Building, Supporting, and Assuring Quality Professional Practice

A Research Study of Teacher Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation in Alberta

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Prepared for

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Executive Summary

Overview

Alberta is considered among the world's top performing education systems. Over the past two decades, the provincial education system has invested heavily in building teachers' professional capital to ensure that the quality of teaching in Alberta is among the best in the world. A wealth of the educational reform research literature, at both international and provincial levels, suggests that continuous professional learning is key to building teachers' professional capital. Within Alberta, the *Teacher Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation Policy* (TGSE) (Government of Alberta, 1998) guides that learning.

In 2017, Alberta Education requested a comprehensive research study to inform an update to the existing policy, and to identify associated requirements for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and superintendents. This research study provides an independent, objective examination of TGSE in Alberta school authorities and related policies at the school authority level.

The purposes of the study were to provide education stakeholders and the Ministry with
- an independent, objective review of the provincial TGSE Policy in Alberta and of related policies at the school authority level;
- recommendations on how best to support implementation of any proposed changes to the TGSE policy;
- recommendations on how the TGSE model should inform related policy on growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals; and
- recommendations on how the TGSE model should inform related policy on growth, supervision, and evaluation of superintendents and school authority leaders.

Research Design

The eight-member research team from the universities of Calgary, Lethbridge, and Alberta adopted a concurrent mixed methods research design to generate insights into educator experiences with and perspectives on teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation within the TGSE policy context. Our comprehensive analysis and merging of the study's quantitative and qualitative data generated 14 merged findings and 10 recommendations.

Quantitative data were generated from online surveys of 710 teachers, 131 principals, and 33 superintendents. Analysis of the survey data provided province-wide insights from a large population of educators in June and July of 2017.

Qualitative data were gathered through multiple case study research during March to June of 2017. Members of the research team conducted individual and/or focus group interviews of

teachers (*n*=64), principals (*n*=53), superintendents, and other system leaders (*n*=33) in seven randomly selected school jurisdictions and selected charter and independent schools. Nine individual cases illustrated and illuminated practices through which teachers and leaders at the school and administrative levels engaged in teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation in their unique contexts. Our cross-case analysis identified 13 larger themes. Evidence was gathered in two additional ways: (a) through analysis of 30 randomly selected school authority policies, and (b) through interviews of education partner organization leaders. The team also gathered evidence from documentary sources, artifacts, and field notes.

In consultation with the members of the Ministry's *Leadership Excellence* team, the following five research questions were asked to make sense of these data:

1. How does the current state of the Alberta TGSE policy compare with the research literature and current best practices on educator growth, supervision, and evaluation?
2. What aspects of the current policy are perceived to be working well? Which aspects of the policy, if any, are not working well?
3. To what extent, and in what ways, do teachers, principals, and superintendents perceive that teacher growth plans have a demonstrable relationship to the TQS?
4. To what extent, and in what ways, do teachers, principals, and superintendents perceive that ongoing supervision by the principal provides teachers with the guidance and support they need to be successful?
5. To what degree, and in what ways, does the implementation of the TGSE policy provide a foundation that could inform related policy development for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and superintendents?

Findings and Recommendations

The merged findings from this study provide a deeper understanding of the current state of the TGSE policy in several dimensions. The following table lists the 14 merged findings from this report as well as the 10 recommendations that flow from these findings. Results are presented in three domains. The first domain examines the interplay of policy and practice in relation to Research Questions 1 and 5. This domain focuses on the content of the 1998 TGSE policy in light of current research literature in the areas of teacher growth, instructional supervision, teacher evaluation, and policy analysis.

The results and recommendations in the second domain address Research Questions 2, 3, and 4. They focus on a central tenet of this study—*the importance and benefits of supporting professional growth through the interplay of teacher learning and instructional supervision.*

The third domain returns to Research Questions 2 and 4. The focus is on assuring quality professional practice through the interplay of instructional supervision and teacher evaluation.

The study's findings and recommendations provide pathways for *building, supporting, and assuring quality professional practice that results in optimum learning for all Alberta students.*

Domain	Research Questions	Merged Findings	Recommendations
1. The Interplay of Policy and Practice: Updating Policy Content and Implementability	*RQ#1.* How does the current state of the Alberta TGSE policy compare with the research literature and current best practices on educator growth, supervision, and evaluation? *RQ#5.* To what degree, and in what ways, does the implementation of the TGSE policy provide a foundation that could inform related policy development for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and superintendents?	*MF#1*: After 20 years the Alberta TGSE policy document stands up well in relation to the literature in the areas of teacher growth and evaluation. The supervision portion of the policy does not compare as favourably with the literature on instructional supervision. *MF#2.* The teacher growth portion of the provincial TGSE policy stands up well in relation to the literature in the area of teacher growth. *MF#3.* The supervision portion of the TGSE policy does not compare as favourably with the literature on instructional supervision. *MF#4.* The teacher evaluation portion of the provincial TGSE policy stands up well in relation to the literature on teacher evaluation. *MF#5.* With updated policy content and an increased emphasis on currency and implementability, the TGSE policy can provide foundation to inform related policy development for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and superintendents.	*R#1 (for Alberta Education):* The TGSE policy content should be updated to better reflect this study's syntheses of the research literature on teacher growth, instructional supervision, and teacher evaluation. *R#2 (for Alberta Education)*: With updated policy content and increased emphasis on currency and implementability, the TGSE policy should serve as an experiential foundation to inform related policy development for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and superintendents.
2. Building and Supporting Quality Professional Practice: The Interplay of	RQ#3. To what extent, and in what ways, do teachers, principals, and superintendents perceive	*MF#6.* The Teaching Quality Standard is not being used as widely as might be expected to	*R#3 (for Alberta Education):* The requirements for teacher growth plans should be

