoring and physical supports like adequate classrooms, materials, and supplies—are much less available in poorer districts, which then suffer greater turnover and must continually recruit greater numbers of teachers. (p. 4)

Furthermore, tight budgets in rural school districts have been the result of approximately 17% of funding from state sources going to rural districts, which has resulted in tight budgets, low staff salaries, scarce resources, underfunded districts, and limited access to advanced courses, such as Advanced Placement classes (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). Additionally, rural educators have lower staff salaries than their urban counterparts earning approximately $11,000 less per year than urban teachers (Showalter et al., 2019).

Young teachers found challenges in rural areas due to the lacking social life as experienced in urban centers (Mcardle, 2019), and Miller et al. (2006) described how teachers feel as though they are in a “fishbowl” (p. 38) when working in rural schools, and notice they were more often under examination due to the embedded nature of the school within the communities. In rural areas, teachers often worked for a few years in rural schools to gain more experience before moving on to larger school districts with higher pay (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). Coupled with the lack of post-secondary options, rural areas have been further impacted by the exodus of skilled workers moving to more urban areas (Bellwether Education Partners, 2021). Rural teachers often spend more time planning, as they teach more subjects in comparison to their urban peers, and often do so for lower pay than their urban counterparts (Desjardens et al., 2021). Being the only teacher for a subject area causes isolation and limits collaboration and resources

(Thoresen, 1997), which can cause teachers to move to larger districts with more resources and colleagues with similar teaching assignments (Tooley & Prescott, 2021).

Twenty-nine percent of new teachers have left the field within their first three years of teaching, and the rate has risen to 39% at the end of five years (Heller, 2004). This rate averages 30% per year for rural teachers (Thoresen, 1997). Due to shortages in qualified teachers, many rural schools have employed uncertified substitutes to fill shortages or teachers to cover many subject areas (Mcardle, 2019; Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). Shortages existed in hard to fill jobs, such as science, math, special education, and languages, and these shortages were more prevalent in rural schools (Banghart, 2021). Rural schools struggled to meet the needs of all learners, especially English Language Learners, which further emphasized a need for a more diverse staff and underscored the need for professional development training for rural educators (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). To combat the shortages and retention issues experienced in rural schools, Desjardens et al. (2021) recommended "onboarding that is culturally and community based" (p. 42). Teacher turnover, unqualified teachers, and less qualified teachers has continued to impact student performance (Banghart, 2021), indicating a need to address staffing in rural schools.

Barriers and Poverty Rates in Rural Areas

Educators and administrators in rural areas have experienced barriers making them different from urban schools. Rural students experienced needs for social, medical, mental health resources just as their urban counterparts, but those needs were not easily obtained in rural areas (Bellwether Education Partners, 2021; Mcardle, 2019; Robson et al., 2019). Furthermore, rural areas have been experiencing a declining population,

shortages of qualified teachers, internet access issues, and racial disparities in student discipline rates (Mitchell, 2021), which were all compounded by the social and societal issues experienced in rural areas (Bellwether Education Partners, 2021).

Common goals for communities have often been shared amongst rural residents (Mcardle, 2019) and the rural economies united those in their communities (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). Rural economies depended on tourism, farming, clean energy, mining, timber, and fishing (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021), so economies varied amongst rural regions, but schools continue to be central to rural economies and communities (Mcardle, 2019). Furthermore, rural communities often experienced a "strong bond among residents and a strong sense of belonging and care for each other" (Mcardle, 2019, p. 4), and this sense of belonging indicates a shared culture in rural areas (Schein, 2004). Thus, these cultural characteristics of rural communities were the draw keeping residents in place despite the barriers experienced in rural communities. Nevertheless, one in four rural children live in poverty, with 46% of rural students qualifying for free and reduced lunch (Bellwether Education Partners, 2021), increasing the need for greater access to resources such as fresh food, social, and medical services (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). Poverty rates for individuals living in rural areas across the nation is 19% comparative to 14% in urban areas, and residents in rural areas have higher rates of deep poverty (at 50% or greater than the federal poverty line) (Robson et al., 2019). These rates were higher for those in non-white populations in rural areas, indicating American Indian, Black, and Alaskan Native communities are at even greater risk (Robson et al., 2019).

Access to Resources in Rural Areas

Access to resources such as transportation, quality childcare, food, healthcare, and social services in rural areas are more limited than in urban areas. Transportation in rural areas is limited comparatively to urban areas, so rural families often must drive long distances to find available, quality childcare options due to limited capacity in rural areas (Hartman, 2021). Census tracts with "more than 50 children under age five that contained either no childcare providers or not enough options there were more than three times as many children as licensed childcare slots were found in 58% of rural areas" (Hartman, 2021, p. 34). Fresh food at grocery stores and other amenities were found to be lacking in rural areas and often required traveling long distances to obtain, and healthcare often was difficult to obtain and to access in rural areas, with limited providers and availability (Mcardle, 2019). Health care was impacted further in rural areas when considering the opioid crisis has impacted approximately 30% of rural areas (Hartman, 2021). Like their urban counterparts, rural families needed support from providers to better combat abuse, domestic violence, and food shortages, but often lacked access to resources to help combat these social issues (Hartman, 2021). Student behavior, mental health, and social justice concerns impact working conditions, and indicate a need for more professional development training for rural educators (Desjardens et al., 2021), but federal and state policies often do not align to meet the needs of educators in rural areas (Bellwether Education Partners, 2021).

Leadership

The concept of leadership has existed throughout history and will continue to be investigated in the future (Ozkan, 2016), and Ciftgul and Cetinkanat, (2021) write

leadership qualities vary based on the environment and the conditions. Furthermore, the research on leadership is vast and varied, lacking a common definition due to disagreements in the conceptualization of what constitutes leadership and an effective leader (Northouse, 2019). Research over the last century has investigated the skills, traits, knowledge, innate abilities, behavior styles, situational responses, emotional intelligence, and servitude to followers in a quest for defining leadership (Northouse, 2019).

Leadership is a complex activity and a relational process involving motivation of followers, and Maslow (2005) defined motivation as being comprised of behavioral, biological, cultural, and situational factors. French and Raven's (2005) work provided understanding of the nature of the reciprocal relationship and power dynamics between leaders and followers, noting the ongoing process of leadership. Northouse (2019) also wrote about the components of leadership: (a) transactional process, (b) influence on a group, and (c) achievement of common goals, and Prentice (1961) defined leadership as "the accomplishment of a goal through the direction of human assistants" (p.102). Kotter's (2011) work focused on the leaders' uses of data to produce change by establishing direction, personnel alignment, and motivating people. Bolman and Deal (2017) used the work of Kotter (2011) and French and Raven (2005) in the creation of the frames thinking and analyzation process where the leader uses data and information to view problems and viable solutions through the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic lenses.

Bolman and Deal's (2017) work provided further understanding of management tasks and leadership responsibilities intertwinement and expanded on Kotter's (2011) research by focusing on the leader's ability to adapt the problem-solving approach based

on the required outcome. Given the multitude of literature surrounding leadership, one holistic definition of leadership is illusive; however, the leaders' achievements are human and social and come from understanding those they lead and their relationships to the goal (Prentice, 1961). Likewise, Northouse's (2019) review of a collection of leadership styles emphasized the importance of leaders' awareness and the impacts of their behaviors on their followers.

Leaders in all organizations are tasked with maintaining or improving organizational cultures (Schein, 2004). Organizational culture represents the "shared values, beliefs, and norms of an organization" (Levi, 2017, p. 283). Culture is also stable, pervasive, slow to change, and shared by the members within an organization. (Levi, 2017). Because culture in organizations is abstract in nature, shared among members, and attached to everything the organization is, says, and does, it is prudent for a leader to determine how culture is recognized within organizations (Schein, 2004). Bolman and Deal's (2017) symbolic frame explained symbols as a means of identifying evidence of organizational culture. These symbols of culture shaped members' thoughts, feelings, and actions, and are passed through the sharing of myths, vision, values, heroes, heroines, stories, fairy tales, rituals, ceremonies, metaphors, humor, and play (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Dyer et al., (2007) and Levi (2017) recognized the integral role organizational culture played in facilitating collaborative teamwork. Furthermore, the context of the organization and support of the leader determined how the members of the organization work together (Levi, 2017). Vesso and Alas (2016) write, "The leader has the greatest impact on culture" (p. 309), thus, there was a need to understand how leaders recognize

and use symbols of culture within their organizations to continue to shape the organizational culture.

Schein's (2004) Levels of Culture (see Figure 1) can be used as a lens for viewing symbols of culture within organizations. The organizational culture shapes how the members interact within the work environment and interact with other members, and a positive organizational culture motivates members to do their best and enjoy their work (Schein, 2004) and has implications for leadership in rural education.

Leadership in Education

School district administrator roles and responsibilities vary from school district to school district. Research indicated administrators in the United States balance requirements of the job which includes: (a) strategy and planning, (b) student instruction, (c) budgeting, (d) law, (e) personnel management, (f) community relations, and (g) other miscellaneous school business (Leithwood, 2007; Marzano et al., 2005). Effective leaders planned and conveyed how their organization's mission and goals were met (Robinson et al., 2008; Sanzo et al., 2011), while also understanding the followers' goals and purposes (Prentice, 1961). Harris (2010) wrote the administrators' job was "primarily to hold the pieces of the organization together in a productive relationship . . . maximizing the human capacity within the organization" (p. 14). Moreover, Chan et. al (2019) found administrators identified the following roles required for job performance: (a) character, skill, (b) style, (c) personnel, (d) duties, (e) student affairs, and (f) knowledge.

Stringer and Hourani (2016) identified eighteen elements which comprised the school leaders' roles and responsibilities found in professional standards. They wrote:

> Vision and strategic goals, leading change, school planning, curriculum, teaching effectiveness, students' achievement, learning environment, continuous learning, professional development, principal as leader, conflict management, distributed leadership, policies and procedures, finances, resources and facilities, parent involvement, collaboration with community stakeholders and sharing learning. (p. 234)

Furthermore, Cisler and Bruce (2013) found building administrators' main roles fell into the categories of: (a) managing school personnel, (b) parent and community collaboration, and (c) school climate. An important finding in the literature surrounding the school leaders' roles were summarized by Leithwood et al. (2008), who wrote the impact of school leaders positively influenced teachers' "motivations, commitment, and beliefs connecting the supportiveness of their working conditions" (p. 32), and was supported by Prentice (1961) when he wrote leaders must know how to respond and to behave towards people and situations, showing the leader was the "most interested in and helpful towards his growth" (p. 107).

Literature has consistently pointed to the leader as the person who influences many aspects of the organization, including the people within. Petersen (2014) indicated the role of the administrator was foremost in creating the collaborative working culture in schools. Cisler and Bruce (2013) found teachers thought administrators were vital to shaping school climates, playing off the work of Schein (2004) who wrote:

> "Organizations do not form accidentally or spontaneously; rather, they are goal oriented, have a specific purpose, and are created because one or more individuals

> perceive that the coordinated and concerted action of a number of people can accomplish something that individual action cannot". (p. 226)

Furthermore, school leaders were the facilitators of collaboration amongst teachers in their buildings (DePaul, 2000; Roberson & Roberson, 2009), and were integral in creating an environment promoting the growth and development of the professionals in their districts (DeFour & Berkey, 1995). School leaders can embed and transmit culture and do so through "what leaders pay attention to, measure, and control" (Schein, 2004, p. 246).

Leadership in Missouri

To become an administrator in Missouri, one must have an advanced degree (master's, specialist, or doctorate) in education leadership or administration, a minimum of two years successful experience as a classroom teacher and pass the Missouri education leadership state licensure exam (DESE Become Certified as an Administrator, 2021). State licensure for Missouri administrators was aligned to the Educational Leadership Standards developed by National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2015) (DESE Become Certified as an Administrator, 2021), which provided guidance on the knowledge, skills, and behaviors an administrator should have, indicative of the roles and responsibilities of school leaders. The Educational Leadership Standards (2015) included:

> Standard 1. Mission, vision, and core values, Standard 2. Ethics and professional norms, Standard 3. Equity and cultural responsiveness, Standard 4. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment, Standard 5. Community of care and support for students, Standard 6. Professional capacity of school personnel, Standard 7.

> Professional community for teachers and staff, Standard 8. Meaningful engagement of families and community, Standard 9. Operations and management, Standard 10. School improvement. (p. 9-18)

Beyond the standards of practice (Educational Leadership Standards, 2015) and the credentialing requirements for Missouri administrators (DESE Become Certified as an Administrator, 2021), there was no identified roles and responsibilities delineated within the literature for Missouri leaders, however, the Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals (MoASSP, 2022) and the Missouri Association of School Administrators (MASA, 2022) have written Code of Ethics for their members.

Leadership in Rural Education

The roles of staff and leaders are different in rural America than in urban schools (Tooley & Prescott, 2021). Many rural administrators assume multiple responsibilities beyond those of their urban peers where responsibilities are shared amongst multiple administrators (Tooley & Prescott, 2021). Robson et al. (2019) wrote about needs in rural education being overlooked by advocates and policymakers, which did not focus on the key assets needed to "create and sustain meaningful change in rural schools" (p. 1).

Chan et al. (2018) found administrators reported three significant challenges related to personnel: (a) hiring and retaining good teachers, (b) high turnover, and (c) lack of training for teachers, even though administrators found it professionally fulfilling to see teachers growing professionally, and reported it was a "great achievement" and "satisfying to see good teachers that you hire really do a good job and become effective educators" (p. 52). Bickmore and Bickmore (2010) found administrators were essential in the teachers' development in the areas of: (a) respect of self, (b) belonging, (c) self-

esteem, and (d) autonomy, and pointed to the need for the administrator to acknowledge the novice teacher's ability, and Tillman (2005) found if the leader did not have positive interactions with novice teachers showing support, the novice teacher might begin to question their abilities and value. These findings have profound implications for leaders in rural areas because of the already identified shortage of qualified teachers in rural areas (Mitchell, 2021).

Furthermore, Prentice (1961) wrote the jobs of leaders were to help others learn from their mistakes, which indicated the leaders' jobs were straightforward, however, Chan et. al (2019) found building administrators reported challenges with how to lead teachers and to develop their professional skills, issues with personnel, such as high turnover, retention, certification issues, insufficient training, and providing adequate evaluation and support focused on teacher improvement. Moreover, one of the most important responsibilities of an administrator is building the organizational culture (Petersen, 2014; Schein, 2004), yet McAdams (1998) found U.S. administrators' work schedules were busier than their foreign counterparts, and this was suggestive of the various responsibilities undertaken by administrators in the U.S., which is additionally intensified in rural areas.

The challenges in staffing rural schools and leading rural schools are interrelated (Downes & Roberts, 2017). Research has shown effective administrators understood the value of hiring qualified teachers and recognized their roles in developing teachers, but a lack of qualified teachers in rural areas and administrators overloaded with responsibilities points to the time, attention, and resources needed to hire, to lead, to develop, and to support novice teachers as a critical issue.

The types of supports offered to teachers have been investigated (Israel et al., 2014), however, indicators of quality induction programs which consistently addressed the needs of rural novice teachers have not been identified, leaving rural, novice teachers reporting feelings of being unprepared to perform in their jobs (Irinaga-Bistolas et al., 2007). Literature documented how administrators experienced leadership challenges and obstacles with the various roles and responsibilities they assumed Chan et al. (2018), which is found to be compounded with additional challenges in rural schools (Downes & Roberts, 2017). Administrators were responsible for creating an environment which encouraged novice teachers to develop their teaching styles and emphasized student achievement (Watkins, 2005) while creating a learning culture within the organization (Schein, 2004), nevertheless, there was a lack of research surrounding administrator's role in the design, support, and evaluation of induction programs in rural education.

SECTION FOUR – CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE

Plan for Dissemination of Practitioner Contribution

The researcher will present the findings of this study to the Missouri Association of Elementary School Principals (MAESP), the Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals (MoASSP), and the Missouri Association of School Administrators (MASA) at their respective spring conferences that occur each year in the months of February and March. The MAESP, MoASSP, and MASA are professional organizations for Missouri administrators. Given the scope of the study, the annual leadership conferences hosted by these organizations are a natural fit for the practitioner contribution and the investigation of the role of the administrator in the design, support, and evaluation induction programs in rural, public K-12 schools in Northwest Missouri. Results from the study could have applicability to administrators who participate in the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher programs in other districts throughout Missouri--both urban and rural, therefore, a breakout session will serve as the main source of dissemination of the practitioner research. In the breakout session, a Power Point will be used and will include resources to support administrators who participate in novice teacher induction programs in their districts. Administrators can take what they have learned from this session and apply it immediately in their leadership roles in their school districts.

Presentation Plan

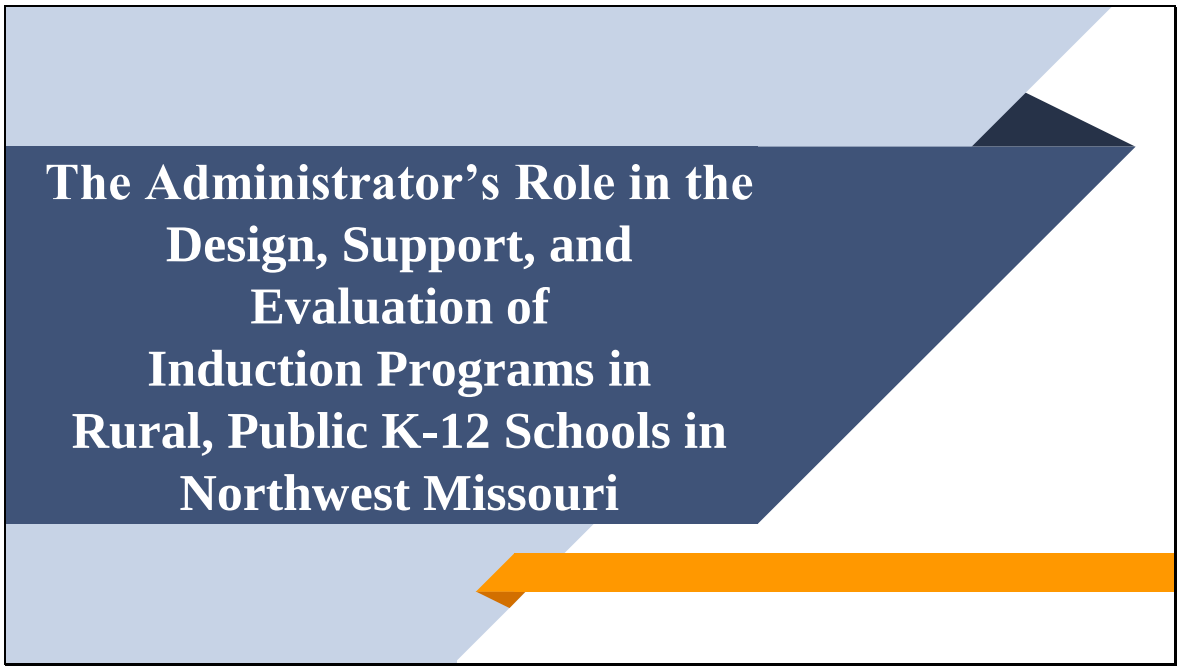
Where: Missouri Association of Elementary School Principals (MAESP), the Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals (MoASSP), and the Missouri Association of School Administrators (MASA) Spring Conferences

When: Spring 2023

How: PowerPoint Small Group Presentation

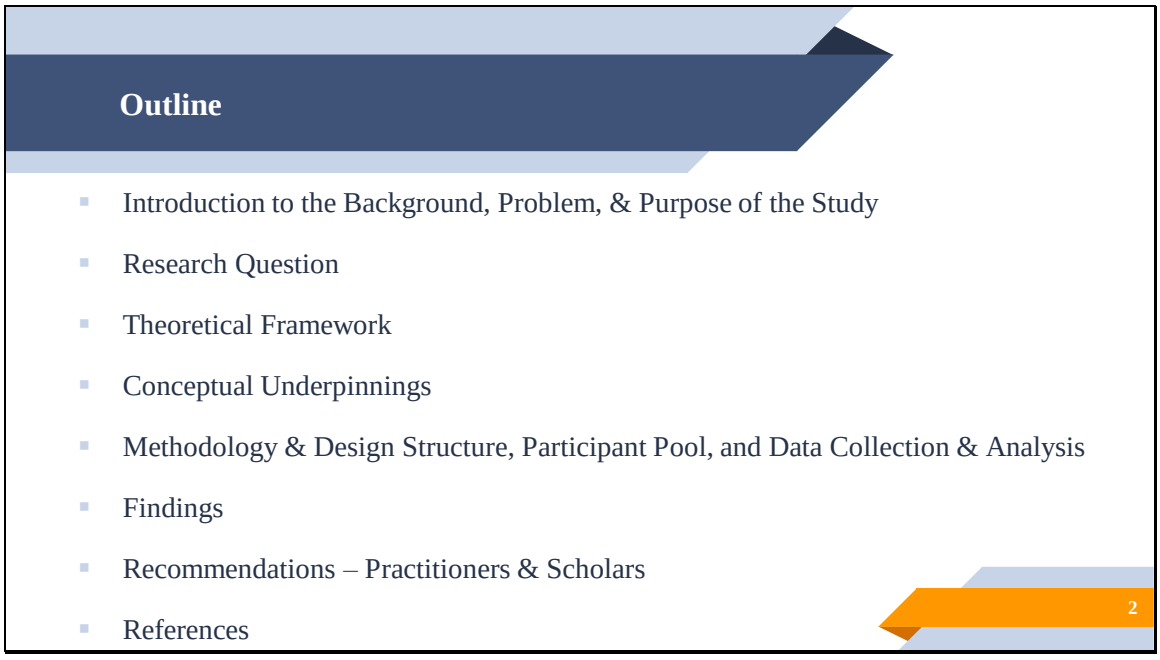
Presentation

Slide 1



- Thank you for being here today. I am Dr. Tamara Lynn.
- Today we will be discussing how administrators cultivate novice teachers in rural, public K-12 schools in Northwest Missouri.
- We will be looking specifically at the administrator's role in the design, support, evaluation of novice teacher induction programs.
- The learning goal for today is the application of what was learned because of this study to future practices.

Slide 2



- Today we will be looking at the following study components.