Domain	Research Questions	Merged Findings	Recommendations
Teacher Learning and Instructional Supervision	that teacher growth plans have a demonstrable relationship to the TQS? RQ#4. To what extent, and in what ways, do teachers, principals, and superintendents perceive that ongoing supervision by the principal provides teachers with the guidance and support they need to be successful? RQ#2. What aspects of the current policy are perceived to be working well? Which aspects of the policy, if any, are not working well?	inform teacher growth planning. *MF#7.* In practice, growth plans have a demonstrable administrative link to the TQS, but the professional linkage is not as strongly in evidence. *MF#8.* Many teachers, principals, and superintendents see benefit in developing growth plans that connect with school and school authority goals. *MF#9*: Teachers' perceptions of the benefits of ongoing supervision on their teaching practice were markedly divergent from those of school and school authority leaders. *MF#10:* Teachers want more opportunities to engage in collaborative conversations about their teaching practice. *MF#11*: School and school authority leadership was an important determinant in the degree to which policies and teacher growth processes were perceived to be worthwhile and successful. *MF#12*: Teachers, principals, and superintendents reported a lack of time and support for implementing teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation.	demonstrably linked to the Teaching Quality Standard and their impact on student learning. These requirements should be made more explicit in a revised and updated TGSE policy that is clearly focused on building and supporting quality professional practice. *R#4 (for teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders):* Professional growth plans should be explicitly anchored in teachers' daily work and measured by student learning, the Teacher Quality Standard, and site-embedded collaborative, sustained professional learning experiences that are clearly focused on building and supporting quality professional practice. *R#5 (for teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders):* Criteria, rubrics, and exemplars designed to build and support professional practice should be developed with and for professionals who see benefit in using them. *R#6 (for teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders):* A range of ongoing individual and collective opportunities and supportive structures should be provided in every school for teachers to collaborate about their professional learning goals with other teachers

Domain	Research Questions	Merged Findings	Recommendations
		MF# 13: Teachers, principals, and superintendents agreed that their school authority had clearly articulated administrative procedures to guide teachers in the development of professional growth plans.	and school leaders. *R#7 (for Alberta Education, teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders):* School leaders should collaboratively engage all teachers in a range of individual, small group, peer, and collective instructional supervision approaches that are clearly focused on building and supporting quality professional practice on an ongoing basis. *R#8 (for Alberta Education, teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders):* Ongoing professional learning opportunities should be provided to support teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders in their efforts to build and support quality professional practice under the revised and updated TGSE policy.
3. Assuring Quality Professional Practice: The Interplay of Instructional Supervision and Teacher Evaluation	RQ#4. To what extent, and in what ways, do teachers, principals, and superintendents perceive that ongoing supervision by the principal provides teachers with the guidance and support they need to be successful? RQ#2. What aspects of the current policy are perceived to be working well? Which aspects of the policy, if any, are not working well?	*MF#9*: Teachers' perceptions of the benefits of ongoing supervision on their teaching practice markedly diverged from those of school and school authority leaders. *MF#12*: Teachers, principals, and superintendents reported a lack of time and support for implementing teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation. *MF#14*: Teacher evaluation procedures were perceived to be fair	*R#9 (for Alberta Education):* The clear distinction between the improvement-oriented process of teacher supervision and the quality assurance process of teacher evaluation in the present TGSE policy should be maintained and made even more explicit in the revised and updated policy. *R#10 (for Alberta Education, teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders):* The current emphasis is

Domain	Research Questions	Merged Findings	Recommendations
		and in keeping with the requirements of the TGSE policy.	on repeated evaluations of early-career teachers, but this should be refocused, with more attention to building and supporting quality professional practice through induction and supervision, with less frequent, but more impactful teacher evaluation for the untenured and those holding interim professional certificates.

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CHAPTER ONE: TEACHER GROWTH, SUPERVISION, AND EVALUATION IN ALBERTA: OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

Alberta is among the world's top-performing education systems. Alberta students consistently score well on international assessments such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS) (Barber, Whelan, & Clark, 2010; Coughlan, 2017; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012).

Over the past two decades, the provincial education system has invested heavily in building teachers' professional capital to ensure that the province has, according to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), one of the best teaching workforces in the world. Professional capital includes three kinds of capital: human, social, and decisional.

Human capital measures include individual teacher qualifications, experience, and ability to teach. *Social capital* was measured in terms of peer interactions: the frequency and focus of conversations and interactions with peers that centered on instruction, and was based on feelings of trust and closeness between teachers (p. 3). *Decisional capital* refers to competence in making decisions in complex and unpredictable situations. It reflects teacher professionalism and the moral aspect of actions and judgments.

Continuous professional learning is key to building the professional capital of Alberta's nearly 40,000 teachers. Educating all students to succeed in the knowledge economies of the 21st century has increased the complexity of teaching, and required educators to engage in professional learning focused on developing students' thinking skills and abilities necessary for success in a rapidly changing world (Burns & Darling-Hammond, 2014; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009).

This research study provides an independent, objective examination of the provincial Teacher Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation Policy (TGSE) (Government of Alberta, 1998) in Alberta and of related polices at the school authority level.

There are four parts to this introductory chapter. We begin by describing the study's research design and then trace the evolutionary development of the TGSE as a prelude to a short discussion of the policy's key components. The chapter concludes with an outline of the structure and organization of the remaining six chapters of our research report.

Concurrent Mixed Methods Research Design

Our eight-member research team from the Universities of Calgary, Lethbridge, and Alberta used a concurrent mixed methods research design to generate insights into educator

experiences with, and perspectives on, the teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation within the TGSE policy context. Our comprehensive analysis and merging of the study's quantitative and qualitative data generated 14 findings and 10 recommendations.

The quantitative data were generated from online surveys of 710 teachers, 131 principals, and 33 superintendents. Analysis of the survey data provided province-wide insights from a large population of educators in June and July of 2017.