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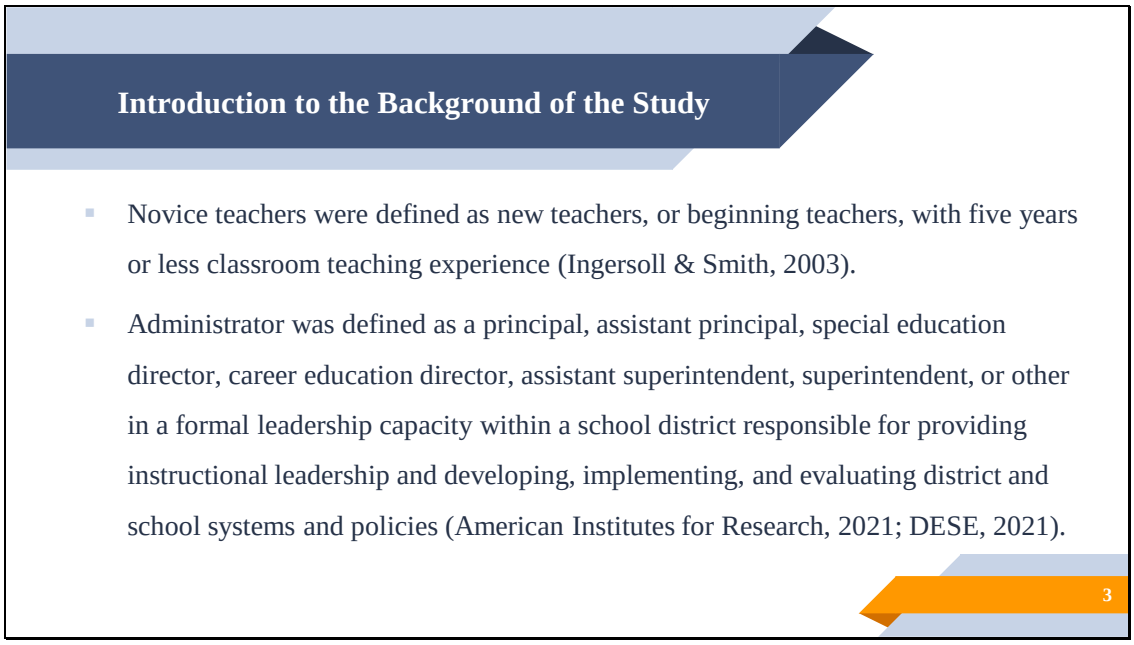
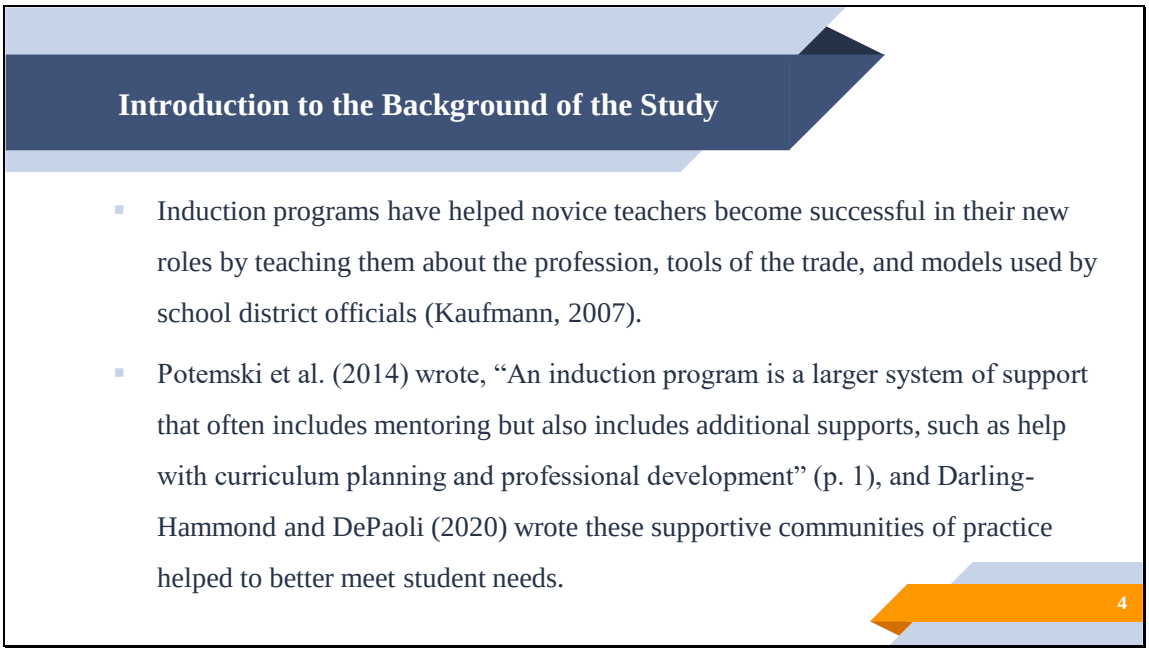


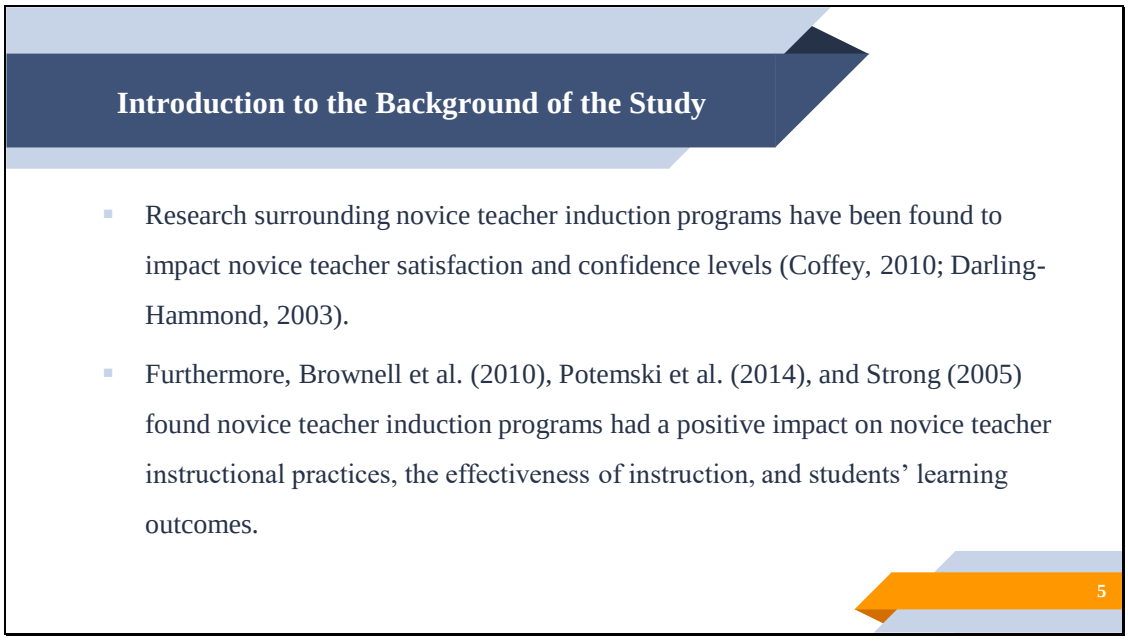
- Novice teacher induction studies often focus on the novice teacher's perceptions of the program, but this investigation is designed to focus on administrators' perceptions and role in novice teacher induction programs within K-12 public, rural school districts.

Slide 4



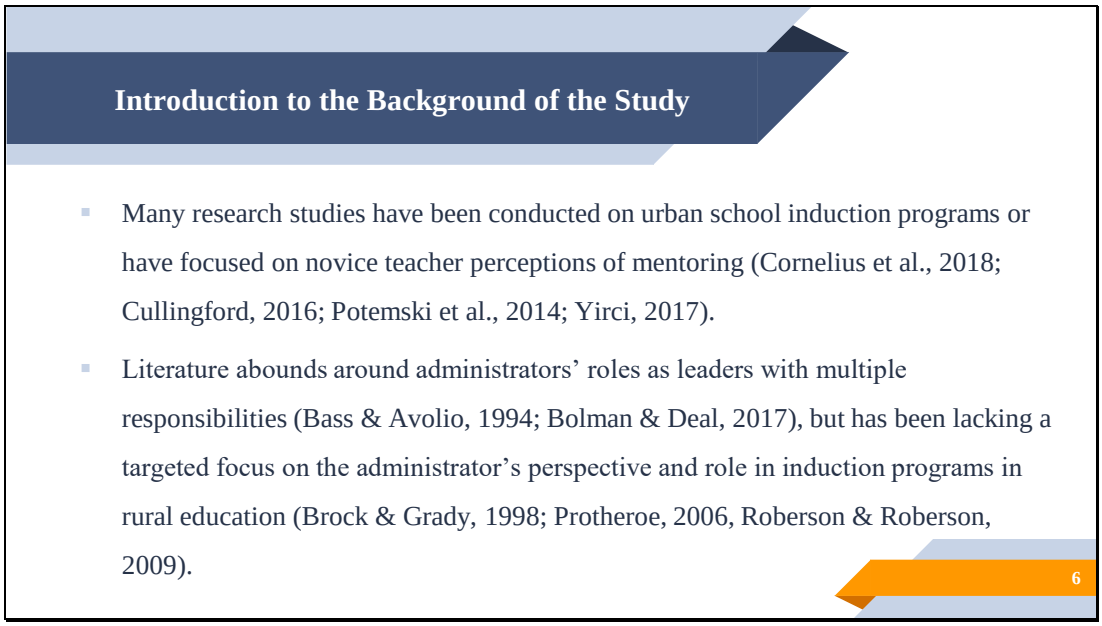
- Novice teacher induction is a process of learning through experience.
- A sense of community is often created within the novice teacher induction environment and engages the novice teacher in the school culture (Dogan, 2017).

Slide 5



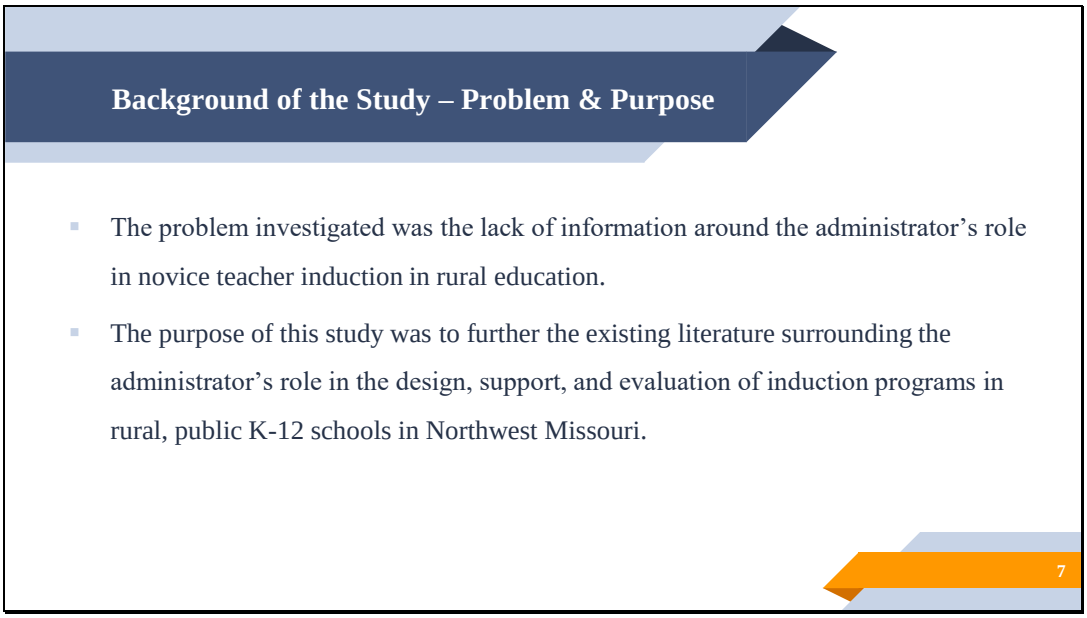
- The benefits of novice teacher induction have been shown in a throng of literature.

Slide 6



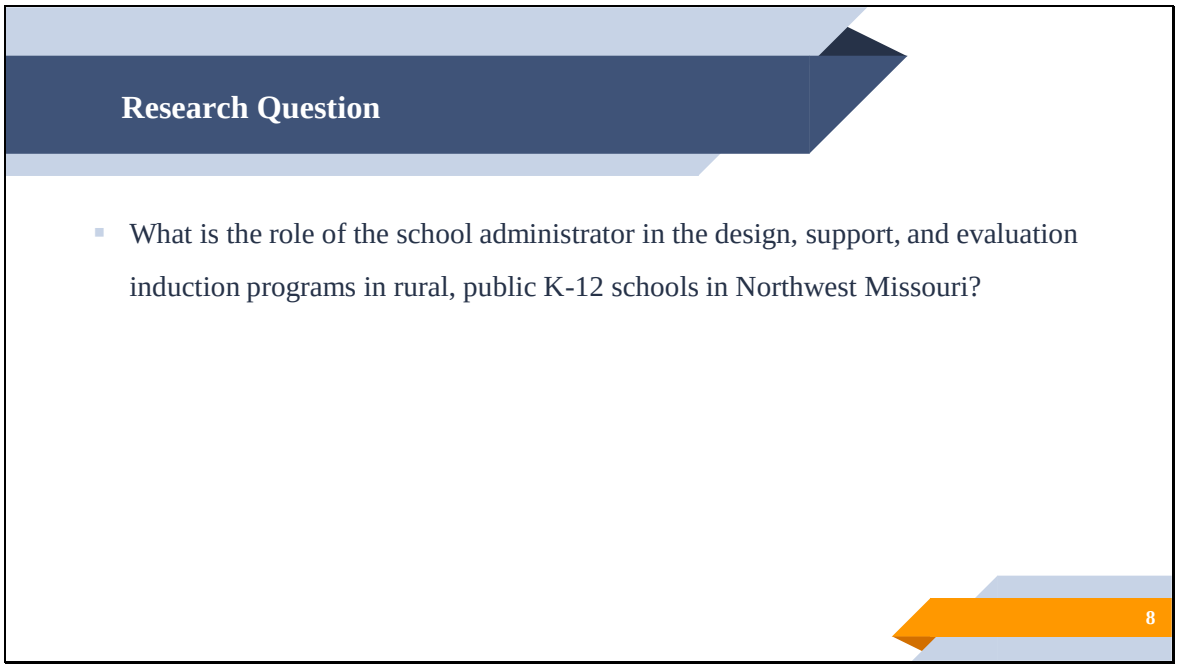
- Novice teacher induction studies often focus on novice teachers' perceptions of the program, but this investigation focused on administrators' perceptions and role in novice teacher induction programs within K-12 public, rural school districts.

Slide 7



- The lived experiences and perceptions collected in this investigation shed light towards understanding the administrators' roles in the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher induction programs.

Slide 8



- The overarching research question guiding this study was: What is the role of the school administrator in the design, support, and evaluation induction programs in rural, public K-12 schools in Northwest Missouri?

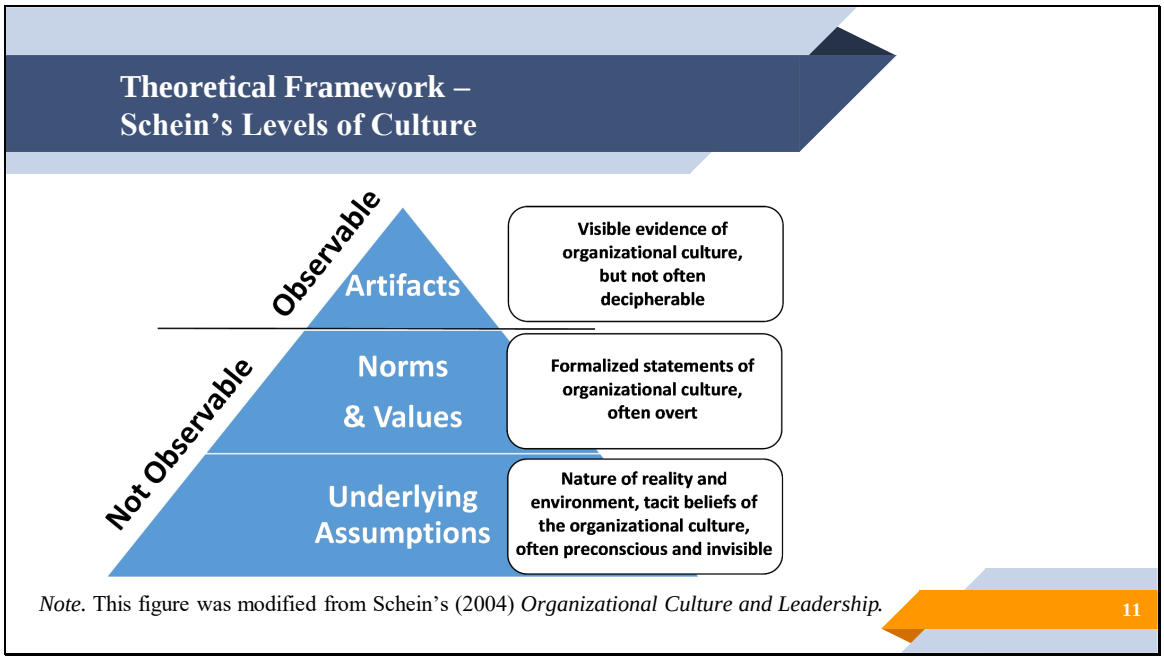
Slide 9

- Schein's (2004) Levels of Culture was used as the theoretical framework to in this study.

Slide 10

- Schein (2004) defined organizations as "social units" (p. 11), with defining characteristics and shared histories.

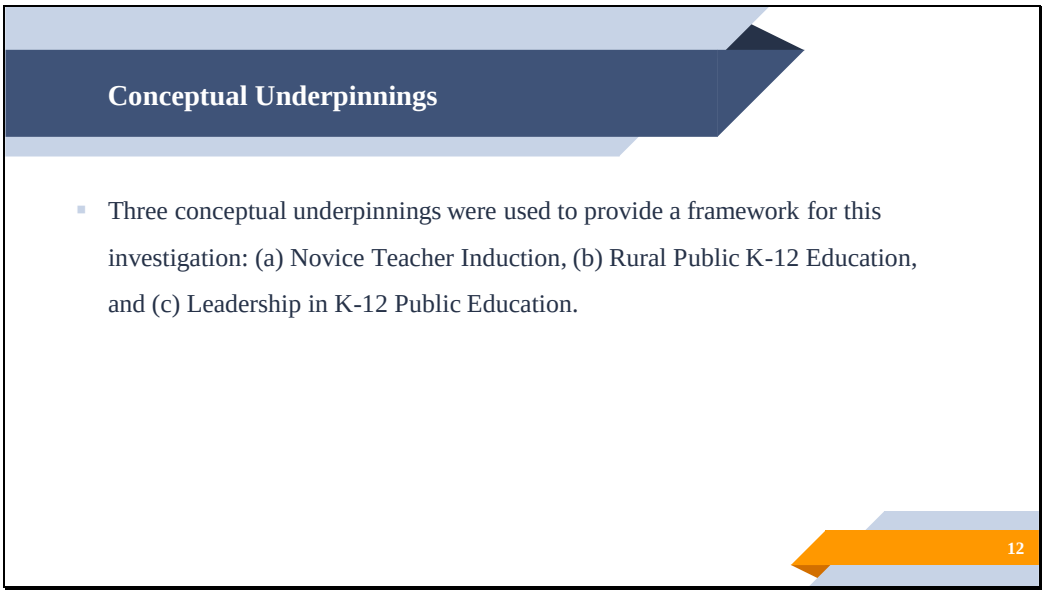
Slide 11



Note. This figure was modified from Schein's (2004) *Organizational Culture and Leadership.*

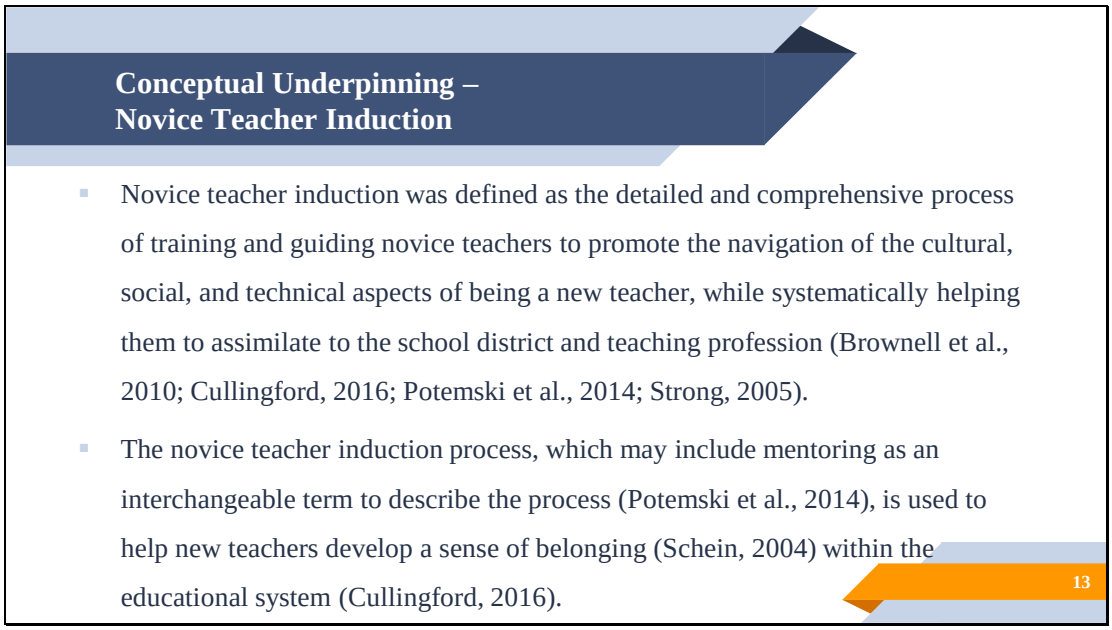
- Schein's (2004) Levels of Culture were used in this study to provide a lens for viewing organizational culture, the evidence, and the representative symbols of culture.

Slide 12



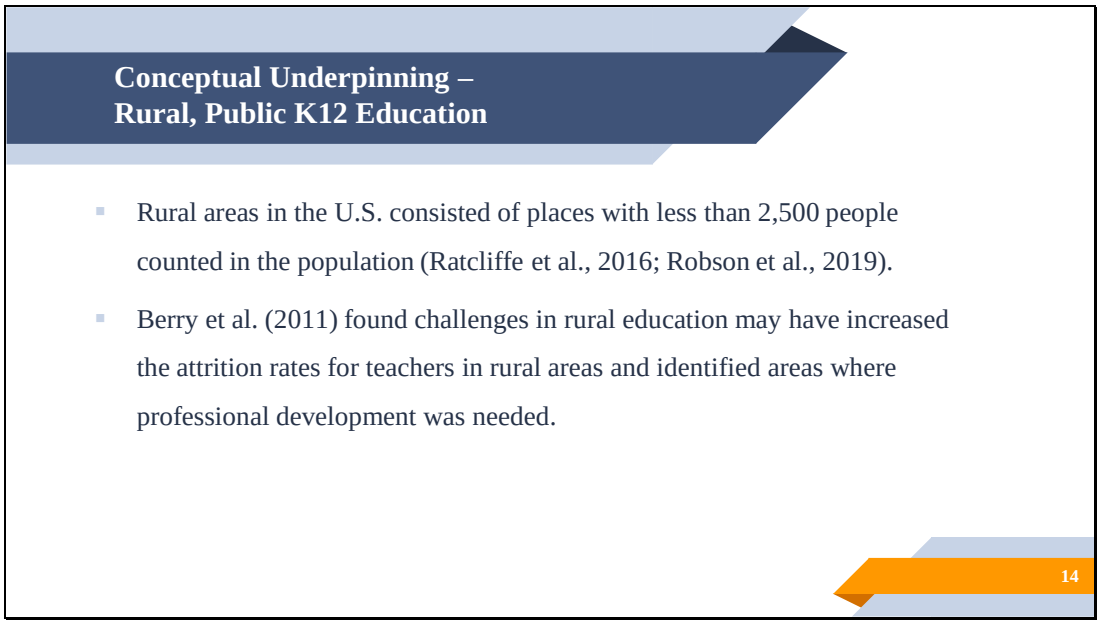
- Furthermore, three conceptual underpinnings were used to provide a framework for this investigation: (a) Novice Teacher Induction, (b) Rural Public K-12 Education, and (c) Leadership in K-12 Public Education.

Slide 13



- The process used in many school districts to guide the learning of novice teachers to assist them in transition into the profession is novice teacher induction (Brownell, et al., 2010; Wong, 2005).
- Frequently, mentoring and induction are used interchangeably, however, mentoring is just one part of the induction process.