The qualitative data were gathered through multiple case study research. From March to June 2017, members of the research team collected data through individual and/or focus group interviews of teachers, principals, superintendents, and other system leaders in seven randomly selected school jurisdictions and selected charter and independent schools. These nine individual cases were used to illustrate and illuminate ways through which teachers and leaders at the school and administrative levels engaged in teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation in their unique contexts. From the emerging themes in each individual case, our cross-case analysis identified 14 larger themes. Evidence was gathered in two additional ways: (a) through analysis of 30 randomly selected school authority policies, and (b) through interviews of education partner organization leaders.

Our research team collected qualitative data through 37 focus group interviews and 6 individual interviews. In total, 150 educational educators participated in the focus groups: 64 teachers, 53 principals, and 33 school authority or education partner organization leaders. We also gathered evidence from documentary sources, artifacts, and field notes.

Twenty Years of Teacher Evaluation Policy and Practice in Alberta 1977 - 1997

While a number of research investigations of teacher supervision and teacher evaluation policies and practices were undertaken in Alberta during the 1980s and early 1990s, no major provincial study has recently been published in this field. Though the first major review of teacher evaluation in this province did not appear until 1977 (Reike), no fewer than four comprehensive studies were conducted in the decade leading up to the 1993 completion of *Toward Teacher Growth: A Study of the Impact of Alberta's Teacher Evaluation Policy* (Haughey). The Ministry of Education published all four implementation studies.

Three dissertations written within this time frame focused on specific aspects of teacher evaluation. Knight (1990) studied implementation of the policy based on a case study of two principals. Oppenheim (1994) considered the subject from the teacher's perspective. The forced resignation of teachers was the subject of Warren Phillips' 1994 doctoral work.

Of the four more comprehensive teacher evaluation studies, the first two were completed in 1984: *The First Year of Implementation of a Policy of Teacher Supervision and Evaluation in*

Five Secondary Schools of Lethbridge School District No. 51 (Townsend) and *An Assessment of Formal Teacher Evaluation Practices in Alberta* (Duncan). The other two both focused on the implementation of the province's 1984 *Teacher Evaluation* policy. Evidence suggests the Ministry used findings from both John Burger's *Teacher Evaluation Policy Implementation* (1987) and the Haughey (1993) studies in the development of its 1998 *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* policy.

Though 19 years have passed since the TGSE policy was adopted by Alberta Learning, and it is more than 20 years since the major concepts associated with the policy were first communicated to the educational community in *An Integrated Framework to Enhance the Quality of Teaching in Alberta: A Policy Position Paper* (1996) only one comprehensive study of the policy (a doctoral dissertation) has since been undertaken: *A Standards-Based Assessment of the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy* (Brandon, 2005).

Twenty Years of Teacher Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation in Alberta 1998 - 2018

Over the past two decades, teacher professional growth in Alberta has been guided by two key government policy documents: the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) (Ministerial Order 016/97) (Alberta Education, 1997) and the aforementioned TGSE.

The single Teaching Quality Standard is stated in Part One of the Ministerial Order:

Quality teaching occurs when the teacher's ongoing analysis of the context, and the teacher's decisions about which pedagogic knowledge and abilities to apply, result in optimum learning for students.

The Ministerial Order describes the *knowledge, skills, and attributes or dispositions that teachers are expected to demonstrate throughout their teaching careers.* Two sets of knowledge, skills, and attributes are specified by the TQS: one for teachers who hold an interim certificate (i.e., in their first two years of teaching and for those new to the province) and one for teachers who hold a permanent certificate. The TGSE Policy aims to ensure that each teacher's actions, judgments, and decisions are in the best educational interests of students and support optimal student learning.

School authorities, Early Childhood Services operators, superintendents, principals, and teachers in Alberta are expected to be responsible for facilitating quality improvement through each teacher's career-long professional growth. All teachers are also expected to align their professional practice to the TQS. (p. 1)

In 1998, the Alberta Government mandated that all teachers complete an annual Teacher Professional Growth Plan (TPGP). In a TPGP, teachers must state their goals for professional

learning and growth, as well as the actions and indicators for accomplishing their goals. Their professional learning goals need to align with the TQS.

The Alberta Teachers' Association has developed online resources to help teachers navigate through the process of completing their TPGPs. The online resources include checklists to determine areas of growth, document templates, strategies for implementation and evaluation, and the regulatory policies governing the TPGP process. In addition, some school jurisdictions provide teachers and their supervisors with additional resources (e.g., administrative procedures, specific guidelines, district- or school-specified goals, and templates). A supervisor, typically the principal, annually reviews each teacher's TPGP.

The TGSE Policy stipulates that TPGPs cannot be used for the purpose of teacher evaluation. They also shall not be shared with anyone besides the supervisor without the teacher's initiation and permission. TPGPs may be used to foster good supervisory practice through periodical reviews of growth processes between a teacher and his or her supervisor (Fenwick, 2001; 2004).

In the TGSE policy document, teacher growth is defined by an annual TPGP that:

reflects goals and objectives based on an assessment of learning by the individual teacher, shows a demonstrable relationship to the teaching quality standard, and considers the education plans of the school, the school authority, and the Government, or the program statement of an ECS operator. (pp. 3−4)

The TGSE policy also states that ongoing supervision of teachers by the principal should include the following:

providing support and guidance to teachers; observing and receiving information from any source about the quality of teaching a teacher provides to students; and identifying the behaviours or practices of a teacher that for any reason may require an evaluation. (p. 4)

According to the policy document, evaluation is conducted upon the written request of the teacher and is for any of these three purposes:

gathering information related to a specific employment decision; assessing the growth of the teacher in specific areas of practice; and when, on the basis of information received through supervision, the principal has reason to believe that the teaching of the teacher may not meet the teaching quality standard. (p. 5)

Two out of the three evaluation purposes place emphasis on summative assessment of teachers for making high-stakes decisions (i.e., employment and certification). In short, the wording and language used to define teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation in the TGSE policy document are more accountability-oriented than growth-focused.