Slide 14

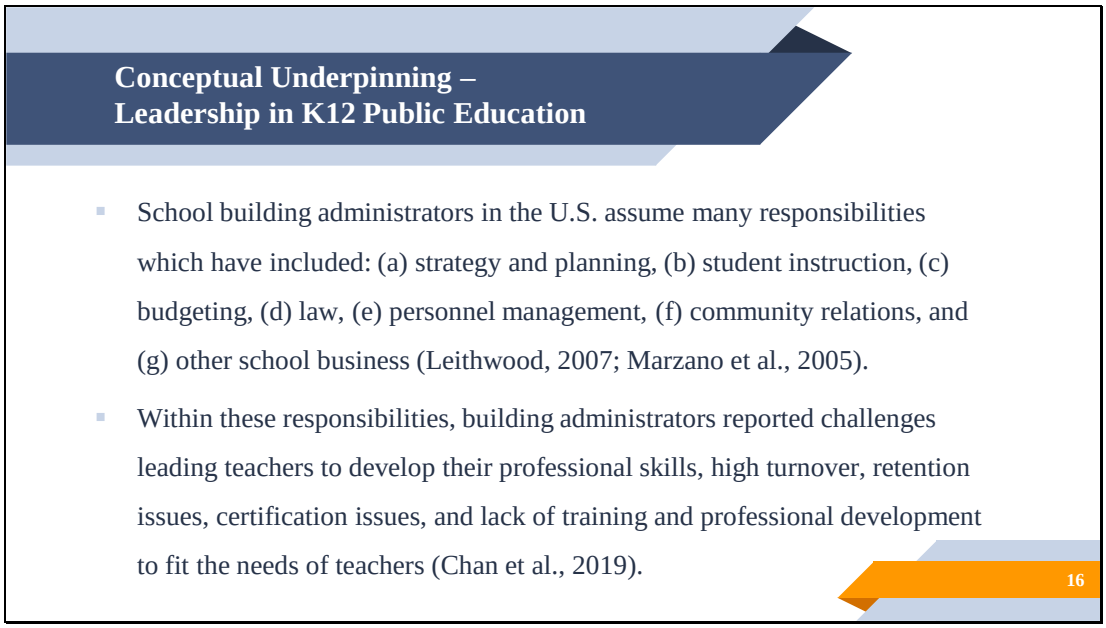


- Other definitions of rural areas have existed in the literature, so it was recommended further research in this area occur before attempting to replicate this study.
- Rural schools can be found across the United States (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021), and one out of every four students in the U.S. attend schools in rural areas (Bellwether Education Partners, 2021).

Slide 15

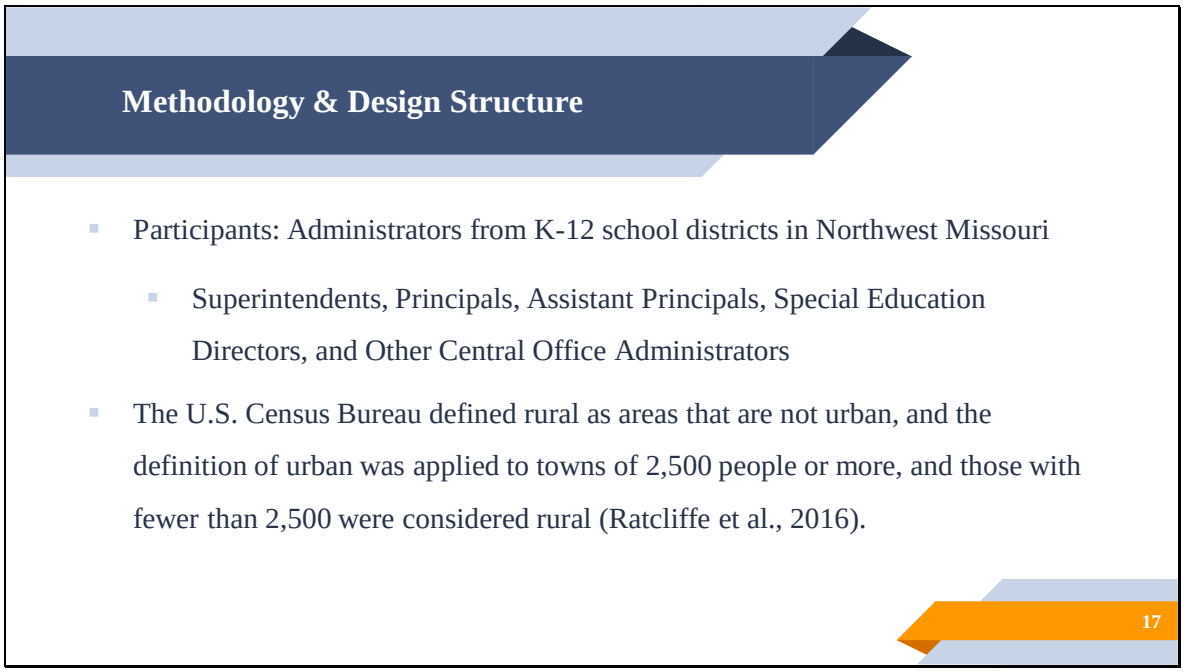
- Rural, public K-12 education experienced distinctive challenges different than their urban equivalents (Bellwether Education Partners, 2021; Tieken & Montgomery, 2021).

Slide 16



- Leaders in K-12 public education take on many roles in school districts, and there is variance in job titles and responsibilities of educational leaders across the country.
- For the purposes of this study, the research will focus on leaders in K-12 public education in any administrator role with direct charge over novice teacher induction programs.
- Furthermore, school leaders in rural areas had more responsibilities than their urban peers due to the shared responsibilities amongst multiple administrators in larger school districts (Tooley & Prescott, 2021).

Slide 17



- Participants in the study were selected as a convenience sample (Fink, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020), which included school administrators from the 59 school districts identified as rural willing to participate in the study to reflect on current and past novice teacher induction practices within their school district.
- Participants were administrators from elementary, middle, high school, or the district level, and some participants supervise some overlapping combination of grade levels, such as K-12 or middle/high school.

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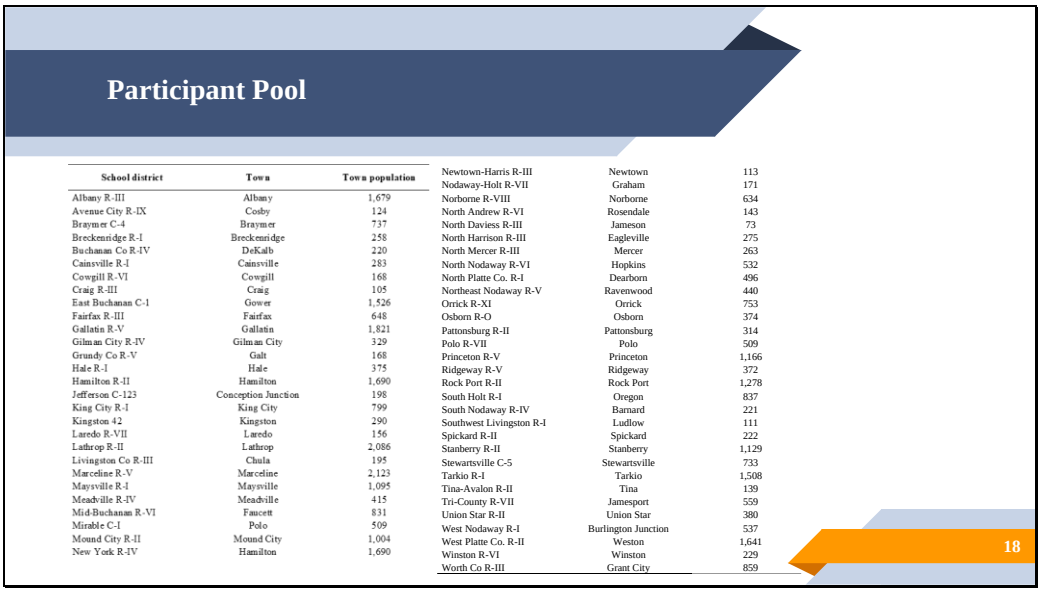
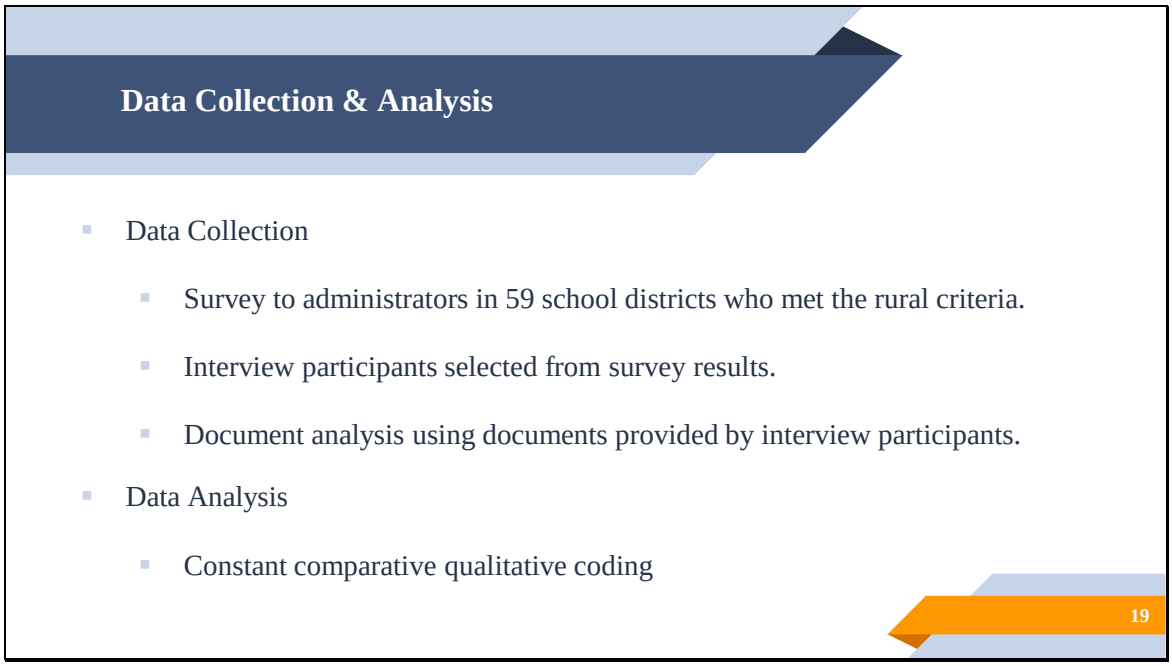


School district	Town	Town population
Albany R-III	Albany	1,679
Avenue City R-IX	Cosby	124
Braymer C-4	Braymer	737
Breckenridge R-I	Breckenridge	258
Buchanan Co R-IV	DeKalb	220
Cainsville R-I	Cainsville	283
Cowgill R-VI	Cowgill	168
Craig R-III	Craig	105
East Buchanan C-1	Gower	1,526
Fairfax R-III	Fairfax	648
Gallatin R-V	Gallatin	1,821
Gilman City R-IV	Gilman City	329
Grundy Co R-V	Galt	168
Hale R-I	Hale	375
Hamilton R-II	Hamilton	1,690
Jefferson C-123	Conception Junction	198
King City R-I	King City	799
Kingston 42	Kingston	290
Laredo R-VII	Laredo	156
Lathrop R-II	Lathrop	2,086
Livingston Co R-III	Chula	195
Marceline R-V	Marceline	2,123
Maysville R-I	Maysville	1,095
Meadville R-IV	Meadville	415
Mid-Buchanan R-VI	Faucett	831
Mirable C-I	Polo	509
Mound City R-II	Mound City	1,004
New York R-IV	Hamilton	1,690
Newtown-Harris R-III	Newtown	113
Nodaway-Holt R-VII	Graham	171
Norborne R-VIII	Norborne	634
North Andrew R-VI	Rosendale	143
North Daviess R-III	Jameson	73
North Harrison R-III	Eagleville	275
North Mercer R-III	Mercer	263
North Nodaway R-VI	Hopkins	532
North Platte Co. R-I	Dearborn	496
Northeast Nodaway R-V	Ravenwood	440
Orrick R-XI	Orrick	753
Osborn R-O	Osborn	374
Pattonsburg R-II	Pattonsburg	314
Polo R-VII	Polo	509
Princeton R-V	Princeton	1,166
Ridgeway R-V	Ridgeway	372
Rock Port R-II	Rock Port	1,278
South Holt R-I	Oregon	837
South Nodaway R-IV	Barnard	221
Southwest Livingston R-I	Ludlow	111
Spickard R-II	Spickard	222
Stanberry R-II	Stanberry	1,129
Stewartsville C-5	Stewartsville	733
Tarkio R-I	Tarkio	1,508
Tina-Avalon R-II	Tina	139
Tri-County R-VII	Jamesport	559
Union Star R-II	Union Star	380
West Nodaway R-I	Burlington Junction	537
West Platte Co. R-II	Weston	1,641
Winston R-VI	Winston	229
Worth Co R-III	Grant City	859

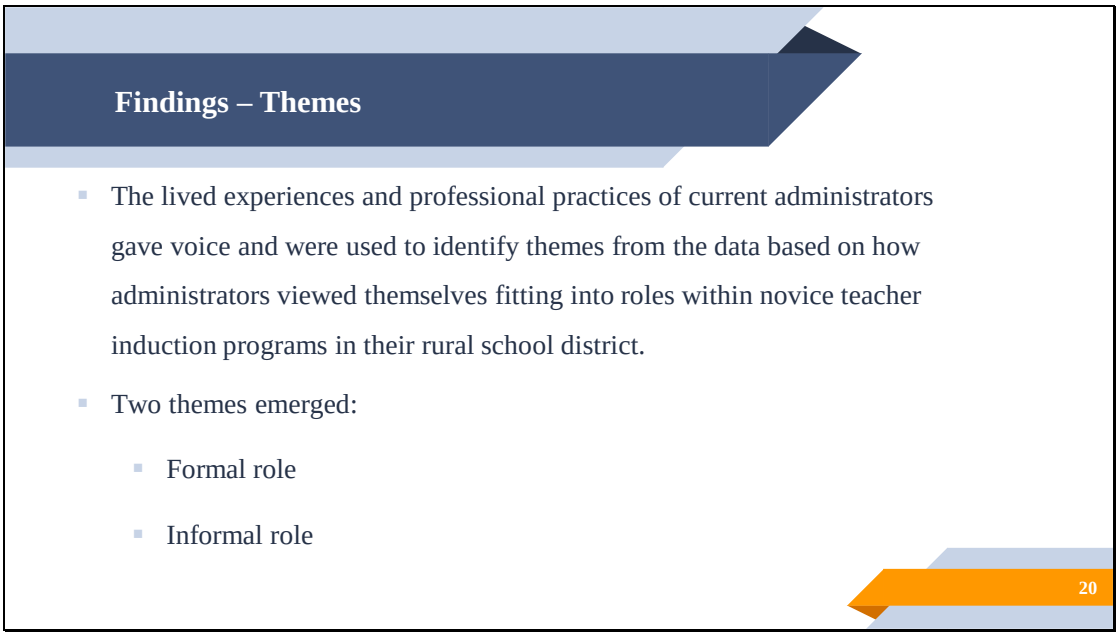
- The setting of this study was rural, Northwest Missouri and consisted of administrators from school districts served by region five of the Northwest Regional Professional Development Center (NWRPDC) (NWRPDC Region Five School Sites, 2021).
- The NWRPDC was a regional branch of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) with a mission to "build the capacity of educators and schools to maximize student performance through high quality professional development" (NWRPDC Welcome, 2021, para. 1), and their partnership helped facilitate the initial communication efforts with the researcher and participants.

Slide 19



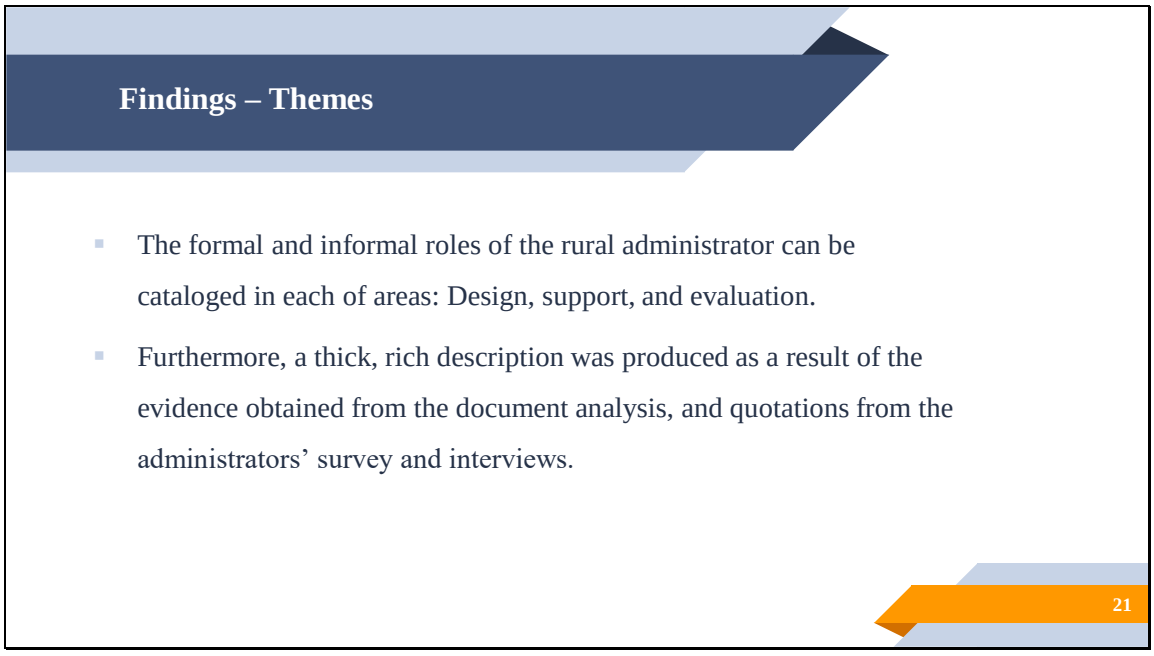
- Forty-three administrators responded to the initial contact made through an email by completing the electronic survey during the two-week window the survey was available.
- Convenience sampling from the population was used due to the researcher's desire to investigate rural school districts in Northwest Missouri and the availability of the participants within those districts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020).
- Six administrators were identified as willing participants, further contact was made through email, phone calls, and/or face-to-face contact to schedule and conduct 45-minutes interviews and to receive documents for the document analysis.
- The data were organized using constant comparative methods into themes which emerged in the coding process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldana, 2015). This process of coding the data were an ongoing and continuous process until saturation was reached, producing a rich, thick description of the investigation using quotes in the findings, which added to the credibility of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Slide 20



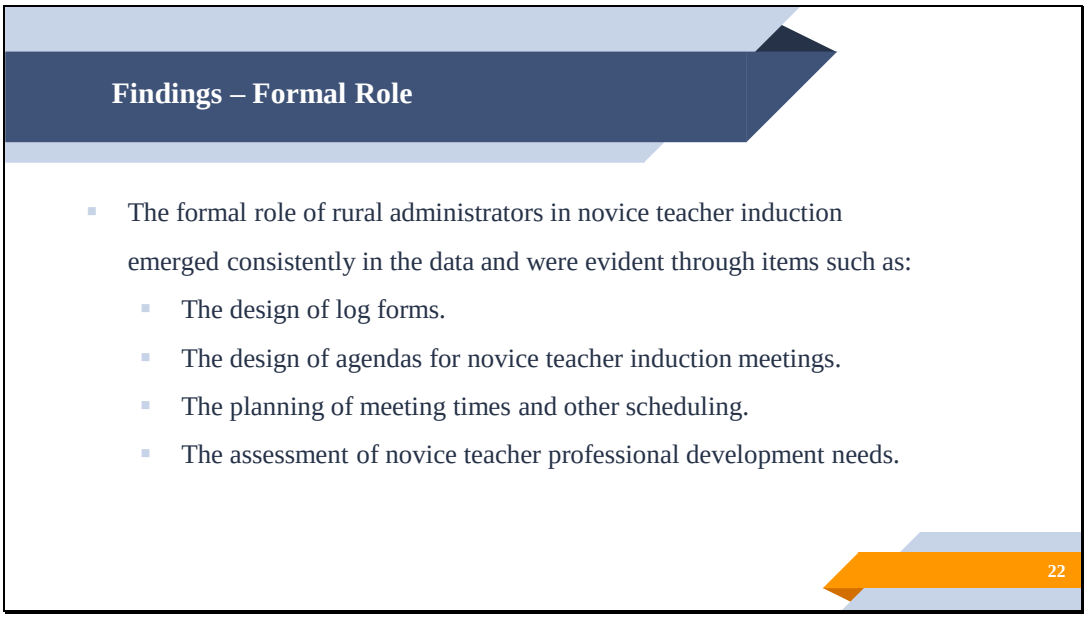
- Two themes emerged as the data were collected and analyzed.
- Administrators' responsibilities for the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher induction programs in rural school district were assembled into two roles: Formal and informal.

Slide 21



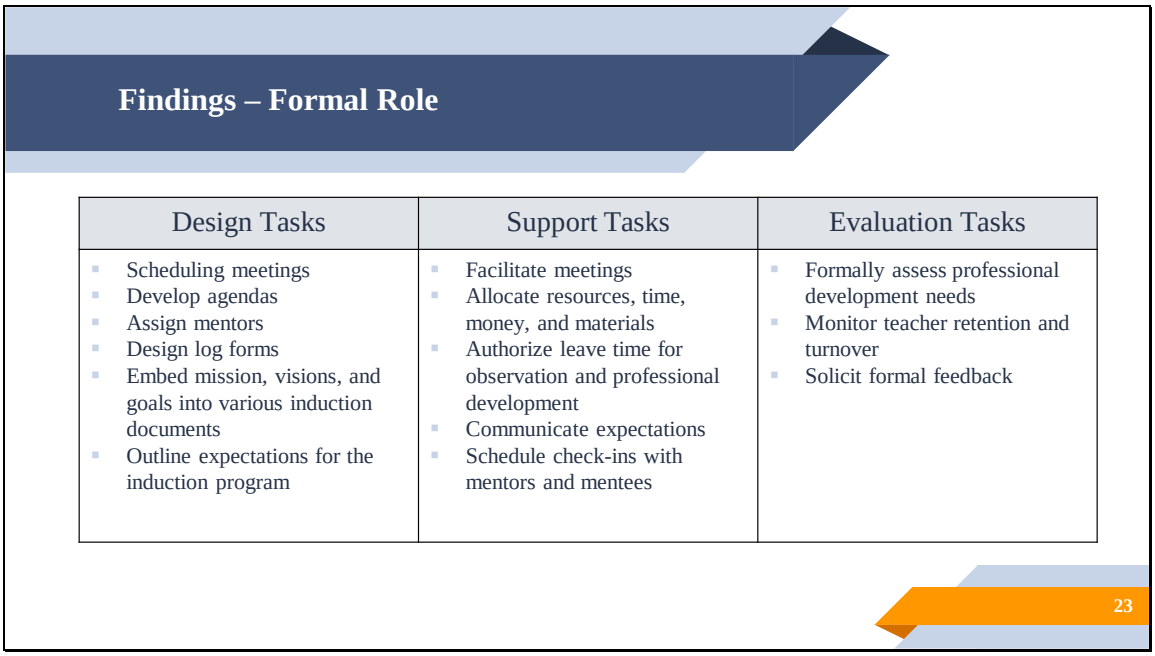
- A summary of the formal role and informal role findings will be discussed on the following slides.