Organization of the Report

This report has seven chapters. Chapter Two situates the current study in the seminal and recent research literature on teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation. The concurrent mixed methods research design is explained in Chapter Three. The processes used to gather the multiple sources of data are outlined along with the strategies we employed to guide analysis, interpretation, and recommendations.

Chapter Four describes the multiple case study methods we employed to generated rich descriptions of teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation as practiced by educators in nine illustrative Alberta contexts. Individual case findings and emerging themes are then developed further into 13 cross-case themes. The quantitative component of our study is reported in Chapter Five. Details are provided about the processes used to collect and analyze survey data from 710 teachers, 131 principals, and 33 superintendents. The policy content analysis section is presented in Chapter Six, which analyzes the content of policy documents from 30 randomly selected Alberta school jurisdiction websites.

The final chapter presents the overall results determined by mixing the key quantitative findings, cross-case themes, and major policy analysis findings to generate 14 merged findings and 10 recommendations that will contribute to *building, supporting, and assuring quality professional practice that results in optimum learning for all Alberta students.*

CHAPTER TWO: SYNTHESIS OF LITERATURE ON
TEACHER GROWTH, SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION

"It is true that good teaching is good teaching…" (Holdheide, 2015, p. 80)

Teacher excellence has been well documented as a central factor in student performance (Aaronson, Barrow, & Sander, 2007; Goe, 2007; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). While there is no debate about this relationship between teaching and learning, classroom composition and school environments have become increasingly diverse, and it has become more difficult to identify good teaching and support teachers' development toward excellence.

This chapter offers a synthesis of literature on teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation, and is a part of a research review of the *Alberta Teacher Growth Supervision and Evaluation Policy 2.1.5*, which came into force in 1998. Two basic questions have guided this review of the literature:

1. What are the key research findings, arguments, and debates in the areas of teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation?
2. What current and enduring practices support teacher growth and learning, as well as the supervision and evaluation of their development towards teaching excellence?

We investigated strands of literature pertinent to each of the areas of teacher growth, teacher supervision, and teacher evaluation, and synthesized the details that we found salient to the 1998 policy. Admittedly, the arbitrary division among these topics does not reflect that growth, supervision, and evaluation are overlapping jurisdictions, and the topics are occasionally difficult to disentangle. This is evident in both research and policy. Discussions about supervision, for example, often reflect the notion of evaluation (e.g. Ibara, 2013), and some jurisdictions do not differentiate between supervision and evaluation in their policies at all. At the same time, the concept of supervision has evolved from its clinical roots to become enriched by the instructional leadership literature (Neumerski, 2013), and now a specific study of the concept, like the others, seems warranted. We invite the reader to appreciate the gestalt of growth, supervision and evaluation in this review.

Search Strategies and Methods

We used a systematic, explicit and reproducible method (Fink, 2014) to investigate the literature and reports pertinent to our interests. Based on our research questions we identified keywords, phrases, and identifiers (Fink, 2014; Keeble & Kirk, 2007) for each area and decided on the best sources of information for our search. We delimited our search to materials published between 1998, when the TGSE policy came to life, and 2017, the year of review, but made exceptions for older publications deemed as foundational to the discussion.

For teacher growth, we primarily used the Google search engine and Google Scholar to find Ministry and Department of Education English-language websites, with the search term "teacher growth policies." The websites were the principal resources used for this review, although when available, we looked at links to authorized professional development websites that support teacher growth policies. The policies evaluated were those that were accessible on these websites and explicit to teacher growth, and where there was a clear distinction of teacher growth from supervision and evaluation. The most relevant policies were then selected from four Canadian provinces, three American states, and nine countries, as shown in Table 1.

Table 2.1: Study Jurisdictions

Provinces	Alberta, Nova Scotia, British Columbia, Ontario
States	California, Texas, Delaware
Countries	Australia, Chile, Denmark Hong Kong, Korea, The Netherlands, Malaysia, Scotland

We selected teacher supervision literature by two separate search strategies. The primary strategy was to focus on seminal sources and common textbooks in the supervision literature over the last half century, with a focus on the most recent editions of widely used North American graduate school texts. A secondary strategy was to conduct an online search of the education data bases in University of Calgary's Taylor Family Digital Library with the following keywords: "supervision," "instructional supervision," "teacher supervision," "instructional leadership," and "leadership for learning." Given the space and time limitations for this first pass at the literature review, there has not yet been an attempt to examine the national and international policy literature in this realm.

To identify relevant literature for teacher evaluation, search terms, "teacher evaluation," "teacher evaluation systems, approaches," "best teacher evaluation systems," "professional evaluation," and "teacher evaluation in Alberta/Canada" were employed in databases such as ProQuest, Academic Search Premier, and ERIC. Articles and reports were evaluated and the most relevant ones were selected. After reading through the selected articles, other relevant articles were identified and located. Google Scholar was also consulted, as it was expedient for identifying popular and recently published research.

To review current evaluation practices across Canada, provincial Education Ministry websites were accessed, along with supporting websites from some school boards. For the international evaluation practices, the review was narrowed to those countries that the OECD had selected for a review of teacher growth policies in 2014.

The teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation sections provide a synthesis of the educational and related literature. We invited both theoretical argument and empirical evidence into those conversations because policy is the product of philosophical orientation and theoretical assumptions, and how theory translates into practice is important to the development and implementation of policy. Grey literature (e.g. organizational documents, policy) was also considered. Examples of practices gleaned from national and international school systems are integrated throughout.

Section One: The Literature on Teacher Professional Growth

The *Alberta Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy 2.1.5* (Government of Alberta, 1998) identifies teacher professional growth as career-long learning focused on achieving optimal student learning. Based on an assessment of teachers' learning needs, as outlined in the Teaching Quality Standard Applicable to the Provision of Basic Education in Alberta (Alberta Education,1997), and connected to current school, jurisdiction, and government priorities, every teacher in the Province of Alberta is required to complete an annual professional growth plan. This policy acknowledges the dynamic nature of learning, supports change in instructional practice and the organization of schools into professional learning communities (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2017).

Much has been written about teacher education and professional growth over the past decade. This review focuses on literature published since 2007 to explore *teacher professional growth* as reflected in peer-reviewed articles, professional development pamphlets, seminar series papers, and reports on international studies. We also highlight ways in which jurisdictions outside Alberta understand the notion of *teacher professional growth* by examining a range of policies in Canada and international jurisdictions.

Recent academic literature and jurisdictional policies highlight three broad themes. First, teacher professional growth is an essential condition for student learning and achievement. Second, collaborative and inquiry-based approaches are most effective for supporting teacher growth. Third, when professional learning is embedded in practice, reflected in professional standards, and articulated through rubrics and exemplars, educators feel supported and guided.

Teacher Professional Growth: Essential for 21st Century Student Learning

Educating students to attain competencies required in the knowledge economies of the 21st century has increased the complexity of teaching, and required educators to engage in professional learning focused on developing students' thinking skills and abilities necessary for success in a rapidly changing world (Burns & Darling-Hammond, 2014; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009).

Described by Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) as "the serious and difficult task of *learning* the skills and perspectives assumed by new visions of practice and *unlearning* the practices and beliefs about students and instruction that have dominated their professional lives to date" (p. 81, italics in original), teacher professional growth has been identified as essential for student success and achievement. The relationship between teacher growth and student learning is forged in the literature of the past decade.

A strong message from the literature is that teachers and school leaders must remain focused on what matters most: student achievement (Hirsh & Killion, 2009). Importantly, as Wei et al. (2009) noted, "Efforts to improve student achievement can succeed only by building the capacity of teachers to improve their instructional practice and the capacity of school systems to advance teacher learning" (Wei et al., 2009, p. 1).

Thus, professional learning has become a "vitally important dimension of the educational improvement process" (Guskey & Yoon, 2009, p. 495), and education reform in general is assumed to be a function of enhancing the quality of teacher learning (Desimone, 2011). Bakkenes, Vermunt, and Wubbels' (2010) contention that teachers are "the most important agents in shaping education for students and in bringing about change and innovation in educational practices" (p. 533) is uncontested. The key message is that impact on student learning is the *raison d'être* of professional growth planning; growth planning that is divorced from the specific impacts on students is ineffective.

The link between teacher learning and student achievement bears out internationally as well. In their summary of data gathered through the *Teaching and Learning International Survey of 2013* (TALIS), Burns and Darling-Hammond (2014) directly associated collaborative and relevant professional learning with effective teaching practices. This survey, representing views of teachers and principals in lower secondary schools from 34 jurisdictions around the world, revealed that valuing professional learning will support and strengthen teaching and lead to high-quality learning for students.

As a result of comprehensive data analyses focused on a range of practices related to the way teachers are trained, supported, and prepared for the classroom, the working environments they face when they get there, the level of interaction they have with colleagues, the way they are formally appraised, their professional growth, and their levels of confidence in their abilities and satisfaction with their work, Burns and Darling-Hammond (2014) concluded the following:

> Teachers are the most valuable resource available to schools. They are the most influential in-school factor upon student learning, and also the greatest financial investment in terms of their training and ongoing compensation. Thus attracting high-

quality individuals into the profession, providing them with the supports they need to make the transition from teacher candidate to experienced teacher, and retaining them in the profession are of critical importance to educational systems. Doing so requires policies that support teachers' continual professional growth, including working with and learning from colleagues, to ensure that teaching practice develops to meet the continually changing demands on the profession. (p. 46)

In addition, Burns and Darling-Hammond proposed ten recommendations for the enhancement of teaching, stating that data gathered in this survey offers "important insights into policies that can support and strengthen teaching and lead to high-quality learning for students" (p. 46). Clearly, academic literature of the past decade and results of the TALIS identify the essential relationship between teacher professional learning and student achievement.

A Paradigm Shift to Teacher Professional Learning

This essential link between teacher growth and student learning has mandated a paradigm shift in the way that teachers' professional development happens. In their report on the status of teacher development, both in the United States and internationally, Wei et al. (2009) called for "much more intensive and effective professional learning than has traditionally been available in the past" (p. 1).

Hirsh and Killion (2009) described this shift to a focus on teacher growth in four ways: (a) from in-service education and professional development to professional learning, (b) from individual learning to team-based, school wide learning, (c) from separate individual teacher, school or district professional development plans to effective professional learning embedded into team, school, and district improvement efforts, and (d) from improving teaching practices to improving teacher quality and student learning.

Based on research about effective teaching, Brady (2009) suggested that models of professional learning should consider teachers' learning, their motivations, and their own initiative. She wrote:

Instead of thinking of professional development as a top-down system of bringing best practices into the school from outside agencies, recent research has identified the teacher and their teaching context as the site at which professional development is most effectively developed. (p. 337)

Fundamentally, what has emerged from the research is that "change must be meaningfully situated and sustained at the classroom level" (Butler & Schnellert, 2012, p. 1206), meaning that teachers learn when they have opportunities to reflect upon and critique their

practice vis-à-vis student learning over extended periods of time (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

But what is the nature of teacher learning? What conditions support teacher learning? Until recently, research has focused mainly on the nature of student learning, but Bakkenes et al. (2010) have directed our attention to the need to improve our understanding of how teachers learn. They observed, "Teachers are supposed to be experts in learning. Although there is a lot of research on how teachers may promote student learning, the scarcity of systematic research on understanding and improving the learning processes of teachers themselves is striking" (p. 533). Their longitudinal study examining the relationship between teacher learning experiences and student learning outcomes emphasized that the school environment must be designed to nurture professional learning.