Slide 22



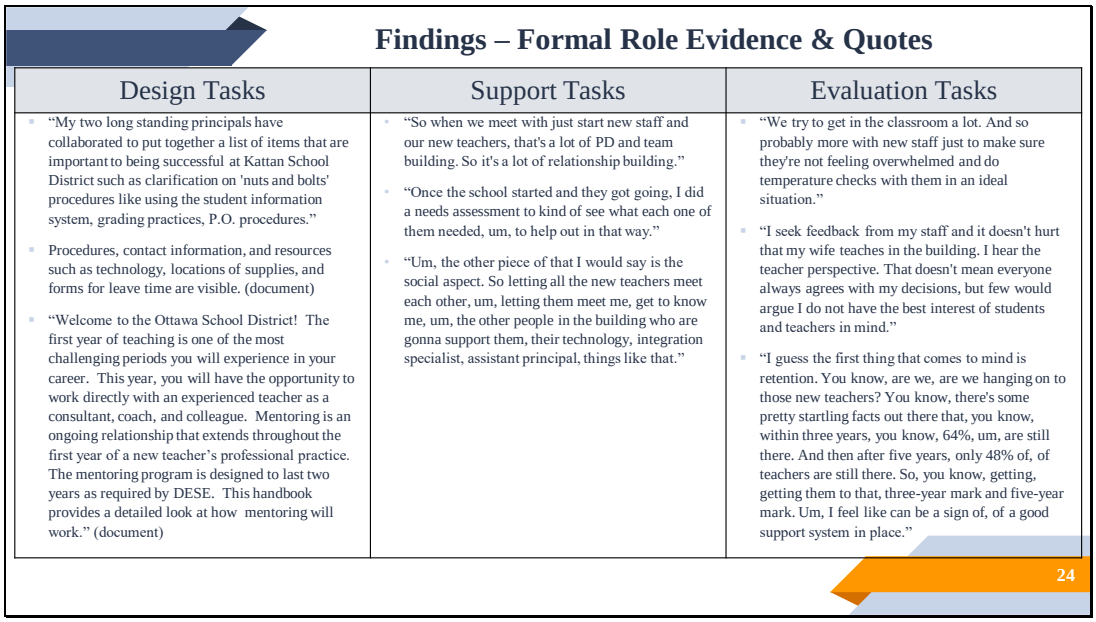
- Across all three data sources, evidence of rural administrators' roles in the design of various forms, agendas, and other formal documents used in the novice teacher induction process emerged.

Slide 23



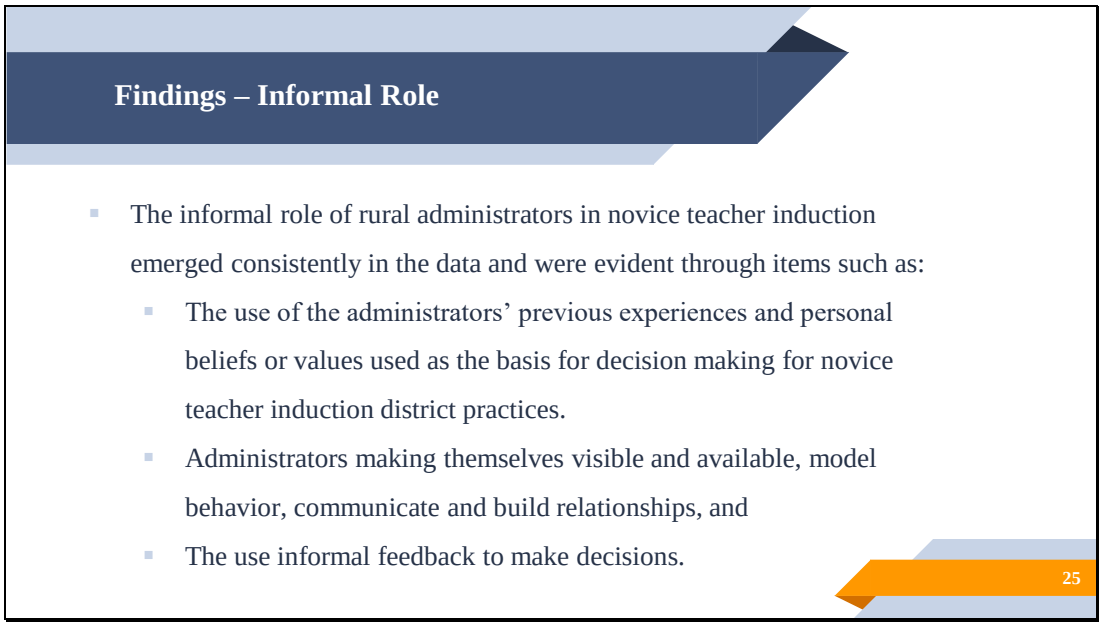
- Some rural administrators delegated these responsibilities to other administrators or mentors within the district, while others completed the tasks within the formal role themselves.
- Additionally, rural administrators also provided documents demonstrating formal tasks used for the novice teacher induction practices.

Slide 24



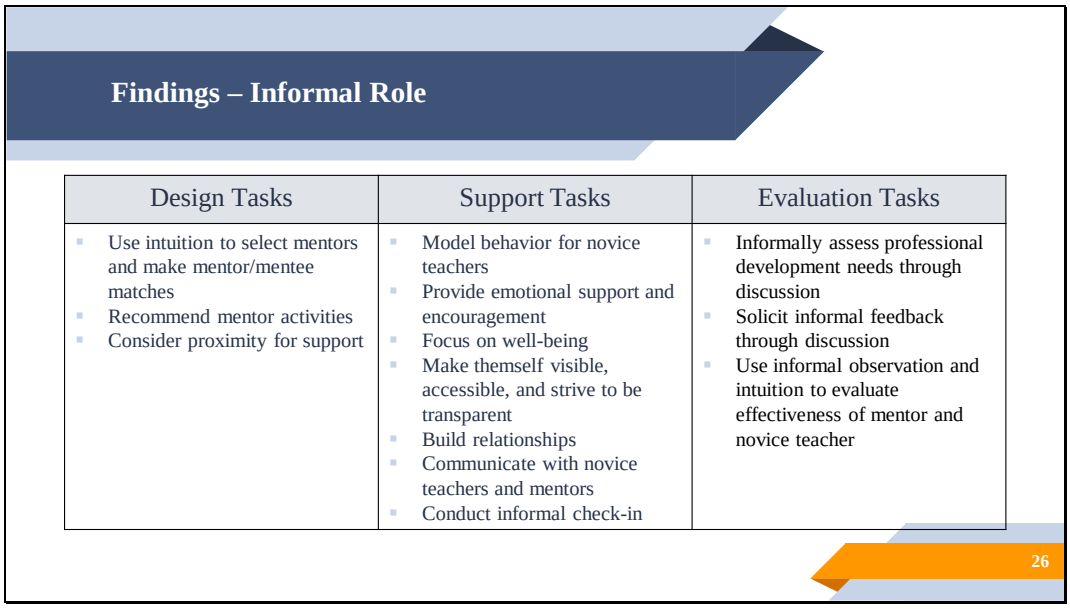
- Here are some representations of the rural administrators' formal role in the design, support, and evaluation novice teacher induction tasks.

Slide 25



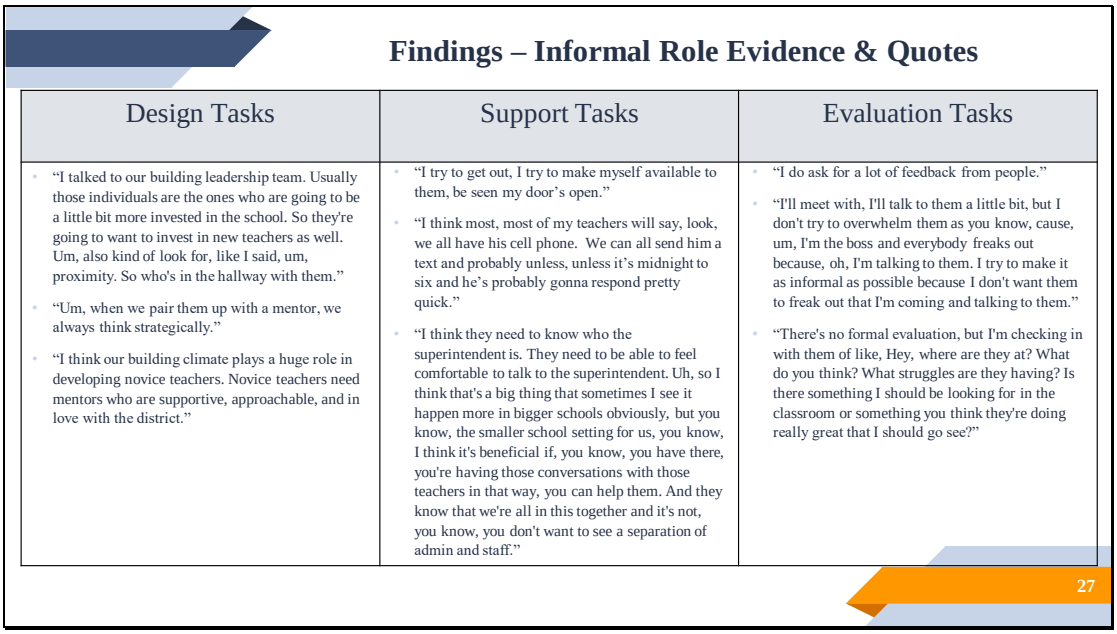
- When considering the rural administrators' informal role in the design of novice teacher induction practices, the administrators' personal experiences, beliefs, and values was evident as the guidepost for decision making.

Slide 26



- Much of the rural administrators' informal roles in the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher induction was reflective of the administrators' visibility, involvement, and connect to their personal beliefs and experiences.
- Rural administrators worked in the informal role without much delegation to others.

Slide 27

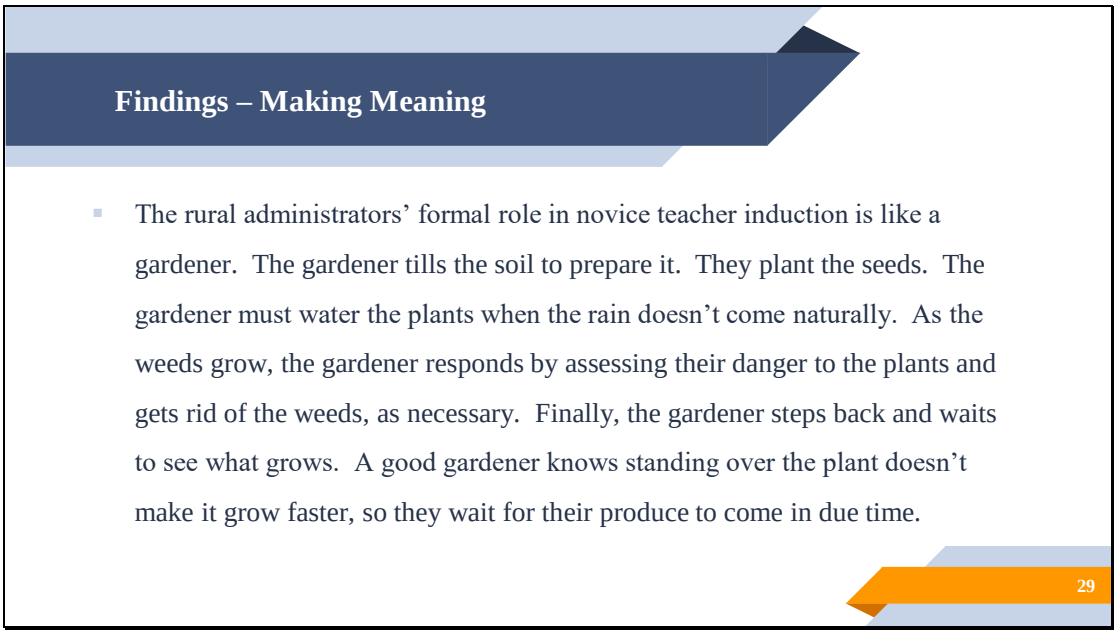


- Here are some representations of the rural administrators' informal roles in the design, support, and evaluation novice teacher induction tasks.

Slide 28

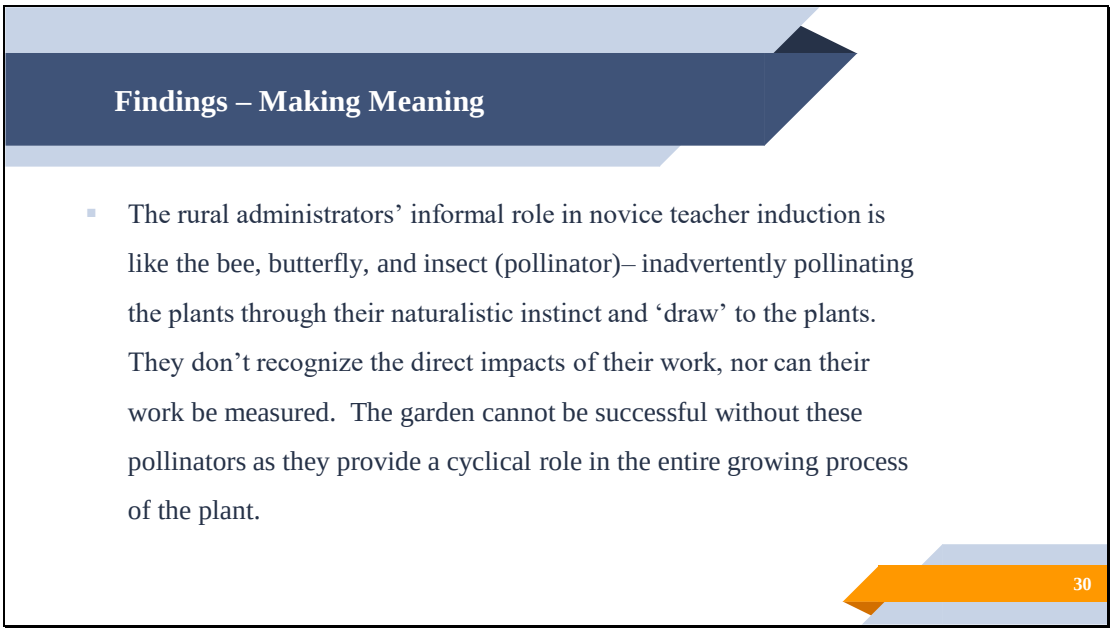
- When considering the administrators' roles in the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher induction in rural, public K-12 schools in Northwest Missouri, it is evident through the data the administrator functions in two divergent roles, formal and informal.
- Meaning is made when we consider the formal role, the rural administrator as a gardener, and the informal role, the rural administrator as a pollinator, like how a bee or butterfly pollinates the flowers.
- We will continue to further unpack these meanings.

Slide 29



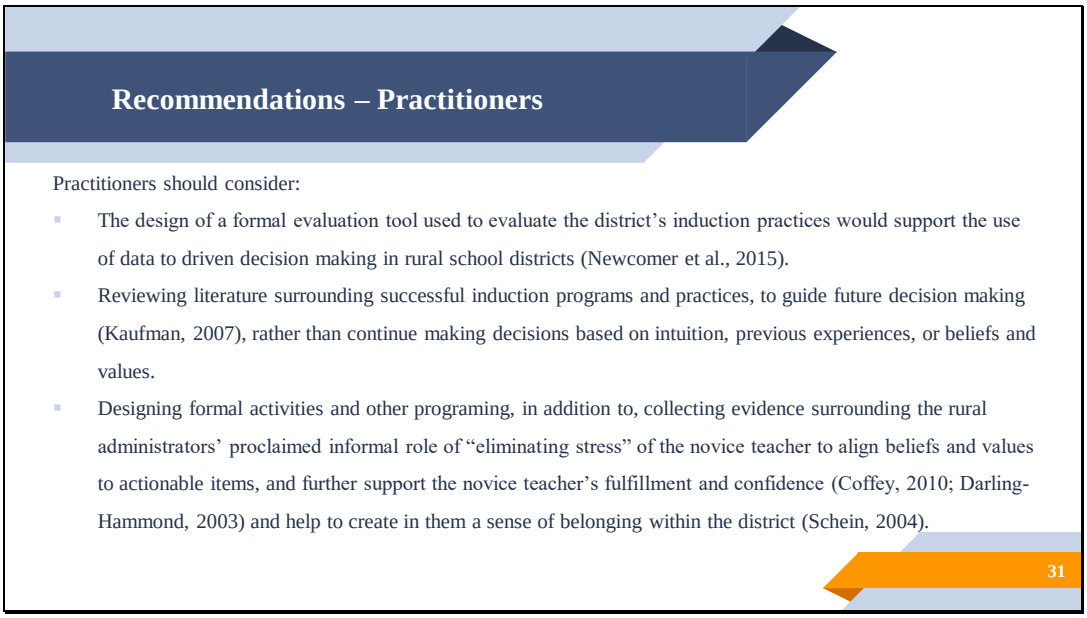
- We liken the role of the gardener to that of the rural administrators' formal roles in novice teacher induction. The rural administrator designs and prepares for the program. They select mentors and provide time, resources, and money to support the novice teachers' growth. Through the formal evaluation role, the rural administrator determines what helps and does not help the novice teacher acclimation to the school district, and the rural administrator continues to watch and wait for the novice teacher to grow and develop into a teacher leader within their school district.

Slide 30



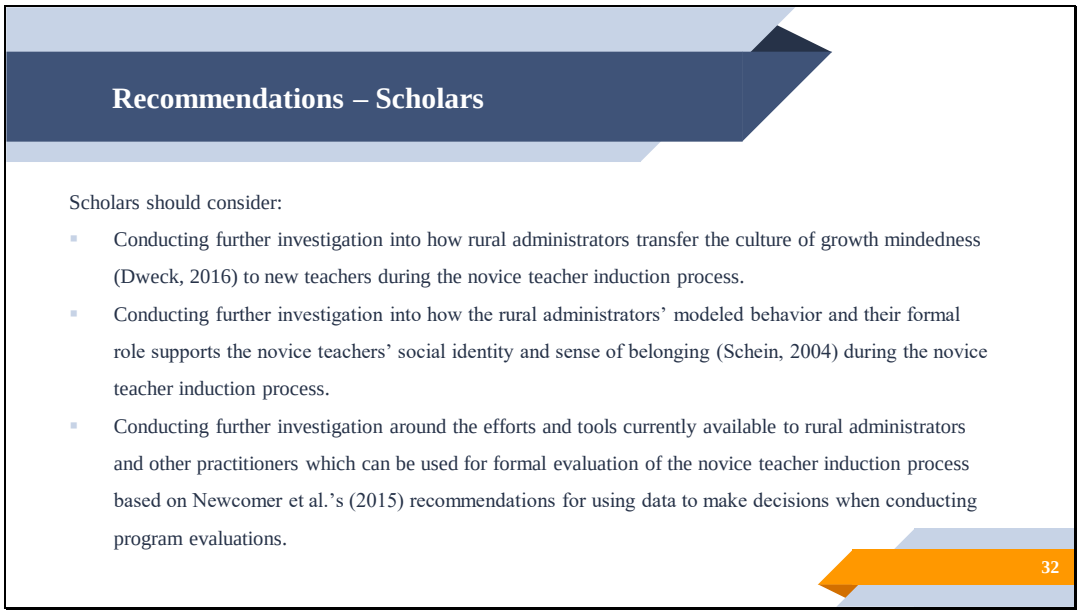
- The use of intuition to make decisions, conduct informal check-ins, focus on well-being, and provide encouragement may not be easily measured in terms of the direct impact on the novice teacher, but are done so as an instinct of the rural administrator based on their beliefs and perceptions surrounding the needs of novice teachers.
- Several recommendations for practitioners and scholars arose from this study and warrant further discussion.

Slide 31



- Rural participants indicated they did not use any formal means for evaluating the success of their novice teacher induction programs, though many felt evaluation was an important component of the program when asked, so the design of a formal evaluation tool used to evaluate the district's induction practices would support the use of data to driven decision making (Newcomer et al., 2015) regarding the program and could provide insight into the school district's novice teacher retention.
- The tool could be a survey, an interview with the novice teacher, or a novice teacher self-assessment, or some combination thereof.
- As recommended by Kaufman (2007), rural administrators should revisit high quality program standards for novice teacher induction.
- Furthermore, the rural administrators' responses indicated the administrators' roles in novice teacher induction is not addressed and embedded with fidelity into administrator coursework and should be considered as recommendation for adoption and review within educator preparation programs (Black, 2004).
- While many practitioners claimed their goal was to support novice teachers to make them want to stay in the district, actionable and planned items did not exist to purposefully eliminate stress for the novice teacher.
- By familiarizing themselves and utilizing recommendations from previous research, practitioners could further support the novice teacher's fulfillment and confidence (Coffey, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2003) and help to create in them a sense of belonging within the district (Schein, 2004) in a more formal and intentional way.

Slide 32



- Rural administrators were reflective on their own behavior and shortcomings throughout the study indicating a desire to do better, do more, and continuing to grow as a leader. Future scholars should consider investigation into how administrators transfer their own culture of growth mindedness (Dweck, 2016) to new teachers during the novice teacher induction process in K-12 public, rural school districts.
- Rural administrators felt duty towards helping the novice teacher adopt the school culture, to "fit in" by establishing within the novice teacher a sense of belonging within the school district (Schein, 2004), thus, further investigation is needed into how the administrator's modeled behavior and their formal role supports the novice teachers' social identity and sense of belonging during the novice teacher induction process in K-12 public, rural school districts.
- Because rural administrators did not use formal tools for evaluating their novice teacher induction programs, Newcomer et al.'s (2015) recommendations for using data to make decisions when conducting program evaluations, further investigation around the efforts and tools currently available to administrators and other practitioners which can be used for formal evaluation of the novice teacher induction process in K-12 public, rural school districts is recommended.
- If such tools for evaluating novice teacher induction exists, rural administrators would be more able to readily adopt and apply these tools to assist in evaluating and making changes and decisions to better support novice teachers within their K-12 public, rural school districts.