Structure and process are equally important, and in the next section we focus on what the literature reports on how collaboration and inquiry can support teachers' professional learning in a way that relates to student outcomes.

Teacher Professional Growth: Collaborative and Inquiry-Focused

What is understood as effective professional development has shifted significantly over time, from participation in workshops and conference sessions designed to offer information *about* teaching practices, to active and sustained explorations *of* instructional practice tied explicitly to student learning outcomes and achievement. Literature of the past decade clearly identifies collaboration through involvement in professional learning communities and teacher inquiry into practice as two of the most effective and empowering forms of professional learning (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Desimone, 2011; Riveros, Newton, & Burgess, 2012; Schnellert & Butler, 2014; Timperley, 2008; Wei et al., 2009). This was a second broad theme gleaned from our review of research. In this section we summarize three ideas that relate to the importance of collaboration and inquiry as a way to enhance teacher learning: professional learning communities, inquiry into practice, and communities of inquiry.

Professional Learning Communities

The relationship between collegial collaboration, teacher professional learning, and student success is well documented in research reports and literature of the past decade. Timperley (2008) wrote, "Findings from many studies suggest that participation in a professional community with one's colleagues is an integral part of professional learning that impacts positively on students" (p. 19).

Focused on exploring the extent to which professional development is supported by communities of learning and collaborative contexts, Brady (2011) stated, "findings from this unique example of an innovative learning community show that such learning communities,

though time and organizationally intensive, greatly benefit teachers by creating spaces for dialogue, collaboration, and exchange of ideas from a range of (multiplicitous) perspectives" (p. 345).

Findings from international studies indicate that "higher-performing countries intentionally focus on creating teacher collaboration that results in more skillful teaching and strong student achievement" (Darling-Hammond, 2015, p. 16).

There are various notions of professional partnership articulated in the research. While Hirsh and Killion (2009) viewed collaboration as a shared responsibility for student learning (i.e. two teachers sharing a classroom to team-teach), Desimone (2011) saw an "interactive learning community" (p. 69) as groups of teachers in similar grades, subjects, and schools as an effective way to promote teacher learning to enhance student achievement. Most sources agree that learning communities are a platform for professional development (Brady, 2009), but Timperley (2008) draws a helpful distinction between collegial collaboration and professional learning communities (PLCs). Reporting that "research typically reveals only a weak relationship between participation in [collaborative] communities and improved student outcomes" (p. 19), she wrote:

> Findings from many studies suggest that participation in a professional community with one's colleagues is an integral part of professional learning that impacts positively on students... If teachers are to change, they need to participate in a professional learning community that is focused on becoming responsive to students, because such a community gives teachers opportunities to process new information while helping them keep their eyes on the goal. (p. 19)

According to Timperley (2008), the key distinction between a collegial community and a PLC is that collegiality often end(s) up merely entrenching existing practice and the assumptions on which it is based" (p. 19). By contrast, a PLC maintains an explicit focus on teachers learning to improve student learning through the active and collaborative development of professional understandings and practices. Importantly, teachers who happen to be working together are not *ipso facto* PLCs. Owen (2014) outlines the necessary elements of a PLC:

> The research literature indicates considerable consistency in the key characteristics of teacher PLCs. Participants working together regularly over an extended timeline, shared values and vision, practical activities focused on student learning, taking an inquiry stance, being reflective and collaborating and sharing experiences, are characteristics which are consistently highlighted. (p. 60)

Owen also reminds us that the affective dimension of professional learning communities – sharing values, vision and experiences – cannot be overlooked; numerous authors identified professional learning communities as characterized by trust and support for professional risk-taking, both of which are required for teacher learning and growth. Wei et al. (2009) emphasized the role that trust and support play in teachers' collaborative growth: "collective work in trusting environments provides a basis for inquiry and reflection into teachers' own practice, allowing teachers to take risks, solve problems and attend to dilemmas in their practice" (p. 7).

The paradigm shift that we argued was necessary in the previous section may be achieved through learning communities where teachers are inspired and supported to engage in debate about their practices, to take professional risks, and to honestly look at the impact of their pedagogy on students. Viewed in this way, though professional learning communities must be structured (through regular meetings, for example), they must become the vehicle that moves a school culture beyond collegiality to one of inquiry.

Inquiry Into Practice

"Innovation floats on a sea of inquiry, and curiosity is a driver for change" (Timperley, Kaser, & Halbert, 2014, p. 4). Academic literature identifies transforming inquiry into practice as an important mandate of professional learning communities. In conjunction with PLCs, moving inquiry into practice is an important element of this second theme on collaboration and inquiry as central to teacher growth. Earl (2016) described "teaching as inquiry" as a process for professional development, as an "investigation of the influence of teaching practice(s) on student learning through a cycle of set steps for the express purpose of showing an improvement in student learning" (p. 50). Some of the most powerful learning occurs when teachers self-examine and engage in "reflective inquiry cycles informed by assessment data (Butler & Schnellert, 2012, p. 744).

Action research (Lewin, 1946; Mills, 2018), a long-standing research methodology used in the social sciences, is a formal way in which teacher inquiry might take place (Desimone, 2011). Initiated by questions focused on the relationship between student learning in their classroom and their own instructional practice, educators engage in recursive cycles of action and reflection by first defining a problem, and then framing it as a more specific, personally relevant question.