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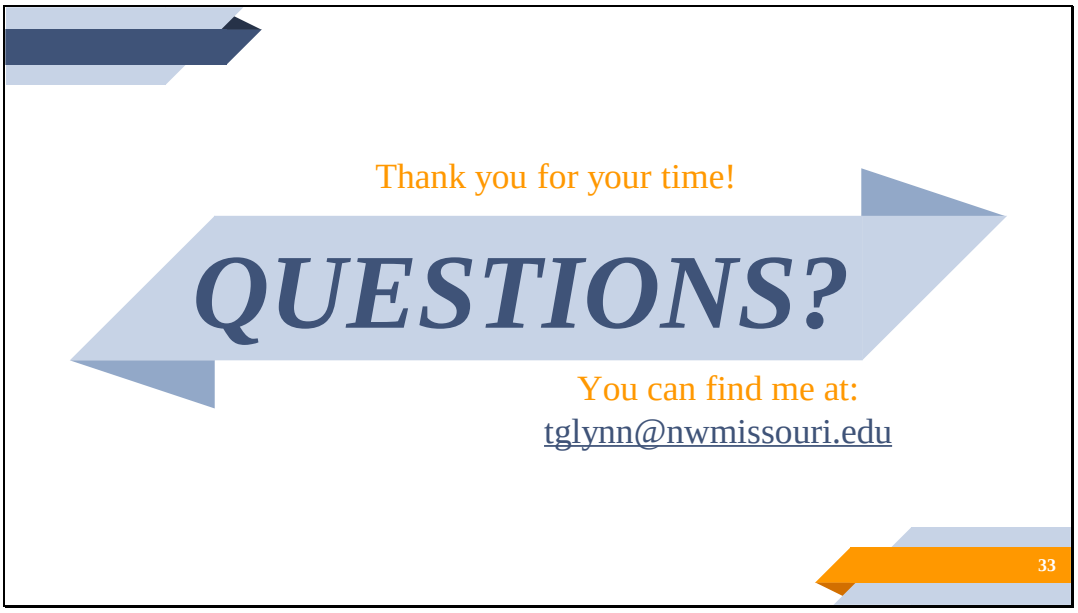
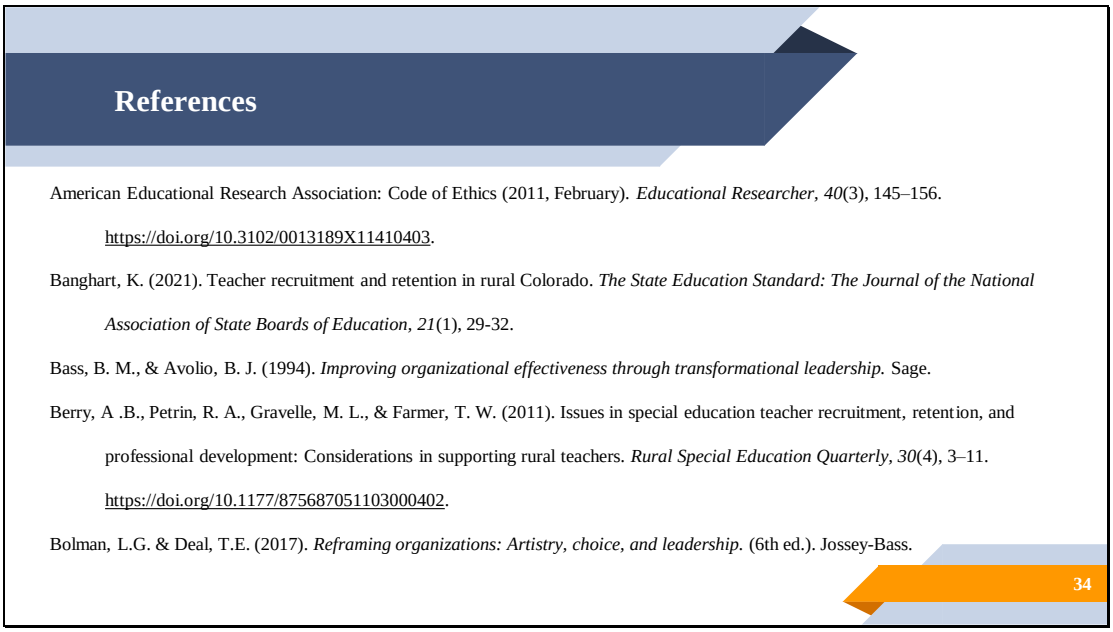


- I would love to collaborate with you in the future if you are interested in novice teacher induction practices or would like to share what you are doing in your district.
- Please email me if you have questions or feedback regarding this study.
- Thank you for your time today!

Slide 34



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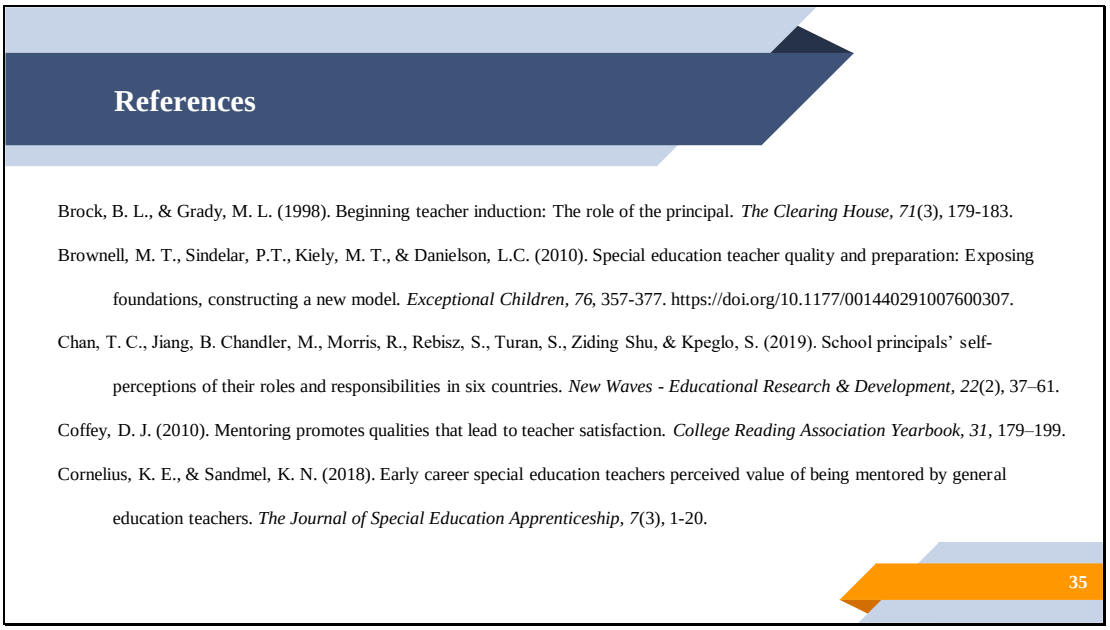

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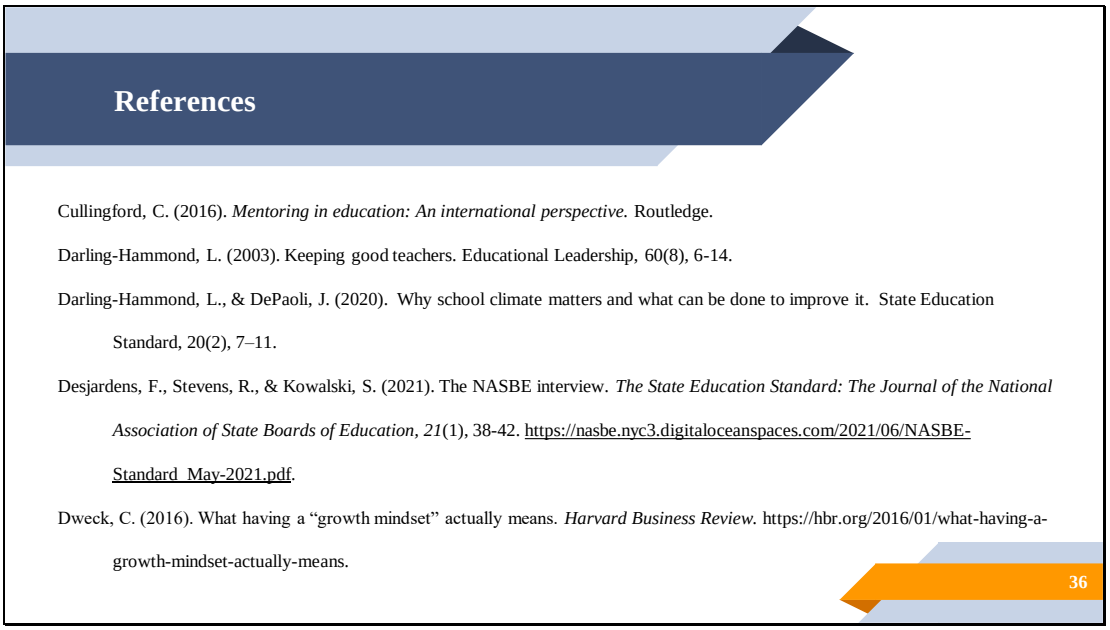

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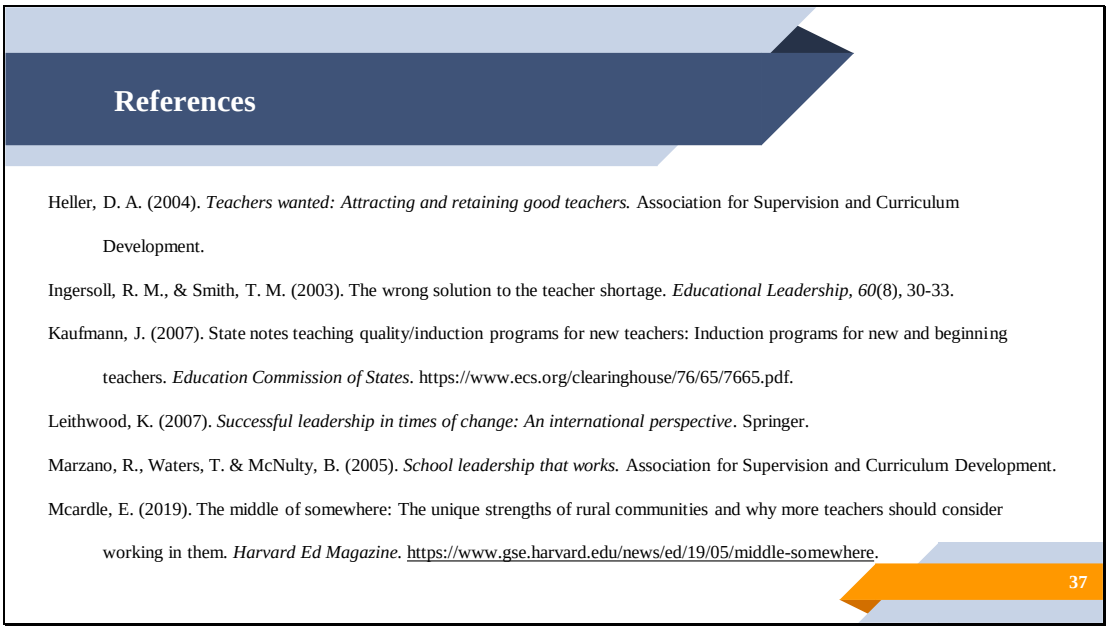

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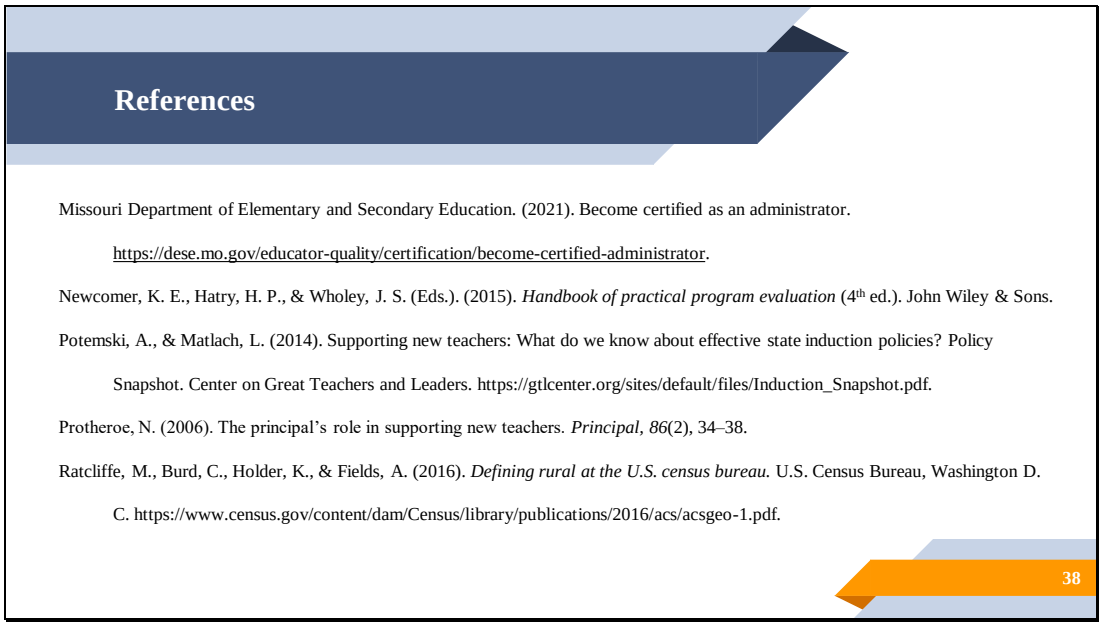

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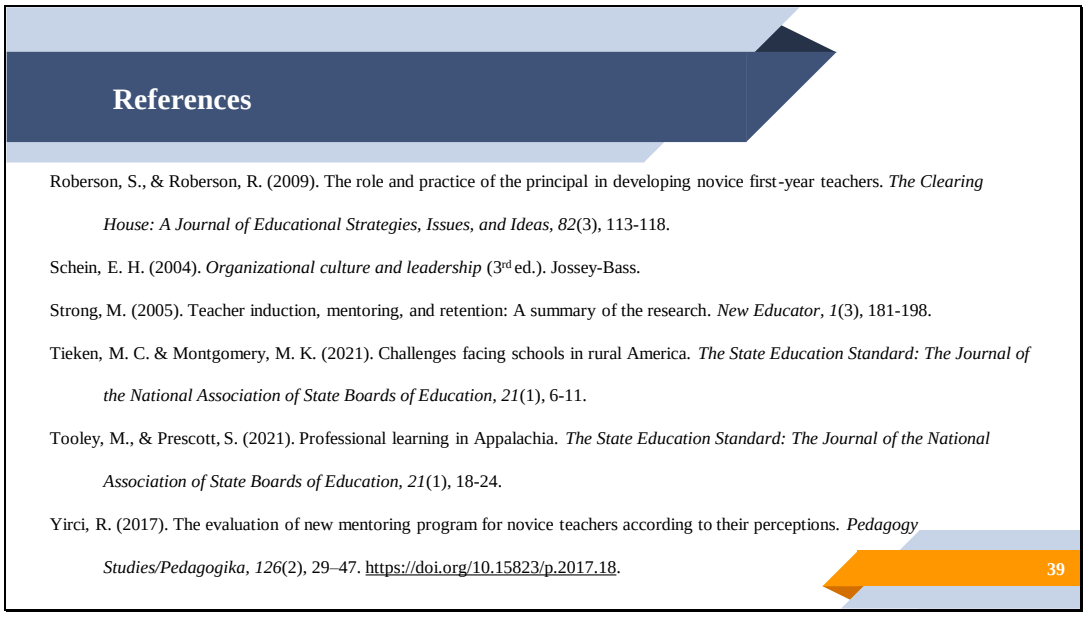

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SECTION FIVE – CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOLARSHIP

Plan for Dissemination of Scholarly Contribution

The researcher produced a scholarly journal article sharing the findings and contributing to the literature surrounding novice teacher induction practices. The scholarly contribution will be submitted for publication in *The Journal of Research in Rural Education (JRRE).*The *JRRE* was created in 1982 and is now housed and published by Penn State University's College of Education. This journal was selected because of its focus on the relevance of education issues and educational leadership practices in rural settings. The journal has an acceptance rate of 14% and publishes peer-reviewed manuscripts which can be: "Single-study investigations, historical and philosophical analyses, research syntheses, theoretical pieces, and policy analyses from multiple disciplinary and methodological perspectives" (About JRRE, 2021, para. 2). The manuscript will be submitted the summer following the completion of the dissertation in practice.

Submission Plan

Where: *The Journal of Research in Rural Education (JRRE)*

When: Summer 2022

How: Manuscripts should be e-mailed to the editor, Karen Eppley, at: keh118@psu.edu.

Submission Ready Article

The Cultivation of Novice Teachers: How Administrators Design, Support, and Evaluate Induction Programs in Rural Schools

Tamara G. Lynn

Northwest Missouri State University

Topics: Novice teacher induction, mentoring, administrators, educational leadership, rural education, school culture

Tamara G. Lynn
Northwest Missouri State University
204 Brown Hall, School of Education
Maryville, MO 64468
816-547-9466 (Cell)
Email: tglynn@nwmissouri.edu

Tamara Lynn is an instructor of special education at Northwest Missouri State University. Her research and teaching interests are in the areas of novice teacher induction, collaborative scholarly writing, educator preparation, transition services, stakeholder collaboration, professional development, and autism consultation.

This research did not receive any specific funding from agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

This submission has not been published elsewhere, is not presently under review elsewhere, and will not be submitted elsewhere while under review for JRRE.

Institutional Review Board approval has been granted for this investigation by the University of Missouri-Columbia and will be exempt from further review.

Abstract

Novice teacher induction studies often focus on the novice teachers' perceptions of the program, but this investigation is designed to focus on the rural administrators' perceptions and role in novice teacher induction programs within K-12 public, rural school districts. This qualitative bounded case study of administrators from 59 school districts in Northwest Missouri identified as rural and were situated in a town with populations of 2,500 or less (Ratcliffe et al., 2016) includes the findings from surveys, interviews, and a document analysis. The lived experiences and perceptions collected in this investigation shed light towards understanding the administrators' roles in the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher induction programs and revealed roles central to two functions: Formal and informal. The findings of this study attempt to fill a gap in the current literature surrounding the rural administrators' roles and provide useful insight for practitioners who participate in the design, support, and evaluation of induction practices in their districts.

Throughout history, evidence exists of the training and development of workers in various professions, often coined ‘mentoring’, and is defined in *Merriam Webster* (2021) as “the influence, guidance, or direction given by a mentor” (para. 1). ‘Mentor’ was first used in Homer's *Odyssey* sometime between the Eighth and Sixth centuries BCE (Williams et al., 1991). This idea of mentoring has continued to evolve throughout history to meet various personal and professional needs and industry standards (American Institutes for Research, 2015), and is likened to the use of apprenticeships for teaching trade skills dating back to 1776 (Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), 2019), and contemporary vocational training, known as Career and Technical Education (CTE) which emerged in 1917 (ACTE, 2019). Through the evolution of these various training models, novice teacher induction is situated prominently as the model used in school districts and is considered a logical, continuous professional development process (Wong, 2005) of learning through experience. Novice teacher induction, when comprehensive, trains and guides novice teachers to promote the navigation of the cultural, social, and technical aspects of being a new teacher, while systematically helping them to assimilate to the school district and teaching profession (Brownell et al., 2010; Cullingford, 2016; Potemski et al., 2014; Strong, 2005).

Research surrounding novice teacher induction programs have been found to impact novice teacher satisfaction and confidence levels (Coffey, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2003), supported the new teachers’ growth, effectiveness, and retention (Billingsley et al., 2019; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Kaufmann, 2007) and connected pre-service training to the realities of teaching (Brownell et al., 2010; Eisenman & Thornton, 1999). Furthermore, Brownell et al. (2010), Potemski et al. (2014), and Strong (2005)

found novice teacher induction programs had a positive impact on novice teacher instructional practices, the effectiveness of instruction, and students' learning outcomes.

Induction programs have helped novice teachers become successful in their new roles by teaching them about the profession, tools of the trade, and models used by school district officials (Kaufmann, 2007). Nonaka (1994) emphasized the importance of high-quality experiences in knowledge creation, which might have redefined what was considered the "nature of the job" (p. 21). Potemski et al. (2014) wrote, "An induction program is a larger system of support that often includes mentoring but also includes additional supports, such as help with curriculum planning and professional development" (p. 1), and Darling-Hammond and DePaoli (2020) wrote these supportive communities of practice helped to better meet students' needs.

Schein's (2004) work on organizational culture sets the stage for creating learning cultures within organizations defined by the values, beliefs and assumptions, norms and behaviors, and the aspects of how people think, feel, and act as a part of the organization (Gill, 2010). A sense of community is created within the induction environment and engages the novice teacher in the school culture, allowing the novice teacher to model the cultural and social sense of belonging for students (Dogan, 2017), which is essential for developing caring relationships (Leone, 2009). Furthermore, Gill (2010) wrote this culture was "passed on to new employees by what they are told and what they observe in the behavior, symbols, and documents around them" (p. 5).

An induction program typically includes the following attributes: "high-quality mentoring, ongoing professional development, access to an external network of beginning teachers, and standards-based evaluations of beginning teachers" (Kaufmann,

2007, p. 2). These attributes also have been connected to strong coaching mentors, innovative research practices, and collegial discussions amongst mentors, mentees, and administrators (Watkins, 2005). This article takes a purposeful look into the administrators' roles in novice teacher induction in K-12 rural, public-school districts in Northwest Missouri.

Study Rationale

Many research studies have been conducted on urban school induction programs or have focused on novice teacher perceptions of mentoring (Cornelius et al., 2018; Cullingford, 2016; Potemski et al., 2014; Yirci, 2017). For the purposes of this study, the term "induction" was used in place of the term "mentoring," utilizing Potemski et al.'s (2014) definition of induction programs, which included mentoring as one component of the overall induction of novice teachers. Darling-Hammond and DePaoli (2020) wrote teacher stress, burnout, and inadequate skills contribute to teacher attrition and shortages, furthermore, "A strong, stable, diverse, and well-prepared teaching and leadership workforce is perhaps the most important ingredient" impacting the school district culture (p. 10). MacNeil et al. (2009) wrote the administrator focusing on the school culture development is essential for enhancing teacher morale. Furthermore, Black (2004) wrote many administrators recognized the excitement of novice teachers as they started their new careers, but found they were "ill-equipped" (p. 46), and novice teachers are expected to fulfill the same demands as experienced teachers, indicating a gap in the literature surrounding the administrators' roles in the culture of the learning environment within the novice teacher induction process. Literature abounds around administrators' roles as leaders with multiple responsibilities (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bolman & Deal, 2017), but

has been lacking a targeted focus on the administrators' perspectives and roles in induction programs (Brock & Grady, 1998; Protheroe, 2006, Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Considering the impacts of barriers experienced within rural education, administrator decision-making is influenced when only one building administrator is often responsible for all decision making and personnel support. Dogan (2017) wrote culture creates "the best environment for facilitating teaching and learning programs and also engage staff with the school" (p. 256), and the administrator has many responsibilities for instilling this culture in people. Protheroe (2006) determined administrators played roles in the participation in novice teacher induction programs, but the extent of the administrators' participation, particularly as it applies to the rural school administrator, remains a gap in the literature.

The overarching research question guiding this study was: What is the role of the school administrator in the design, support, and evaluation induction programs in rural, public K-12 schools in Northwest Missouri?

Review of Relevant Literature

Using the lenses of Schein's (2004) Levels of Culture, Novice Teacher Induction, Rural, Public K-12 Education, and Leadership in K-12 Public Education, the following review of literature explores the role of educational leaders in novice teacher induction within rural, public K-12 school districts. Schein's (2004) Levels of Culture (see Figure 1) was used as the theoretical framework to guide this study. Furthermore, three conceptual underpinnings were used to provide a framework for this investigation: (a) Novice Teacher Induction, (b) Rural Public K-12 Education, and (c) Leadership in K-12 Public Education.

Theoretical Framework

Culture in an organization is an everchanging-phenomenon all-encompassing impacted by behavior and interactions, while also affecting the norms and behaviors of those within organizations (Schein, 2004). Stoll (1998) defined culture as manifests in customs, rituals, symbols, stories, and other artifacts, and Kutsyuruba et al. (2020) wrote, "Humans learn to organize their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors based on shared norms, beliefs, values, customs, and traditions that are common to a group of people" (p. 692). Culture is abstract and difficult to define but can be a practical means for creating profound change in an organization (Schein, 2004). Schein (2004) defined organizations as "social units" (p. 11) with defining characteristics and shared histories. Furthermore, Schein (2004) identified categories used to describe culture from a multitude of research on organizations, "Observed behavior regularities, group norms, espoused values, formal philosophy, rules of the game, climate, embedded skills, habits of thinking, mental models, and linguistic paradigms, shared meanings, root metaphors or integrating symbols, and formal rituals and celebrations" (p. 13). The critical elements shared in organizations' cultures were the following: "Structural stability, depth, breadth, and patterning or integration" (Schein, 2004, p. 14). Schein's (2004) Levels of Culture (see Figure 1) were used in this study to provide a lens for viewing organizational culture, the evidence, and the representative symbols of culture.