Teachers draw on resources to advance their professional learning, plan how they might take up ideas and enact them in practice, monitor progress towards goals, and make adjustments as needed. "Rich forms of inquiry unfold when teachers engage in inquiry cycles across time, interweaving learning and reflection on practice" (Schnellert & Butler, 2014, p. 42). As a form of professional learning, inquiry into practice empowers teachers, supports the construction of new forms of pedagogical knowledge, and enhances learning for students. In their status report on

teacher development, Wei et al. (2009) concluded, "Professional development is most effective when teachers engage actively in instructional inquiry in the context of collaborative professional communities, focused on instructional improvement and student achievement" (p. 57).

Communities of Inquiry

Engaging in inquiry develops collective professional agency in the service of transforming instructional practice (Timperley et al., 2014). Schnellert and Butler (2014) observed that inquiry-into-practice methods are most powerful when collaborative, within communities of inquiry. While educators teach alongside others at their grade levels, in their departments and schools, the reality of their professional experience is often one of isolation and individual enterprise. Thus, working within a network or community of inquiry "creates conditions for teachers not only to access rich resources, but also to engage together in developing practice and learning" (Butler & Schnellert, 2012, p. 1208). Schnellert and Butler (2014) position collaborative inquiry as an essential component of professional learning:

Research suggests that teachers make and sustain valued changes to their practice when they collaboratively construct, monitor and adapt context-specific approaches to address their goals. In collaborative inquiry, teachers work together to define problems, co-plan, co-teach, co-monitor and interpret outcomes, and then consider together "what's next." When teachers collaboratively develop and test their own conceptions, they can better grapple with new theories and practices. (p. 42)

In addition to investigating the role of inquiry in professional development, Butler and Schnellert (2012) explored the ways in which collaboration might support inquiry. They gathered data to gain insights into how collaborative inquiry supports shifts in instructional practice. Results of their study confirmed the complexity of the nature of teaching and the development of relationships among teachers. On the practical side, they suggested that collaboration must be resourced, structured, and scheduled to work. Under the right conditions, "collaborative inquiry communities [have] potential to impact classroom practices in ways that benefit students" (p. 1216).

Acknowledging that communities of inquiry, comprised of teachers and school leaders focused on improving instructional practice, have demonstrated their effectiveness by improving learning for students, Timperley et al. (2014) suggested a broadened model of inquiry, inviting students, families, and communities to collaborate with educators to enhance learning:

We propose that it is through a disciplined approach to collaborative inquiry, resulting in new learning and new action, that educators, learners, their families and involved community members will gain the confidence, the insights, and the mindsets required to

design new and powerful learning systems. This process will indeed transform their schools into more innovative learning environments. (p. 4)

The authors described their model as facilitating curiosity-driven change and argued that if we want students to leave our classrooms more curious than when they started, "it is more likely to happen if young people are learning in highly engaging and innovative settings where curiosity – for everyone – is a way of life" (p. 23). This vision challenges educators to think deeply about what constitutes a community of inquiry, and to design new forms of collaboration that extend beyond the walls of classrooms and schools.

Teacher Professional Growth: Embedded in Context, Reflected in Standards of Practice, and Articulated through Rubrics and Exemplars

A third theme derived from our review of literature suggests that teacher professional learning and growth happens best when it is embedded in context, reflects standards of practice, and is articulated through rubrics and exemplars. The following sections summarize key findings with respect to these components.

Professional Growth as Situated and Contextualized

Literature of the past decade supports the notion that professionals learn as they teach. Slepkov (2008) maintained this learning "needs to be purposeful and linked to the classroom teachers' needs and practices, not as someone else defines it but as they themselves perceive those needs to be" (p. 86). Bruce, Esmond, Ross, Dookie and Beatty (2009) described authentic teacher learning as "embedded in the classroom context and constructed through experience and practice in sustained iterative cycles of goal setting/planning, practicing, and reflecting" (p. 2).

Brady (2009) suggested that while teacher learning is a broad and multi-varied process that can occur in many ways and in various contexts: "It is always embedded in the daily lives of teachers in the classroom, in the school community, in the corridors, in courses and workshops" (p. 337).

Specifically addressing the diversity of students and the contexts of learning characterized by cultural difference, Li (2013) stated that

> professional learning programs must help teachers examine their own cultural beliefs and practices, gain a repertoire of cultural practice relevant to their culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, and acquire pedagogical knowledge and skills about how to create spaces to connect these cultural practices to the curriculum and in their daily instruction. (p. 137).

While suggesting a reflective model for teacher learning initiated and controlled by educational authorities, Kiss (2016) acknowledged the centrality of teacher professional learning: The teacher learner should be in the centre of learning. [This] should be built into the everyday work of the school. It must offer a chance to collect evidence of and opportunities for examining student learning with the aim of improving the syllabus and fine-tuning its execution in the school context. (p. 55)

Clearly, teacher professional learning is viewed as emerging from within the context of the classroom and the pedagogical needs of the teacher.

Educational institutions and school authorities must support this shift to a contextualized focus for teacher learning by reconceiving notions of what constitutes professional development. No longer will in-service training and workshops disseminating information be adequate; professional learning founded in the context of instructional practice will require new structures for both individual and organizational learning. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) wrote:

To create new structures for individual and organizational learning, the usual notions of in service training or dissemination must be replaced by possibilities for knowledge sharing anchored in problems of practice. To serve teachers' needs, professional development must embrace a range of opportunities that allow teachers to share what they know and what they want to learn and to connect their learning to the contexts of their teaching. Professional development activities must allow teachers to engage actively in cooperative experiences that are sustained over time and to reflect on the process as well as on the content of what they are learning. Structures that break down isolation, that empower teachers with professional tasks, and that provide arenas for thinking through standards of practice are central to this kind of professional growth. (p. 84)

Calling for a renewed understanding of what constitutes effective teacher professional learning, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) argued that educational organizations must provide opportunities for reflection and discussion related to standards of practice.