Novice Teacher Induction

The detailed process of learning and teaching novice teachers to promote navigation through the profession is referred to as novice teacher induction (Brownell et al., 2010; Wong, 2005). Black (2004) wrote, "Beginning teachers do not enter the

classroom as finished products" (p. 46). The novice teacher induction process, which may include mentoring as an interchangeable term to describe the process (Potemski et al., 2014), is used to help new teachers develop a sense of belonging (Schein, 2004) within the educational system (Cullingford, 2016). Induction programs have been multi-year processes for training and acculturation (Wong, 2005) used to introduce new teachers to the teaching profession, tools, and models needed to be successful in their new careers (Kaufmann, 2007), and systems of induction have been required for novice teachers in 48 states (Hirsch et al., 2009). Improved quality of instruction, effectiveness of instruction, and improved student learning were all outcomes associated with high quality induction programs (Brownell et al., 2010; Potemski et al., 2014; Strong, 2005). Furthermore, induction programs have been found to impact the novice teachers' levels of fulfillment and confidence (Coffey, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2003), and teachers in induction programs had an increased likelihood of participating in future professional development opportunities (Carr & Evans, 2006). Varying definitions for defining induction, in addition to the impact of induction programs on student outcomes and teacher satisfaction point toward a need for a deeper look into novice teacher induction practices (Brownell et al., 2010; Potemski et al., 2014; Strong, 2005; Wong, 2005).

Rural K-12 Education

For the purposes of this study, Ratcliffe et al.'s (2016) definition, written on behalf of the U.S. Census Bureau, was used for the definition of rural education. Rural regions are the remaining spaces not included within urban areas, which consisted of areas with more than 50,000 people and suburban areas of more than 2,500 people, thus, rural areas in the U.S. consisted of places with less than 2,500 people counted in the

population (Ratcliffe et al., 2016; Robson et al., 2019). Other definitions of rural areas have existed in the literature, so it was recommended further research in this area occur before attempting to replicate this study.

Rural schools can be found across the United States (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021), and one out of every four students in the U.S. attend schools in rural areas (Bellwether Education Partners, 2021). Rural, public K-12 education experienced distinctive challenges different than their urban equivalents (Bellwether Education Partners, 2021; Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). Challenges of rural schools contrasting those schools in urban centers include: (a) greater gaps in achievement of white students (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021), (b) lower educational attainment (Robson et al., 2019), (c) tight budgets, (d) low staff salaries, (e) scarce resources, (f) underfunded districts, (g) limited access to advanced courses, such as Advanced Placement classes (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021), (h) lower staff salaries (Showalter et al., 2019), and (i) challenges in rural areas due to the lack of social activities for young teachers (Mcardle, 2019). Furthermore, challenges also occurred in the areas of: (a) teacher turnover when teachers work for a few years to gain experience before moving on (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021), (b) teachers spending more time planning lessons (Desjardens et al., 2021), (c) isolation and limited collaboration (Tooley & Prescott, 2021), (d) teacher resignations at a rate of 25% after three years and 39% after five years (Heller, 2004), (e) uncertified substitutes filling teaching shortages (Banghart, 2021; Mcardle, 2019; Tieken & Montgomery, 2021), and (f) need for professional development to support the diverse needs of learners (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). Berry et al. (2011) found these factors

may have increased the attrition rates for teachers in rural areas and identified areas where professional development was needed.

Leadership in K-12 Public Education

Leaders in K-12 public education take on many roles in school districts, and there can be much variance in job titles and responsibilities of educational leaders across the country (Leithwood, 2007; Marzano et al., 2005). For the purposes of this study, the research will focus on leaders in K-12 public education in any administrator role with direct charge over novice teacher induction programs. School building administrators in the U.S. assume many responsibilities including: (a) strategy and planning, (b) student instruction, (c) budgeting, (d) law, (e) personnel management, (f) community relations, and (g) other school business (Leithwood, 2007; Marzano et al., 2005). In addition, Barbara and Grady (2007) found leader responsibilities included even more tasks, such as (a) determining the mission and vision of the school, (b) motivating employees, and (c) making decisions, and Dogan (2017) wrote the school culture influences the way administrators "think, feel, and behave" (p. 253). Within these responsibilities, administrators reported challenges leading teachers to develop their professional skills, high turnover, retention issues, certification issues, and lack of training and professional development to fit the needs of teachers (Chan et al., 2019). Despite these challenges, Chan et al., (2018) reported administrators are more professionally fulfilled when they witnessed teachers growing professionally. Chan et al, (2019) also reported it was a "great achievement" (p. 52), "satisfying to see good teachers that you hire really do a good job and become effective educators" (p. 52), and Pearson (2015) found a solid organizational culture provided a structure to affect employee behavior. Furthermore,

school leaders in rural areas had more responsibilities than their urban peers due to the shared responsibilities amongst multiple administrators in larger school districts (Tooley & Prescott, 2021).

The impact of the multitude of responsibilities on administrators in the U.S. (Leithwood, 2007; Marzano et al., 2005) has been known, awareness has surrounded the challenges in rural schools which were further impacted by shortages of qualified teachers in rural areas (Mitchell, 2021), focuses on the administrators' responsibilities to create learning environments to develop teachers and increased student achievement was understood (Watkins, 2005), and the impact of creating and influencing the school culture has been studied (Dogan, 2017). These factors indicated the need for further research surrounding K-12 administrators' roles in the design, support, and evaluation of rural novice teacher induction programs.

Methods

A bounded case study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020) provided voice to the lived experiences and professional practices of current administrators' surrounding their roles in the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher induction in rural, public K-12 school districts in the region of Northwest Missouri. All data were qualitative in nature, and a process was used to ensure research ethics were followed, and trustworthiness was achieved (AERA, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020).

Data Collection

Participants in the study were selected as a purposeful, convenience sample (Fink, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020), which included school administrators from the 59 school districts identified as rural (Table 1) willing to participate in the study

to reflect on current and past novice teacher induction practices within their school district. The method of participation varied based on the participants' experiences and consisted of a combination of surveys, interviews, and novice teacher induction program document analysis conducted by the researcher.

District Identification

The setting of this study was rural, Northwest Missouri and consisted of administrators from school districts served by region five of the Northwest Regional Professional Development Center (NWRPDC) (NWRPDC Region Five School Sites, 2021). The NWRPDC was a regional branch of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) with a mission to "build the capacity of educators and schools to maximize student performance through high quality professional development" (NWRPDC Welcome, 2021, para. 1), and their partnership helped facilitate the initial communication efforts with the researcher and participants. Using the Ratcliffe et al. (2016) definition of a rural school, 59 of the schools served by NWRPDC met the population threshold to be considered rural schools (see Table 1). The researcher conducted the research digitally or face-to-face based on the preference of the participants.

Participant Selection

Participants were administrators from elementary, middle, high school, or the district level, and some participants supervised some overlapping combination of grade levels, such as K-12 or middle/high school. Forty-three administrators responded to the initial contact made through an email by completing the electronic survey during the two-week window the survey was available. Convenience sampling from the population was

used, and districts who did not meet the rural population threshold were eliminated from the possible sample due to the researcher's desire to investigate rural school districts in Northwest Missouri (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Once administrators were identified as willing participants, further contact was made through email, phone calls, and/or face-to-face contact to schedule and to conduct interviews and to receive documents for the document analysis, and six participants were identified (Table 2). Informed consent was received from all participants, which included the option to opt out of the study at any time (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020).

Survey

An electronic survey was used to collect initial perspectives from administrators regarding the induction practices in their districts and identified perceived gaps in the programming (Fink, 2017; McDavid et al., 2019). The survey was sent via email directly to district administrators using the list of administrators provided by the NWRPDC (NWRPDC Region Five School Sites, 2021) using *Qualtrics*^{XM} *(*Qualtrics, Provo, UT, 2020*)*.

Informed consent, outlining the potential benefits and risks, was obtained from participants through the embedded agreement within the first page of the survey, allowing participants to opt in to continue or to opt out of the study, and no participant was able to participate without giving consent (Fink, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). The survey consisted of semi-structured and open-ended questions (Fink, 2017). Because the survey was sent to the participant group, there was no representative sample.

Interview

Structured interviews of participants were used to capture the lived experiences of the administrators surrounding their induction program role (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017; Seidman, 2019). Participants for the administrator interviews were selected purposefully to allow the researcher to flesh out further details and experiences gleaned from the survey responses identified by the researcher as those of interest (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). Seidman's (2019) guidelines were used to design the interview questions to ensure they were bias free and open ended which supported the confirmability of the questions. Participants were informed the interview would last 30-45 minutes (Seidman, 2019). Informed consent was obtained again from participants during the interview process, and participants could choose to not answer questions or to opt out of the study at any time (Fink, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). To address issues with confirmability, verbatim transcripts were used, and member checks were conducted following all interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020; Seidman, 2019). The researcher audio recorded the interviews and then created verbatim transcripts using a media transcription service, creating an audit trail for the study. Member checking followed the interviews to ensure participants' voices were heard accurately as the data were processed to make meaning (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020; Seidman, 2019).

Document Analysis

The document analysis included the following novice teacher induction artifacts from districts: (a) policy manuals, (b) training manuals, and (c) any other resources used for novice teacher induction as identified by the administrators. For some participants, the

school administrators or boards of education were the gatekeepers to the various documents, so the researcher communicated via email, phone, digitally, and/or face-to-face during the interview processes to obtain the necessary documents (Newcomer et al., 2015). The documents were reviewed simultaneously with the survey and interview data to determine if support of induction programs aligned with the perspectives of the administration and allowed for triangulation and added credibility to the investigation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Following the recommendations of Yin (2014), the researcher found the document analysis confirmed the details found in the other data sources.

Data Analysis

The use of three data sources in the form of electronic surveys of administrators, administrator interviews, and analysis of documents identified by administrators reflecting the various school districts' induction practices provided triangulation to ensure a credibility of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020) and supported the comprehensive understanding of the problem of practice and to answer the research question (Patton, 1999). Furthermore, saturation amongst all data collected added to the transferability of the findings and recommendations for both scholarly and practitioner practice (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020).

A process for coding the documents and interview notes allowed the researcher to identify themes that surfaced from the data (Creswell, 2014). Explicit logic was used, and a chain of evidence was documented, outlining how data were tracked to the source to ensure confirmability and allow for the replication of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Inductive coding through the procedure of open coding (line-by-line) was used for the survey, as well as data from the interviews and document analyses

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020; Saldana, 2015). The data from the survey were coded first, allowing the researcher to determine the interview questions that needed to be expanded upon. McDavid et al. (2017) wrote the flexible and fluid nature of the data collection, and the analysis process allows for "eliciting ideas on interpretation of existing information, perspectives that may have been missed, or ideas about how trends and the internal and external context affect both unmet needs and possible solutions" (p. 78). Following the open coding, the responses to all three data sources were axially coded, which is the process of identifying relationships or linking data together through categories and subcategories and resulted in the identification of categories of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020; Saldana, 2015). The data were organized using constant comparative methods into themes which emerged in the coding process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldana, 2015). This process of coding the data were an ongoing and continuous process until saturation was reached, producing a rich, thick description of the investigation using quotes in the findings, which added to the credibility of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Member checking throughout the data collection process, ensuring accuracy, as the researcher strived to make meaning and sense of the data collected from participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020; Seidman, 2019). Additionally, audits were conducted to review transcripts, field notes, and coding procedures to ensure greater confirmability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020; Saldana, 2015; Seidman, 2019). Dependability audits were conducted to ensure accuracy as patterns arose in the data and the patterns were documented appropriately, allowing other researchers to replicate the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Confidentiality of participants was maintained throughout the study

through anonymity of the survey responses and the use of pseudonyms for participants and school districts' names (AERA Code of Ethics, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020), and quotes were used to make connections in the results by using rich data (Elo et al., 2014). Lastly, data were protected and stored, using a double-authenticated password-protected online storage system to prevent the distribution of confidential research materials (AERA, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2017; Seidman, 2019).

Positionality

As a White woman, former rural teacher and an administrator, my identity helped me form a connection with the participants in the study. My connection with the participants allowed me access which may not have been available to other researchers. Additionally, my identity reflects the racial identity of most of my participants, which established a level of comfort and familiarity based on the perception of shared experiences. I believe these connections and shared identities assisted in establishing trust with the participants. I recognize the potential influence my experiences could have had on the research process, but do not believe they influenced the neutrality and bias free nature of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Furthermore, member checking was used to ensure the accuracy of the data collected from the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020; Seidman, 2019).

Limitations

Because this was a qualitative study, the results collected were limited to the participants' experiences. There was a possibility the participants were not forthcoming and/or were incomplete in fear of impacting themselves or their school districts in a negative way, which in turn could have impacted the results of the study (Merriam &

Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020). Efforts to address this potential limitation were made by the researcher by ensuring confidentiality of participants' responses through the informed consent and through the applications of pseudonyms in place of participants' given names.

Another limitation was the participants may not have played a role in the district's induction practices, which could impact the results based on the administrators' knowledge of the districts' induction practices. Additionally, the researcher may have had limited access to information for the document analysis due to these documents being provided in good faith by the district administrators. Every effort was made by the researcher to secure all district documents for the analysis to ensure this limitation was being addressed appropriately.

Lastly, time could be considered an issue when data were collected due to administrators' busy schedules. The researcher addressed this limitation by conducting interviews based on the administrators' preferences either digitally, by phone, or face-to-face to ensure the administrators were given flexibility to participate based on their schedule limitations.

Findings

The lived experiences and professional practices of current rural administrators gave voice and were used to identify themes from the data based on how administrators viewed themselves fitting into roles within novice teacher induction programs in their school district. Two themes emerged as the data were collected and analyzed. Rural administrators' responsibilities for the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher induction programs in rural school district were cataloged into two roles: Formal and

informal. A summary of the formal role findings (see Table 3) and informal role findings (see Table 4) was used to answer the research question: What is the role of the school administrator in the design, support, and evaluation induction programs in rural, public K-12 schools in Northwest Missouri?

The Formal Role

The rural administrators' formal role in novice teacher induction programs are those which are more procedural and organized in nature. Rural administrators often schedules, set agendas for, and facilitates meetings. They embed the mission, vision, and goals into various documents used in the induction process. Furthermore, rural administrators select mentors, allocating to the mentor and novice teacher time, money, and other resources as determined necessary to help the novice teacher develop professionally. In rural districts, administrators are familiar with their teacher retention numbers due to smaller staff sizes and play a role in assessing the needs of those novice teachers. Some rural administrators delegated these formal responsibilities to other administrators or mentors within the district, while others completed the tasks within the formal role themselves. The formal role of rural administrators in novice teacher induction emerged consistently in the data and were evident through items such as: The design of log forms, the design of agendas for novice teacher induction meetings, the planning of meeting times and other scheduling, and the assessment of novice teacher professional development needs.

Across all three data sources, evidence of the rural administrators' formal roles in the design of various forms, agendas, and other formal documents used in the novice teacher induction process were consistent (see Table 5). Some rural administrators who

participated in this delegated this responsibility to others within the district. David shared:

> My two long standing principals have collaborated to put together a list of items that are important to being successful at Kattan County School District such as clarification on 'nuts and bolts' procedures like using the student information system, grading practices, P.O. procedures.

Other rural administrators provided documents demonstrating the design of formal documents used for the novice teacher induction practices such as: Procedures, contact information, and resources, such as technology, locations of supplies, and forms for leave time, were visible (document), and this was also observed within a document stating:

> Welcome to the Ottawa School District! The first year of teaching is one of the most challenging periods you will experience in your career. This year, you will have the opportunity to work directly with an experienced teacher as a consultant, coach, and colleague. Mentoring is an ongoing relationship that extends throughout the first year of a new teacher's professional practice. The mentoring program is designed to last two years as required by DESE. This handbook provides a detailed look at how mentoring will work.

Additionally, rural administrators served in their formal roles by supporting novice teachers through the induction process. Rural administrators support roles included the scheduling of meeting times. Anna explained, "So, when we meet with just start new staff and our new teachers, that's a lot of PD and team building. So, it's a lot of relationship building." Furthermore, the meetings scheduled by administrators were often

used to help the novice teacher meet other co-workers and familiarize them with people, resources, and procedures. Abigail stated:

> [sic], the other piece of that I would say is the social aspect. So, letting all the new teachers meet each other, [sic], letting them meet me, get to know me, [sic], the other people in the building who are gonna support them, their technology, integration specialist, assistant principal, things like that.

Rural administrators also formally supported novice teachers by assessing their professional development needs and provided time, money, and other support to continue to grow professionally in their first years. Lydia stated, “Once the school started and they got going, I did a needs assessment to kind of see what each one of them needed, [sic], to help out in that way.” Moreover, in the formal role of evaluation, most rural administrators felt this was an area they did not do well in. Spencer noted, “There's no formal evaluation.” David was asked how novice teacher induction were evaluated and he responded, “Probably not very well.”

Another administrator, Anna, shared:

> I think that we don't offer a lot of time for new teachers to reflect on their practices because they're trying to learn so much that first year. So probably just more of a reflection with their mentor because sometimes they don't always want to reflect with their administrator because they don't want to look like they're not capable.

In the area of evaluation, the data also indicated the rural administrators tried to be visible in the novice teachers’ classroom, and Anna explained, “We try to get in the classroom a

lot. And so probably more with new staff just to make sure they're not feeling overwhelmed and do temperature checks with them in an ideal situation."

Additionally, David indicated he tried to evaluate their teachers' needs as a whole staff rather than singling out only novice teachers, and explained:

> I seek feedback from my staff, and it doesn't hurt that my wife teaches in the building. I hear the teacher perspective. That doesn't mean everyone always agrees with my decisions, but few would argue I do not have the best interest of students and teachers in mind.

Lastly, Spencer indicated a good way to evaluating the success of the novice teacher induction practices within their school district would be to consider the retention of their teachers.

> I guess the first thing that comes to mind is retention. You know, are we, are we hanging on to those new teachers? You know, there's some pretty startling facts out there that, you know, within three years, you know, 64%, [sic], are still there. And then after five years, only 48% of, of teachers are still there. So, you know, getting, getting them to that, three-year mark, and five-year mark. [sic], I feel like can be a sign of, of a good support system in place.

The Informal Role

The informal role of the rural administrator is shaped by their own previous experiences and this role lends itself to the use of intuition for responding to situations and making decisions. When the rural administrator assumes the informal role, they design and recommend mentor activities based on what they believe the novice teacher needs. Using this informal position, rural administrators select mentors for novice

teachers based on perceptions of their personalities and use proximity to other similar teachers when available. Rural administrators are aware their behavior serves as a model for their teachers, and choose to provide emotional support, encouragement, and work to build relationships by being visible in their building and at district activities.

They believed being more visible to novice teachers made the novice teachers feel more comfortable to approach them when necessary. Furthermore, by engaging in conversations, they used this intuition to gauge and to evaluate the professional development needs of their teachers and to receive feedback, which may have been beneficial to the rural administrators to reinforce their beliefs or to guide their decision making. The informal roles of rural administrators in novice teacher induction emerged consistently in the data and were evident through items, such as the use of the administrators' previous experiences and personal beliefs or values used as the basis for decision making for novice teacher induction district practices, to make themselves visible and available, to model behavior, to communicate and build relationships, and to use informal feedback to make decisions (see Table 6).

When considering the rural administrators' informal role in the design of novice teacher induction practices, the administrators' personal experiences, beliefs, and values was evident as the guide for decision making. One rural administrator, Samuel explained "I honestly, to be honest with you, for me, it's just a feeling." Moreover, the use of their own experiences and beliefs was also apparent in the selection of mentors for novice teachers as Abigail explained:

> I talked to our building leadership team. Usually, those individuals are the ones who are going to be a little bit more invested in the school. So, they're going to

> want to invest in new teachers as well. [sic], also kind of look for, like I said, [sic], proximity. So, who's in the hallway with them.

Further supporting the use of their own experiences and beliefs, Anna remarked, "[sic], when we pair them up with a mentor, we always think strategically." Furthermore, Abigail considered how the mentor would communicate the culture of the district to the novice teacher and shared, "I think our building climate plays a huge role in developing novice teachers. Novice teachers need mentors who are supportive, approachable, and in love with the district."

In addition, many rural administrators expressed that they viewed their informal support roles as they were viewed by their novice teachers. To support the novice teacher, Samuel focused on how he made himself visible and available, modeled behavior, communicated and built relationships by explaining, "I try to get out, I try to make myself available to them, be seen my door is open." David agreed and shared, "I think most, most of my teachers will say, look, we all have his cell phone. We can all send him a text and probably unless, unless it's midnight to six and he's probably gonna respond pretty quick."

Samuel, a school superintendent, explained that it was important to be viewed by novice teachers in a certain way. He said:

> I think they need to know who the superintendent is. They need to be able to feel comfortable to talk to the superintendent. Uh, so I think that's a big thing that sometimes I see it happen more in bigger schools obviously, but you know, the smaller school setting for us, you know, I think it's beneficial if, you know, you have there, you're having those conversations with those teachers in that way, you

> can help them. And they know that we're all in this together and it's not, you know, you don't want to see a separation of admin and staff.

When considering the rural administrators' informal roles in evaluating novice teacher induction practices, many administrators indicated they did not conduct formal evaluation measures, rather relied upon informal 'check-ins' with novice teachers as a means of evaluation. An administered Abigail shared about formal evaluation:

> There's no formal evaluation, but I'm checking in with them of like, hey, where are they at? What do you think? What struggles are they having? Is there something I should be looking for in the classroom or something you think they're doing really great that I should go see?

A superintendent, David, also seeks feedback by asking for it from others in his district as he said, "I do ask for a lot of feedback from people." Moreover, Abigail informally evaluated the mental health and/or personal life of their staff by using these 'check-ins'. Abigail explained:

> A lot of times I try to ask people about, you know, [sic], things that are going on in their personal life, and so it's checking in, especially with newer teachers checking in with them, how are you doing, how are you feeling about this? What concerns do you have? What struggles are you feeling? [sic], because I want them to be successful people first and successful teachers the second, because if they're not a successful person and they don't feel validated, they don't feel healthy.

Samuel also agreed on projecting an informal approach. He explained:

> I'll meet with, I'll talk to them a little bit, but I don't try to overwhelm them as you know, cause, [sic], I'm the boss and everybody freaks out because, oh, I'm talking

> to them. I try to make it as informal as possible because I don't want them to freak out that I'm coming and talking to them.

Furthermore, a unique finding emerged throughout the study in self-reflection by the administrators. Many administrators expressed a desire to do more in terms of novice teacher induction. Abigail firmly replied:

> I don't do enough when it comes to induction. [sic], but I think it's an area that, to be honest, I never got any training on, I would never say that my Master's or specialist [degrees] did not prepare me for this job. I don't know that it was ever a topic of any class.

And Spencer was reflective in his response:

> Only what I went through myself as a, as a new her and a new administrator, just going through some of those programs, [sic], you know, try to take some components of, of the AMP [Administrator Mentoring Program] program the administrator mentoring program, [sic], that I went through a few years ago found that that was very valuable.

Making Sense of the Formal and Informal Roles

Meaning is made of these two roles when considered the formal role, the administrator as a gardener, and the informal role, the administrator as a pollinator. The rural administrators' formal roles in novice teacher induction is like a gardener. The gardener tills the soil to prepare it, plant the seeds, and must water the plants when the rain doesn't come naturally. As the weeds grow, the gardener responds by assessing their danger to the plants and gets rid of the weeds, as necessary. Finally, the gardener steps back and waits to see what grows. A good gardener knows standing over the plant

doesn't make it grow faster, so they wait for their produce to come in due time. So, too, is the rural administrators' formal roles in novice teacher induction. The findings of this study concluded the rural administrator designs and prepares for the program. Furthermore, they select mentors and provide time, resources, and money to support the novice teacher's growth. Through the formal evaluation role, the rural administrator determines what helps and does not help the novice teacher acclimation to the school district, and the administrator continues to watch and wait for the novice teacher to grow and develop into a teacher leader within their school district.

Likewise, the rural administrators' informal roles in novice teacher induction is like the bee, butterfly, and insect serving as a pollinator--inadvertently pollinating the plants through their naturalistic instinct and "drawing" to the plants. The pollinators do not recognize the direct impacts of their work, nor can their work be measured, much like the rural administrators' informal roles. The use of intuition to make decisions, informal check-ins, focus on well-being, and encouragement may not be easily measured in terms of the direct impact on the novice teacher, but are done so as an instinct of the rural administrator based on their beliefs and perceptions surrounding the needs of novice teachers. The garden cannot be successful without these pollinators as they provide a cyclical role in the entire growing process of the plant.

Discussion

The narratives surrounding the rural administrators' roles in the design, support, and evaluation of novice teacher induction in rural, public K-12 schools in Northwest Missouri revealed rural administrators served in two distinct roles: Formal and informal. The collected narratives highlighted rural administrators' behavior, use of intuition,

decision making, and work tasks evident in these roles and were found to align with Kotter's (1990/2011) research on management and leadership roles. Much like the rural administrators' formal and informal roles in novice teacher induction, management and leadership tasks are both necessary and complementary functions. The functions of management are observed in the planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling, and problem solving, while the functions of leadership are observed in processes that produce change and movement through establishing direction, aligning people, motivating, and inspiring (Kotter, 1990/2011).

The data revealed most tasks within the formal role were management tasks. In this formal role, the rural administrators designed and prepared for the induction program. They selected mentors and provided time, resources, and money to support the novice teachers' growth. Through the formal evaluation role, the rural administrator determined what helped the novice teachers' acclimation to the school district. In contrast to the formal role, the data revealed the rural administrator performed more leadership tasks within the informal role. It should be noted that a wealth of survey responses and a significant amount of time during interviews explicitly and implicitly reflected the administrators' passion towards the informal roles they assumed to help the novice teacher acclimate to the school district and the community. The use of intuition to make decisions, conduct informal check-ins, focus on well-being, and provide encouragement may not be easily measured in terms of the direct impact on the novice teacher, but are done so as an instinct of the rural administrator based on their beliefs and perceptions surrounding the needs of novice teachers. Furthermore, the centrality of relationships and the belief of offering support was consistently evident in the administrators' responses

and shed light on the rural administrators' desire to create a sense of belonging for their novice teachers (Schein, 2004). Administrators mentioned the 'feel' or 'needs' of the rural stakeholders and community, bringing focus towards the rural administrators' desire for their novice teachers to know the rural context, the social role of the school, and the value of the rural school within the community (Mcardle, 2019; Miller et al, 2006; Tieken and Montgomery; 2021). Additionally, several rural administrators referred to their focus on their behavior being informal

While the role of the rural administrator in novice teacher induction is complex and multi-faceted, both the formal and informal role of the rural administrator are valuable and complementary. Administrators performed within their formal role the management tasks necessary for conducting the novice teacher induction program. Furthermore, the administrators' demonstrated passion within their informal role, and many chose to focus on these areas during this study. Ashton and Duncan (2013) wrote, "Principals who take the time to build rapport with teachers and staff demonstrate their respect for the school culture, as well as a desire to be a part of the community." (p. 7). By giving attention to both roles, rural administrators can continue to improve novice teacher induction practices within their districts.

Conclusions and Implications for Practice and Research

Practitioner recommendations emerged from the formal and informal administrators' roles in novice teacher induction practices in K-12 public, rural Northwest Missouri. These recommendations can be applied by rural practitioners who are currently responsible for novice teacher induction in their school districts. Participants indicated they did not use any formal means for evaluating the success of their novice

teacher induction programs, although many felt evaluations were important components of the program when asked. Several administrators indicated time limitations as a factor in deciding not to conduct an evaluation of the novice teacher induction practices. Considering the lack of such a tool, the design of a formal evaluation tool used to evaluate the districts' induction practices would support the use of data-driven decision making (Newcomer et al., 2015) regarding the program and could provide insight into the school district's novice teacher retention. The tool could be a survey, an interview with the novice teacher, a novice teacher self-assessment, or some combination thereof, and would serve as the basis for making decisions regarding the needs of the novice teacher and the program.

Next, rather than making decisions based on intuition, previous experiences, or beliefs and values as evidenced by the informal role which occurred in the data of this study, rural administrators should consider reviewing literature surrounding successful induction programs and practices, to guide future decision making. As recommended by Kaufman (2007), administrators should revisit high quality program standards for novice teacher induction. Additionally, Cherian and Daniel (2008) found the leader was vital in creating organization and structural contexts for strategy, implementation, and adaption of the novice teacher induction process. Furthermore, there are implications based on the rural administrators' responses in the data collected within this study indicating the administrators' roles in novice teacher induction is not addressed and embedded with fidelity into administrator coursework and should be considered as recommendation for adoption and review within educator preparation programs (Black, 2004).

Lastly, practitioners would benefit from designing formal activities and other programing, in addition to, collecting evidence surrounding the rural administrators' proclaimed informal roles of "eliminating stress" of the novice teacher to align beliefs and values to actionable items. While many practitioners claimed their goal was to support novice teachers to make them want to stay in the district, few participants had formal means for addressing this goal. Actionable and planned items did not exist to purposefully work to eliminate stress for the novice teacher. Many of their roles assumed by the practitioner were informal to address the stress and overwhelmed feeling they believed existed within their novice, however, there were no formal efforts to do so. By familiarizing themselves and utilizing recommendations from previous research, practitioners could further support the novice teachers' fulfillment and confidence (Coffey, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2003) and to help to create in them a sense of belonging within their new district (Schein, 2004) in a more formal and intentional way.

Scholarly recommendations evolved from this study around the formal and informal administrators' roles in novice teacher induction practices in K-12 public, rural Northwest Missouri. The scholarly recommendations were areas for which themes did not emerge consistently in the data but were indicators of potential areas of further research which may result in novel findings in relation to this study. Rural administrators were reflective on their own behaviors and shortcomings throughout the study indicating a desire to do better, do more, and continuing to grow as a leader. While this notion of growth mindedness (Dweck, 2016) did not influence the findings and translate into an additional theme, future scholars should consider investigation into how administrators

transferred their own cultures of growth mindedness (Dweck, 2016) to new teachers during the novice teacher induction processes in K-12 public, rural school districts.

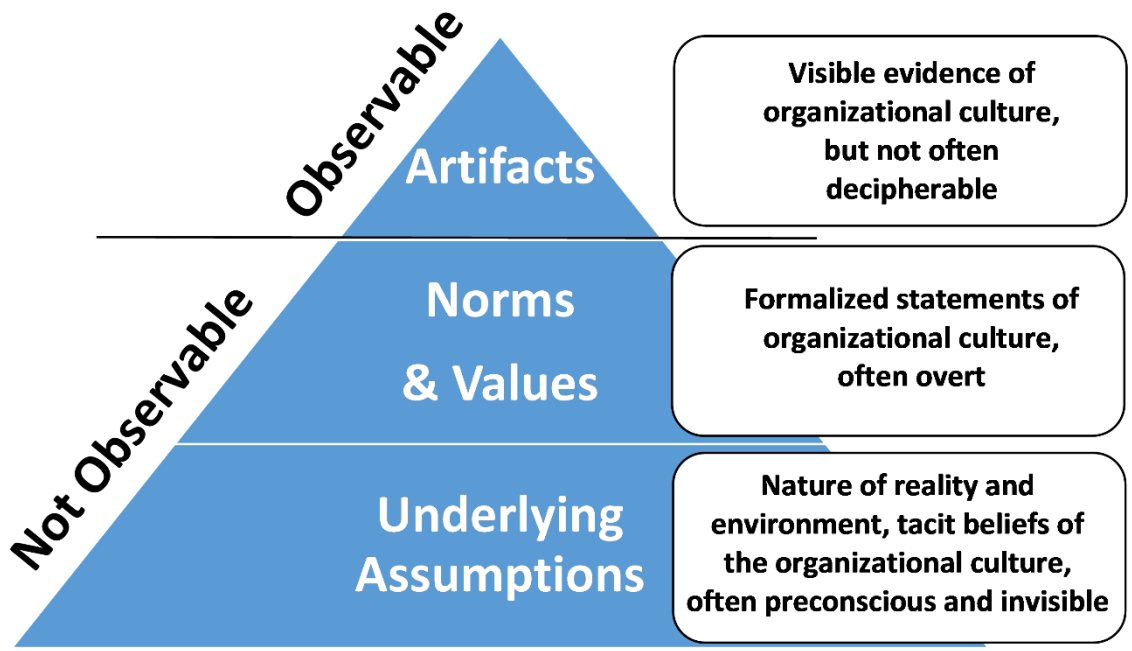
Similarly, throughout the study rural administrators referenced the desire to help novice teachers acclimate to their school district by informally modeling the school districts' beliefs through their own behavior. Furthermore, rural administrators felt duty towards helping the novice teacher adopt the school culture, to "fit in" by establishing within the novice teacher a sense of belonging within the school district (Schein, 2004), but there was a lack of formal means for addressing the novice teachers' sense of belonging. To address a gap in the current literature, further investigation was needed into how the administrators modeled behavior and their formal role supports the novice teachers' social identity and sense of belonging during the novice teacher induction process in K-12 public, rural school districts.

Finally, because rural administrators did not use formal tools for evaluating their novice teacher induction programs, Newcomer et al.'s (2015) recommendations for using data to make decisions when conducting program evaluations, further investigation around the efforts and tools currently available to administrators and other practitioners which can be used for formal evaluation of the novice teacher induction process in K-12 public, rural school districts is recommended. If such tools for evaluating novice teacher induction exists, administrators would be more able to readily adopt and apply these tools to assist in evaluating and making changes and decisions to better support novice teachers within their K-12 public, rural school districts.

Tables and Figures

Figure 1

Schein's Levels of Culture



Note. This figure was modified from Schein's (2004) *Organizational Culture and Leadership.*

Table 1

School District Participant Pool and Town Population Size

School District	Town	Town Population
Albany R-III	Albany	1,679
Avenue City R-IX	Cosby	124
Braymer C-4	Braymer	737
Breckenridge R-I	Breckenridge	258
Buchanan Co R-IV	DeKalb	220
Cainsville R-I	Cainsville	283
Cowgill R-VI	Cowgill	168
Craig R-III	Craig	105
East Buchanan C-1	Gower	1,526
Fairfax R-III	Fairfax	648
Gallatin R-V	Gallatin	1,821
Gilman City R-IV	Gilman City	329
Grundy Co R-V	Galt	168
Hale R-I	Hale	375
Hamilton R-II	Hamilton	1,690
Jefferson C-123	Conception Junction	198
King City R-I	King City	799
Kingston 42	Kingston	290
Laredo R-VII	Laredo	156
Lathrop R-II	Lathrop	2,086
Livingston Co R-III	Chula	195
Marceline R-V	Marceline	2,123
Maysville R-I	Maysville	1,095
Meadville R-IV	Meadville	415
Mid-Buchanan R-VI	Faucett	831
Mirable C-I	Polo	509
Mound City R-II	Mound City	1,004
New York R-IV	Hamilton	1,690
Newtown-Harris R-III	Newtown	113
Nodaway-Holt R-VII	Graham	171
Norborne R-VIII	Norborne	634
North Andrew R-VI	Rosendale	143
North Daviess R-III	Jameson	73
North Harrison R-III	Eagleville	275

North Mercer R-III	Mercer	263
North Nodaway R-VI	Hopkins	532
North Platte Co. R-I	Dearborn	496
Northeast Nodaway R-V	Ravenwood	440
Orrick R-XI	Orrick	753
Osborn R-O	Osborn	374
Pattonsburg R-II	Pattonsburg	314
Polo R-VII	Polo	509
Princeton R-V	Princeton	1,166
Ridgeway R-V	Ridgeway	372
Rock Port R-II	Rock Port	1,278
South Holt R-I	Oregon	837
South Nodaway R-IV	Barnard	221
Southwest Livingston R-I	Ludlow	111
Spickard R-II	Spickard	222
Stanberry R-II	Stanberry	1,129
Stewartsville C-5	Stewartsville	733
Tarkio R-I	Tarkio	1,508
Tina-Avalon R-II	Tina	139
Tri-County R-VII	Jamesport	559
Union Star R-II	Union Star	380
West Nodaway R-I	Burlington Junction	537
West Platte Co. R-II	Weston	1,641
Winston R-VI	Winston	229
Worth Co R-III	Grant City	859

Note. Table 1 shows the school district, town, and population size for the districts which served as the participant pool.

Table 2

Participant Pseudonym, School District, and Role

Participant Pseudonym	Participant School District	Role
Samuel Ashford	Ottawa	Superintendent
Anna Canton	Mountain Butte	Elementary Principal
David Jacobs	Kattan County	Superintendent
Abigail Kutter	Mountain Butte	MS/HS Principal
Lydia Rogers	Mercyville	Special Education Director
Spencer Wright	Fall Brook	Elementary Principal

Note. Table 2 are the assigned pseudonyms for the participants' names, school districts, and their actual roles within their district.

Table 3

Summary of Formal Role Findings

Design	Support	Evaluation
Scheduling meetings	Facilitate meetings	Formally assess professional development needs
Develop agenda	Allocate resources, time, money, and materials	Monitor teacher retention and turnover
Assign mentors	Authorize leave time for observation and professional development	Solicit formal feedback
Design log forms	Communicate expectations	
Embed mission, visions, and goals into various induction documents	Schedule check-ins with mentors and mentees	
Outline expectations for the induction program		

Note. Table 3 is a summary of the findings associated with the formal role of the administrators in novice teacher induction.

Table 4

Summary of Informal Role Findings

Design	Support	Evaluation
Use intuition to select mentors and make mentor/mentee matches	Model behavior for novice teachers	Informally assess professional development needs through discussion
Recommend mentor activities	Provide emotional support and encouragement	Solicit informal feedback through discussion
Consider proximity for support	Focus on well-being	Use informal observation and intuition to evaluate effectiveness of mentor and novice teacher
	Make themselves visible, accessible, and strive to be transparent Build relationships	
	Communicate with novice teachers and mentors	
	Conduct informal check-in	

Note. Table 4 is a summary of the findings associated with the informal role of the administrators in novice teacher induction.

Table 5

Formal Role Evidence and Quotes

Design Tasks	Support Tasks	Evaluation Tasks
"My two long standing principals have collaborated to put together a list of items that are important to being successful at Kattan School District such as clarification on 'nuts and bolts' procedures like using the student information system, grading practices, P.O. procedures."	"So, when we meet with just start new staff and our new teachers, that's a lot of PD and team building. So, it's a lot of relationship building."	"I seek feedback from my staff and it doesn't hurt that my wife teaches in the building. I hear the teacher perspective. That doesn't mean everyone always agrees with my decisions, but few would argue I do not have the best interest of students and teachers in mind."
Procedures, contact information, and resources such as technology, locations of supplies, and forms for leave time are visible. (document)	"Once the school started and they got going, I did a needs assessment to kind of see what each one of them needed, um, to help out in that way."	"We try to get in the classroom a lot. And so probably more with new staff just to make sure they're not feeling overwhelmed and do temperature checks with them in an ideal situation."
"Welcome to the Ottawa School District! The first year of teaching is one of the most challenging periods you will experience in your career. This year, you will have the opportunity to work directly with an experienced teacher as a consultant, coach, and colleague. Mentoring is an ongoing relationship that extends throughout the first year of a new teacher's professional practice. . . .	"Um, the other piece of that I would say is the social aspect. So, letting all the new teachers meet each other, um, letting them meet me, get to know me, um, the other people in the building who are gonna support them, their technology, integration specialist, assistant principal, things like that."	"I guess the first thing that comes to mind is retention. You know, are we, are we hanging on to those new teachers? You know, there's some pretty startling facts out there that, you know, within three years, you know, 64%, um, are still there. And then after five years, only 48% of, of teachers are still there. So, you know, getting, getting them to that, three-year mark and five-year mark. Um, I feel like can be a

This handbook provides a detailed look at how mentoring will work." (document)	sign of, of a good support system in place."

Note. Table 5 is a summary of the evidence and quotes associated with the formal role of the administrators in novice teacher induction.

Table 6

Informal Role Evidence and Quotes

Design Tasks	Support Tasks	Evaluation Tasks
“I talked to our building leadership team. Usually, those individuals are the ones who are going to be a little bit more invested in the school. So, they're going to want to invest in new teachers as well. Um, also kind of look for, like I said, um, proximity. So, who's in the hallway with them.”	“I think they need to know who the superintendent is. They need to be able to feel comfortable to talk to the superintendent. Uh, so I think that's a big thing that sometimes I see it happen more in bigger schools obviously, but you know, the smaller school setting for us, you know, I think it's beneficial if, you know, you have there, you're having those conversations with those teachers in that way, you can help them. And they know that we're all in this together and it's not, you know, you don't want to see a separation of admin and staff.”	“There's no formal evaluation, but I'm checking in with them of like, Hey, where are they at? What do you think? What struggles are they having? Is there something I should be looking for in the classroom or something you think they're doing really great that I should go see?”
“Um, when we pair them up with a mentor, we always think strategically.”	“I try to get out, I try to make myself available to them, be seen my door’s open.”	“I do ask for a lot of feedback from people.”
“I think our building climate plays a huge role in developing novice teachers. Novice teachers need mentors who are supportive, approachable, and in love with the district.”	“I think most, most of my teachers will say, look, we all have his cell phone. We can all send him a text and probably unless, unless it’s midnight to six and he’s probably gonna respond pretty quick.”	“I'll meet with, I'll talk to them a little bit, but I don't try to overwhelm them as you know, cause, um, I'm the boss and everybody freaks out because, oh, I'm talking to them. I try to make it as informal as

	possible because I don't want them to freak out that I'm coming and talking to them."

Note. Table 6 is a summary of the evidence and quotes associated with the informal role of the administrators in novice teacher induction.

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SECTION SIX – SCHOLARLY PRACTITIONER REFLECTION

Continuous exploration of myself as a leader and a scholar has been an invaluable experience entrenched in the MU Cooperative Doctoral Program, and this section highlights my reflection as a leader and scholar. A synthesis of my learning and growth in four areas will be explored: (a) leadership theory and practice, (b) organizational analysis, policy analysis, and (c) content and context for learning while reflecting on my program, this scholarly dissertation process, and my professional practice. The examination is comprised of themes which I found emerged in my learning: (a) ethics, (b) diversity and inclusion, and (c) data driven decision making and are supported by perspectives, scholars, and theories, which now frame my thinking.

Leadership Theory and Practice

Leaders need to know how they learn first, before they can create a culture of learning within organizations (Gill, 2010). As a result of this program and dissertation process, I understand how cooperation, competition, communication, decision making, and problem-solving skills are shaped and applied to my views and actions (Levi, 2017). My first insight from the dissertation process that shaped my personal and professional beliefs came from the Clifton StrengthsFinder (2018) Inventory taken during Summer 2019, which I used to identify my strengths, skills, and behaviors considered to be leader assets. The Clifton StrengthsFinder (2018) Inventory determined my personalized strength themes to be Strategic, Analytical, Command, Deliberative, and Relator. These strengths manifest in me as the following personality traits: Fascination with problems, examining facts to gain understanding, analyzing people or problems, assertiveness, self-reliance, matter of fact, practical, ability to see a variety of perspectives, being open and

honest, straightforward, and talking through tough problems (Clifton, 2018). These strengths were relied upon during the dissertation writing phase. These strengths strongly demonstrate my belief in collaborative teams, motivating others towards a shared vision, and achievement of common goals (Levi, 2017; Northouse, 2019). The Clifton StrengthsFinder (2018) inventory created in me self-awareness which enhanced my consciousness of the dyadic interactions with those work with (Northouse, 2019). These strengths manifested in my dissertation work in the planning process, my view of the process as practical in nature, and my openness to hearing perspectives different than my own from my advisor and committee.

Although the dissertation serves as the culminating work of the program, it was a continual reminder I am growing, developing, and learning as a leader, and the dissertation helped me become more open-minded about the conceptualization of leadership. As I worked in the dissertation process to unearth the implications and to make recommendations for practitioners, I was reminded of my current role as an instructor within an educator preparation program, and how my job is to teach my students to understand data and act on it accordingly in their classroom, and as Zettelmeyer and Bolling (2014) wrote, a translator of data for people, which is what I can do as a leader. The dissertation process helped me to be a better leader and decision maker. As I am finishing this dissertation process, I reflect on how this process has required me to cooperate and communicate with others, make decisions, and use critical thinking skills throughout the writing process. Furthermore, it has been a transformational process for me as I have learned to work with my committee to achieve

winning configurations, just as a well-attuned leader can look at an organization from multiple perspectives-unconsciously, quickly, and holistically (Bolman & Deal, 2017).

Organizational Analysis

We started in the Summer of 2019 with a focus on organizational analysis, using Bolman and Deal's (2017) frames of thinking, and this set the stage for us to analyze a variety of situations, programs, policies, and learning practices throughout this process. As leaders embark on organizational change, an emphasis on continuous communication, commitment to clear goals, mission, and purpose, and flexibility to allow change in processes should be of central focus (Manning, 2013; Bolman & Deal, 2017). The themes of communication, teamwork, clear and focused goals, conflict resolution, and collaboration were principal to my learning insights throughout this program and dissertation process. My dissertation committee and advisor helped me to remain focused on my goal, and we established a system of communication to keep me on track towards my goal. The teamwork demonstrated by my committee evidenced the collaboration and teamwork I learned about in this program. Furthermore, my learning came from the processes we practiced as we completed a different project with a new project team each semester, and I have come to value the process of teamwork and collaboration more deeply because of the program.

Additional learning and significant insight came from Bolman and Deal's (2017) frames of thinking to help leaders navigate the complexity of organizations. Using the guidance of Levi (2017) during Summer 2019, work teams were created with other cohort members to tackle a wicked problem in education (Jordan et al., 2014). This experience alone was life changing, and I am forever indebted to the MU Cooperative

Doctoral Program leaders for the conflict management skills, learning, and planning skills I gained from the experience. It is difficult to reckon this experience or even describe it, but I am so grateful for the experience and process, which connected me to lifelong friends. For this wicked problem (Jordan, et al., 2014), we used the frames thinking to serve as a foundation through which to act within an organization (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Furthermore, weaved into the problem were other factors to shape how we as leaders need to recognize people and structure can impact privilege, oppression, and the use of power within organizations (Johnson, 2018), expanding the idea from Manning (2013) which makes the connection between hierarchy and power to an understanding of privilege and oppression within organizations. It was a powerful experience to say the least, and the process was transformational for me.

Policy Analysis

There was a strong emphasis on data during my learning in this program. Data-driven decisions are an "analytical process that entails making and evaluating decisions in relation to problems" (Kowalski, 2009, p. 5). As a leader, I need to understand the data needed to make decisions can take various forms, which is not always quantitative in nature. Moreover, the data-driven decision process should be one of systemic inquiry to collect data to make decisions (Mertens, 2020). The understanding of data and policy analysis became practical once I entered the dissertation writing phase. I determined I wanted to conduct a qualitative study and learned the methodology to do so in this program. During the dissertation process, I had to determine what data existed surrounding my study and what policies drove the novice teacher induction process. Gummer (2020) wrote about the need for leaders to grow in their data capacity or

"sensemaking processes" (p. 1). Multiple layers of data, both numerical and narrative, were used by leaders in numerous ways to build data literacy and capacity in their teams (Gummer, 2020). Furthermore, my StrengthsFinder (2018) results indicated I prefer to use data to make and support my decisions. During the dissertation process, I was able to synthesize the data I collected from the survey, interviews, and document analysis to make sense and provide recommendations for practitioners and scholars who work with novice teacher induction programs. As a result of this program, I am better prepared to understand policy, to collect data, and to use these skills as a scholarly writer.

Content and Context for Learning

Adult learning relies on experience to understand the process of learning (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Merriam and Bierema (2014) described three distinct types of learners: Goal-oriented learners tend to be motivated by higher economic status, activity-oriented learners seek the opportunity to meet new people, and learning-oriented learners enjoy learning for learning's sake. As a result of this dissertation process, I have learned so much about myself as an adult learner. I found myself to be a learning-oriented learner as I embraced the dissertation process and all the learning activities within this program and found they were rich, changed my awareness level, and helped me to view people and situations with more of an open mind.

During our Spring 2021, we started with who we are as a learner. My personal epistemology as a learner is negotiated through relationships, Socratic argumentation (Holmes, 2010), in social contexts with a focus on dialogue (Kofman & Senge, 1993), which is why I enjoyed the cohort learning experience so much. Campbell et al., (2009) wrote about the "need to deliberate" (p. 150) when making decisions, which relates to

Kofman and Senge's (1993) social contexts and use of dialogue in the learning process, and I found this need emerged within my work teams. I highly value knowledge as a shared experience occurring from conversation with the infusion of personal life experiences (Bruffee, 1998), and, as a result, I thrived in this dissertation process in the weekly meetings I had with my advisor. The conversations we had helped to shape my writing in the dissertation process and fulfilled me as a learning-oriented learner. I found this dissertation process to be transformative for me as a scholar (Christie et al., 2015).

I do not believe learning is an isolated event, but an ongoing and interactive process, and this program certainly reinforced this idea for me. I believe I apply my personal preferences of social dialogue and collaboration to being a leader of adult learners, because these contexts best facilitate the essential self-examination, confidence and knowledge building skills, relationships, and lived experience which allow for "critical, analytical reflection" (Christie, et al, 2015, p. 22) adult learners crave and need to be successful in their careers. Learning takes place in social settings (Merriam & Bierema, 2014), but I recognize there can be ethical issues with collaborative learning and leading. Unclear roles and ambiguity in a team leads to what Rogers and Blenko (2001) referred to as "bottlenecks" (p. 96), creating a stalled decision-making process, but by "assigning clear roles and responsibilities" (p. 97), I can address ambiguity. As a leader of learners, I also need to be aware of how the power structures can affect the dialogue needed for effective data-driven decision making (Campbell et al., 2009). Banaji et al. (2013) wrote, "The first step to reducing unconscious bias is to collect data to reveal its presence" (p. 126), and I can overcome this by using Kahneman et al.'s (2011) quality control checklist for decision evaluation to address bias issues. I am looking forward to

sharing with other adult learners the results of my dissertation at practitioner conferences, and I will apply the principles of adult learning in my presentations.

Ethics, Diversity and Inclusion, and Data Driven Decisions

The coursework in this program and dissertation process changed me as a leader and scholar. One of the most impactful readings during our coursework was Markovits' (2019) *The Meritocratic Inheritance*. Markovits (2019) wrote, "The meritocratic inheritance - the immense excess investments rich parents make in their children's human capital, over and above what middle-class children receive, dominates dynastic succession in a meritocratic world" (p. 147). This reading following Johnson's (2018) *Privilege, Power, and Difference* framed how I viewed each student individually, rather than considering the whole class needs in my professional practice in my educator preparation program. Students' families and individual experiences shape their college experiences and how they learn. I think this was the first time I consciously tried to understand those who were first generation college students, to visit with them individually, to communicate my own experiences, and to work to address the needs that make them different. Davis (2013) wrote that poverty negatively impacts educational performance more in the U.S. than in other countries, and higher education reform indirectly targets minority students and those who are low-income by putting greater focus on data driven measures, such as graduation rates, which forces schools to provide more support with less money.

Furthermore, the achievement gap continues to widen between socioeconomic classes, and rich students systematically outperform all students (Markovits, 2019). Learning this helped me to understand just how at risk some students are when they come

to college. I realized not all starting points are uniform for my students and I need to become aware of the need for our organization to focus on leveling the playing field to create a uniform starting point.

Neoliberalism ideas were introduced during Summer 2020 to support the learning of policy analysis. Neoliberalism favors market model and individualism, which I learned puts some students at more risk than others. “According to Neoliberalism/Individualism, a student’s educational success or failure is largely a result of individual investment and effort rather than social and economic influences” (Cormier, personal communication, July 15, 2020). Dodman, et al. (2021) explained, “Neoliberal educational contexts problematically frame data use as objective” (p. 1), and Dodman et al. recommended the use of equity audits. This could help to create what Holmes (2010) referred to as a “pluralistic awareness” (p. 284). As a leader, I believe I can influence and create a learning culture that moves beyond indecisiveness through improving the quality of the dialogue in groups, which could lead to innovative ideas, productivity, and growth (Charan, 2001), and I am going to continue to do so using the tools I have been equipped with in this program. My dissertation process did not include addressing the underrepresented people as novice teachers, but it did influence my thinking on how I can apply what I have learned as a leader and scholar in the future. Furthermore, I have embedded resources within my courses to help future educators understand their own biases, privileges, and powers as they transition into the novice teacher role.

The MU Cooperative Doctoral Program and the dissertation process has allowed me to continue to grow and develop as a leader and a scholar. I cannot measure or even put into words the experiences I have gained as a part of this program. I am grateful to be

able to reflect on my learning and growth in the areas of leadership theory and practice, organizational analysis, policy analysis, and content and context. I applied learning from each of these areas to the dissertation process. Ethics, diversity and inclusion, and data driven decision making themes were fixed within the MU Cooperative Doctoral Program and influenced how I tackled the dissertation process. Furthermore, I was influenced by countless perspectives, scholars, and theories and I find these each frame my thinking and decision making. The learning I have gained through this program and scholarly dissertation process has already begun to influence my professional practice, and I look forward to continuing to grow as a leader and practitioner in my educator preparation program and as a scholarly writer.

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Appendix A: Participant Email Recruitment

Hello,

My name is Tamara Lynn, and I am a Doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis program through the University of Missouri, Columbia. I am conducting a qualitative research study on understanding the administrator's role in novice teacher induction in rural, public K-12 Northwest Missouri school districts The results of this study will help you develop or revise your novice teacher induction programming to improve retention efforts and your novice teacher induction practices. There are no known risks or costs in this study other than the time you commit to sharing your experiences.

If you are an administrator in a rural district in Northwest Missouri, I am interested in your point of view of how your district has designed, implemented, and evaluated your novice teacher induction program. Your participation will provide a better understanding of novice teacher induction programming in Northwest Missouri schools. The results of this study will help you develop or revise your novice teacher induction programming to improve retention efforts and your novice teacher induction practices. Your participation is voluntary, and your experiences are of immense value to informing this study. This survey will take you approximately 15 minutes to complete. If you are willing to participate, please complete the survey link below:

https://missouri.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eFB9b8aJGfw5eVo

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in this research study,

Tamara Lynn, Doctoral Candidate
University of Missouri-Columbia Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

Dr. Nissa Ingraham, Dissertation Advisor
University of Missouri-Columbia Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

Appendix B: IRB Informed Consent

Project Title: *AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR'S ROLE IN THE DESIGN, SUPPORT, AND EVALUATION OF INDUCTION PROGRAMS IN RURAL, PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS IN NORTHWEST MISSOURI*

Participants may contact the following at any time with questions or concerns related to the research study or your rights as a participant:

Principal Researcher: Tamara Lynn 816.547.9466 or tglynn@nwmissouri.edu

Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Nissa Ingraham 660.541.2333 or nissai@nwmissouri.edu

University of Missouri Institutional Review Board: 573.882.3181 or muresearchirb@missouri.edu. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to make sure the rights and welfare of participants are protected. If you want to talk privately about any concerns or issues related to your participation, you may contact the Research Participant Advocacy at 888-280-5002 (a free call) or email muresearchrpa@missouri.edu.

IRB Reference Number: *2083544*

You are being invited to take part in a research project. This informed consent provides you specific information about the research study, the study procedure, and your rights as a participant. You must be 18 years of age or older. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may refuse to participate and/or discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or prejudice. You will not receive compensation for your participation. The research study will take approximately two months to complete. There are no known risks or costs in this study other than the time you commit

to sharing your experiences. You can ask the researcher to provide you with a copy of this consent for your records, or you can save a copy of this consent if it has already been provided to you. We appreciate your consideration to participate in this study.

The purpose of this research study is to understand the administrator's role in novice teacher induction practices in rural, Northwest Missouri. The results of the study will provide an understanding of novice teacher practices in the rural Northwest Missouri region, and the study will help fill a gap in literature relating to novice teacher induction practices. Your participation will provide a better understanding of novice teacher induction programming in Northwest Missouri schools, and the results of this study will help you develop or revise your novice teacher induction programming to improve retention efforts and your novice teacher induction practices.

Participants will include Missouri administrators: Superintendents, principals, assistant principals, or other district administrators who participate in novice induction practices in the rural Northwest Missouri region. Participants will be selected to participate in one or more of the following:

- An electronic survey lasting no longer than 15 minutes. There are no risks of being involved with the study except the commitment of a 15-minute survey. Your responses are confidential and will be kept in a secure location.
- An interview lasting no longer than 45 minutes. There are no risks of being involved with the study except the commitment of a 30–45-minute interview. The interview will be audio recorded to assist the researcher in

obtaining accurate data. Your responses are confidential and will be kept in a secure location.

- Providing documents from the district's novice teacher induction program for analysis by the researcher. At no time will the district's name, participants, name, or any other identifiable information be shared. Your documents are confidential and will be kept in a secure location.

The information you provide will be kept confidential and only the research team will have access. All participant responses and identity will be kept confidential, as the researcher and research assistant are the only individuals who will have access to the data. Information will be locked in a secure location, with the researcher only having access to the information. Identifying characteristics such as name, role, or school district will not be disclosed at any time.

After reading the informed consent form, indicate if you are willing to participate in this study. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Appendix C: Electronic Survey Questions

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR'S ROLE IN THE DESIGN, SUPPORT, AND EVALUATION OF INDUCTION PROGRAMS IN RURAL, PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS IN NORTHWEST MISSOURI

1. After reading the informed consent form, indicate if you are willing to participate in this study.

   □ Yes (If participant indicates 'yes', the survey will continue.)

   □ No (If participant indicates 'no', the survey will cease, and the following response will be given: "Thank you for your time! If you have questions regarding this study or believe you have received this message in error, please contact the researcher at tglynn@nwmissouri.edu.")

2. Do you participate and/or have a role in the design, support, and evaluation of the novice teacher induction program in your school district?

   □ Yes (If participant indicates 'yes', the survey will continue.)

   □ No (If participant indicates 'no', the survey will cease, and the following response will be given: "Thank you for your time! If you have questions regarding this study or believe you have received this message in error, please contact the researcher at tglynn@nwmissouri.edu.")

3. What is your role in the school? If you serve in multiple administrative roles, please check all that apply.

   □ Superintendent □ K-12 Principal □ High School Principal

   □ Junior High/Middle School Principal □ Elementary School Principal

   □ Central Office Administrator (Please specify) □ Other (Please specify)

4. How many years have you served as an administrator?

   a. 0-2 years b. 3-5 years c. 6-10 years d. 10 or more years

5. How many years have you served as an administrator in your current school district?

   a. 0-2 years b. 3-5 years c. 6-10 years d. 10 or more years

6. Describe how novice teachers are inducted in your school district. (Text Response)

7. Do teachers volunteer to participate in novice teacher induction?

   □ Yes □ No

8. What are the goals for your novice teacher induction program? (Text Response)

9. Is release time provided for novice teachers and their mentors? If so, please explain approximately how much time is provided.

   □ Yes; If yes, please use the box below. (Text response) □ No

10. Organizational culture is defined as the "shared values, beliefs, and norms of an organization" (Levi, 2017, p. 283). Considering the definition of organizational culture as it applies to your school district, how would you describe your school district culture? (Text response)

11. Describe your role and/or responsibility as an administrator in creating, maintaining, or improving the school district culture. (Text response)

12. Describe the collaborative environment in your school district. (Text response)

13. Elaborate on the impact of your school district culture on novice teachers. (Text response)

14. Is there anything else you would like to expand on regarding your role and/or responsibilities as an administrator, novice teacher induction within your school district, or school district culture?

    □ Yes; If yes, please use the box below. (Text response) □ No

15. Would be willing to participate in an interview? (Interviews will be conducted based on your preference, by email, digitally, or face-to-face, and will take 30-45 minutes)

    □ Yes; If yes, please indicate your name. (Text response) □ No

Appendix D: Interview Email Recruitment

Hello,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Tamara Lynn, and I am a Doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis program through the University of Missouri, Columbia. I am conducting a qualitative research study on understanding the administrator's role in novice teacher induction in rural, Northwest Missouri school districts. The results of this study will help you develop or revise your novice teacher induction programming to improve retention efforts and your novice teacher induction practices. There are no known risks or costs in this study other than the time you commit to sharing your experiences.

You have been selected to participate in an interview for this study due to your current role as an administrator in a rural, Northwest Missouri school district. I would appreciate your notification of interest to participate in a 30–45-minute interview at your earliest convenience. Upon your notification of interest, I will be in contact with you to set up a date and location for the interview. Your participation is voluntary, but important to the success of this research study. I appreciate you taking the time to consider participating in the interview process.

Many thanks,

Tamara Lynn, Doctoral Candidate
University of Missouri-Columbia Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

Dr. Nissa Ingraham, Dissertation Advisor
University of Missouri-Columbia Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

Appendix E: Interview Recruitment Oral Script

Hello, this is Tamara Lynn, doctoral candidate from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Thank you for taking the time to participate in my research study survey regarding administrator's role in novice teacher induction practices in rural, Northwest Missouri.

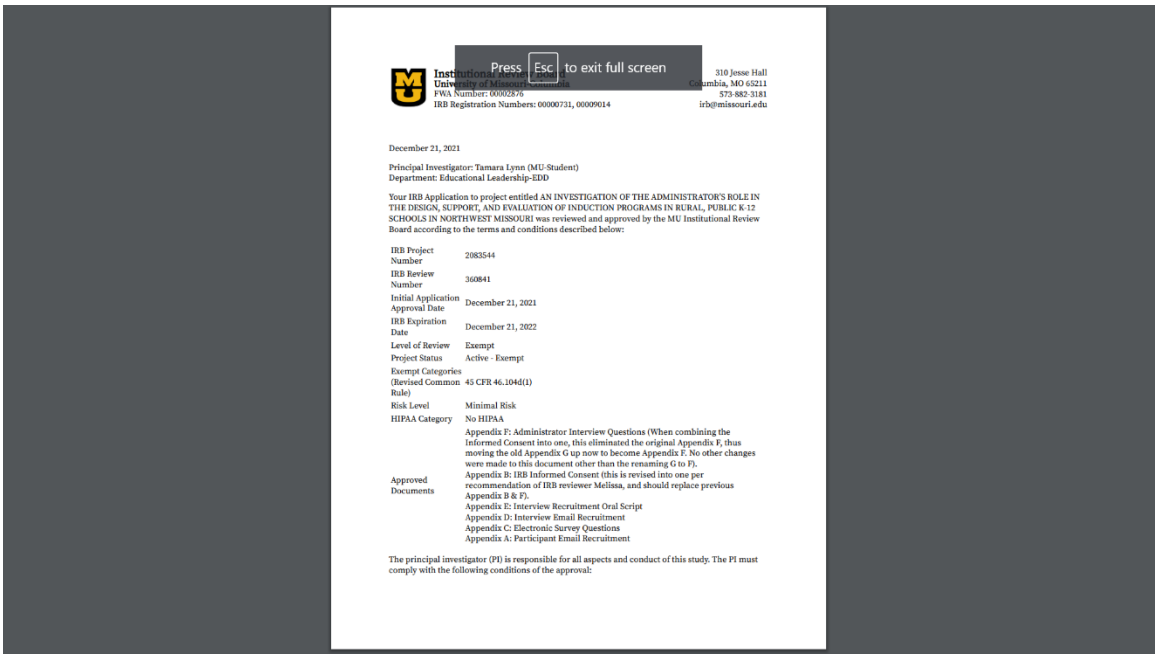
You have been selected to participate in an interview for this study due to your current role as an administrator in a rural, Northwest Missouri school district. Would you consider participating in a 30–45-minute interview? Your participation is voluntary, but important to the success of this research study. Your responses are confidential. If so, can we set up a date and location for the interview with you at this time? I appreciate you taking the time to consider participating in the interview process.

Appendix F: Administrator Interview Questions

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR'S ROLE IN THE DESIGN, SUPPORT, AND EVALUATION OF INDUCTION PROGRAMS IN RURAL, PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS IN NORTHWEST MISSOURI

1. What is your current administrative role and how long you have been an administrator?
2. Describe how novice teachers are inducted in your school district.
    a. In your district, is novice teacher induction an event, a program, a process, or something else? Tell me more about how you define or describe novice teacher induction in your school district.
    b. What is your role and/or responsibility as an administrator in the induction of novice teachers within your school district?
    c. Describe how novice teachers are supported during their induction.
    d. How do you believe novice teacher induction practices should be evaluated?
    e. Describe your prior knowledge about policies, practices, and research surrounding the induction of novice teachers.
3. Describe your school district culture. What evidence exists to represent your school district culture?
    a. Elaborate on the relationship between novice teacher induction practices and school district culture.
4. Is there anything else you would like to share about your role and/or responsibilities as an administrator, novice teacher induction within your school district, or school district culture?

Appendix G: IRB Approval Letter



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Institutional Review Board
University of Missouri System
FWA Number: 00002876
IRB Registration Numbers: 00000731, 00009014

310 Jesse Hall
Columbia, MO 65211
573-882-3181
irb@missouri.edu

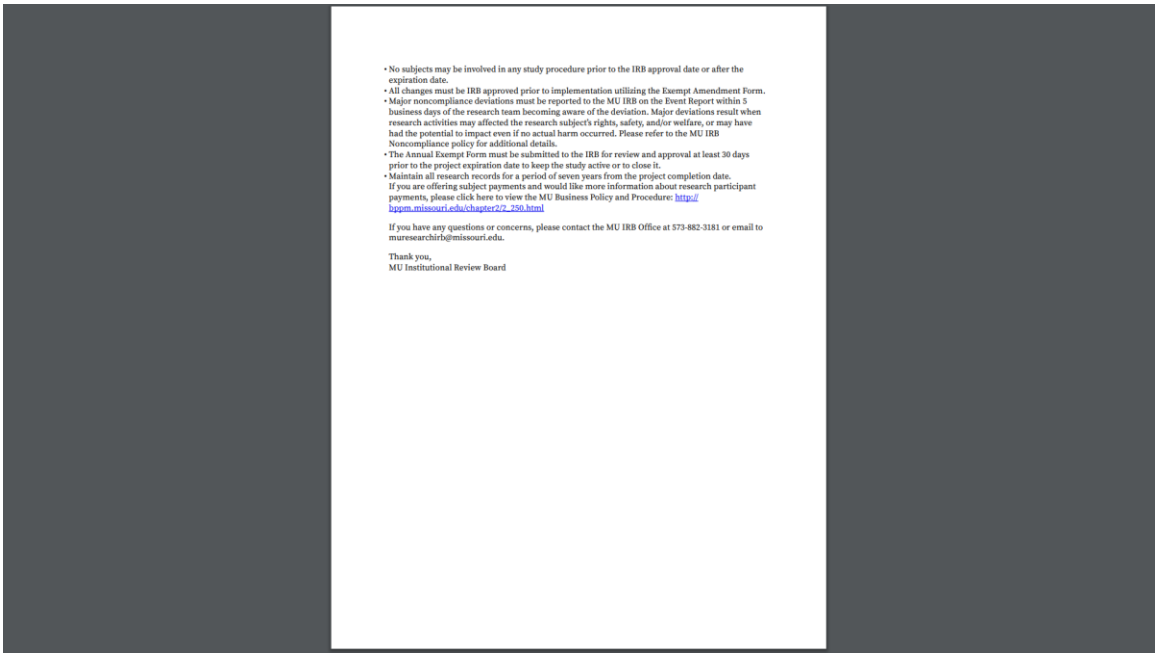
December 21, 2021

Principal Investigator: Tamara Lynn (MU-Student)
Department: Educational Leadership-EDD

Your IRB Application to project entitled AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR'S ROLE IN THE DESIGN, SUPPORT, AND EVALUATION OF INDUCTION PROGRAMS IN RURAL, PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS IN NORTHWEST MISSOURI was reviewed and approved by the MU Institutional Review Board according to the terms and conditions described below:

IRB Project Number	2083544
IRB Review Number	360841
Initial Application Approval Date	December 21, 2021
IRB Expiration Date	December 21, 2022
Level of Review	Exempt
Project Status	Active - Exempt
Exempt Categories (Revised Common Rule)	45 CFR 46.104d(1)
Risk Level	Minimal Risk
HIPAA Category	No HIPAA
Approved Documents	Appendix F: Administrator Interview Questions (When combining the Informed Consent into one, this eliminated the original Appendix F, thus moving the old Appendix G up now to become Appendix F. No other changes were made to this document other than the renaming G to F). Appendix B: IRB Informed Consent (this is revised into one per recommendation of IRB reviewer Melissa, and should replace previous Appendix B & F). Appendix E: Interview Recruitment Oral Script Appendix D: Interview Email Recruitment Appendix C: Electronic Survey Questions Appendix A: Participant Email Recruitment

The principal investigator (PI) is responsible for all aspects and conduct of this study. The PI must comply with the following conditions of the approval:



- No subjects may be involved in any study procedure prior to the IRB approval date or after the expiration date.
- All changes must be IRB approved prior to implementation utilizing the Exempt Amendment Form.
- Major noncompliance deviations must be reported to the MU IRB on the Event Report within 5 business days of the research team becoming aware of the deviation. Major deviations result when research activities may affected the research subject's rights, safety, and/or welfare, or may have had the potential to impact even if no actual harm occurred. Please refer to the MU IRB Noncompliance policy for additional details.
- The Annual Exempt Form must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval at least 30 days prior to the project expiration date to keep the study active or to close it.
- Maintain all research records for a period of seven years from the project completion date.

If you are offering subject payments and would like more information about research participant payments, please click here to view the MU Business Policy and Procedure: http://bppm.missouri.edu/chapter272_250.html

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the MU IRB Office at 573-882-3181 or email to muresearchirb@missouri.edu.

Thank you,
MU Institutional Review Board

VITA

Tamara G. Lynn was born in Kansas City, MO, and graduated from Smithville High School in Smithville, MO in 1998. Tamara earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a minor in psychology from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2002, a Master of Science in Special Education from Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville, MO, in 2009, and a Specialist in Education in Educational Leadership K-12 and Special Education Administration from Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville, MO, in 2016. She completed her Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2022. Tamara has been a special education instructor in the School of Education at Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville, MO, since 2017. She and her husband, Brian, have been married since 2002 and together they have two children, Timothy 'Cooper' and Sofia Gisele. The family are residents of Maryville, MO, since 2006.