Professional Growth Reflected in Standards of Practice
Standards of practice "provide a vision for the profession. They define what teachers should know and do [and] they establish a foundation upon which all aspects of teacher development from teacher education to induction and ongoing professional development can be aligned" (Virginia Department of Education, 2012, p. 1).

Moreover, by providing a common language within an articulated set of professional expectations, these standards "support teachers as they establish professional goals and engage in

continuous and purposeful professional growth and development" (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2009, p. 16). Asserting that improving teaching must be focused on improving student outcomes, *The Australian Professional Standards for Teaching* (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2014) are outlined as follows:

> To improve teaching, it is necessary to have a clear vision of what effective teaching looks like. [The Standards] outline what teachers should know and be able to do at four career stages. These Standards present a comprehensive picture of the elements of effective teaching organized around the domains of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement. (p. 3)

High quality professional learning, described as relevant, collaborative, and future-focused, is the means of improving teacher practice (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2012). Variously stated, Canadian provincial policies emphasize professional learning is integral to effective teaching practices and student learning (Ontario College of Teachers, 2016), the hallmark of professionalism (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2012), and as a necessary reflective process associated with high quality teaching (Province of Nova Scotia, 2016).

Of the twelve international school authorities reviewed, five outline standards of practice with explicit expectations for teacher professional learning and growth: Australia, Texas, California, Virginia, and Hong Kong. All three of the Canadian school authorities that we reviewed (British Columbia, Ontario, and Nova Scotia) do outline these standards. In the authorities, there is substantive commonality to identify teacher learning and growth as an essential criterion of a standard of professional practice and engagement. Standards of practice articulate agreed-upon professional expectations for teaching excellence and ensure that teachers' growth planning and learning are purposeful, and that teachers understand in what direction they are expected to grow.

Professional Growth Articulated Through Rubrics and Exemplars

If standards point to a territory of teacher excellence, rubrics and exemplars are the roadmap suggesting potential pathways toward enhanced practice. In the Canadian jurisdictions, exemplars were usually seen in the form of conceptual frameworks; Ontario provided conceptualizations of professional learning and reflective questions but these were not as extensive as the exemplars and rubrics seen in the international jurisdictions that had them.

To accompany their standards of professional practice, four jurisdictions (Australia, California, Texas, and Hong Kong) have created rubrics and exemplars to guide teacher learning. Australia's is worth noting. In addition to the *Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders* (2012), which details the characteristics of high quality

professional learning, the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (2014) described and illustrated practice across four career stages of teacher development. These resources recognize that professional knowledge and skills develop throughout a teacher's career in response to changing contexts; thus, articulated standards, accompanied by rubrics and illustrations of practice at four stages of development, have a potential to support teachers' professional learning needs, goal setting, collaboration, and growth over time.

Policy Perspectives on Teacher Professional Learning and Growth

Our review of the literature on teacher growth and learning supports the claim that teacher professional growth has the power to transform schools and change the lives of students. However, given the expectations for student learning in a rapidly changing world and current research that explores the nature of adult learning, notions of what characterizes effective professional learning must change. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) maintained that one of the challenges ahead will be to draft policies that maintain a learner-centric view of teaching and a career-long perspective on teachers' learning. This cannot be the sole purview of policy-makers; it must be a shared responsibility "taken up at all levels of the education system – by teachers, school leaders, system leaders and policy makers" (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2012, p. 6).

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) maintained that policies must reflect new ideas about what, when, and how teachers learn, and focus on developing schools' and teachers' capacities to be responsible for student learning. They argued for policies that act upon the assumption that both teachers and students are learners, and which build teachers' capacity rather than policies which "convey…a single solution for top-down implementation (p. 82). In an era characterized by change and educational reform, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin argued for policies that afford teachers the freedom to engage their knowledge of content, pedagogy and learners in responsive ways, particularly considering the diversity and complexity of twenty-first century learning, and the rapid and unpredictable changes that face them.

Our review of policies identified examples where the vital relationship between teachers' and students' learning is reflected. Professional learning was connected (a) with "desired student outcomes" (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2012, p. 35), (b) to "enhance the learning experiences of all learners" (General Teaching Council of Scotland, 2012, p. 4), (c) to "support student achievement and success" (Province of Nova Scotia, 2016, p. 2), and (d) for "the benefit of students" (Education Bureau: The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2003, p. 39).

However, the following four jurisdictions articulate an explicit and intentional relationship between teacher professional learning and student achievement. From a policy design perspective, it is worth considering these statements:

Quality professional learning focuses on the knowledge and skills that educators need in order to help students bridge the gaps between their current level of knowledge, skill, and understanding and expected student outcomes. (California Department of Education, 2015, p. 10)

Teachers establish and strive to achieve professional goals to strengthen their instructional effectiveness and better meet students' needs. [They] engage in relevant, targeted professional learning opportunities that align with their professional growth goals and their students' academic and social-emotional needs. (Texas Department of Education, 2014, Standard 6 (A)(ii))

[Teachers] recognize that a commitment to ongoing professional learning is integral to effective practice and to student learning. Professional practice and self-directed learning are informed by experience, research, collaboration and knowledge. (Ontario College of Teachers, 2016, p. 3)

Teachers will have flexibility and autonomy to plan their learning relevant to their professional needs and interest. Their learning will be aligned to the knowledge and skills needed to nurture students in 21st century competencies. (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2012, 13)

Professional learning will be most effective when it takes place within a culture where teachers and school leaders expect and are expected to be active learners, to reflect on, receive feedback on and improve their pedagogical practice, and by doing so to improve student outcomes. (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2012, p. 3)

These policies demonstrate that direct statements connecting the purpose of teachers' learning and growth to student learning outcomes will "ensure that teaching practice develops to meet the continually changing demands on the profession" (Burns & Darling-Hammond, 2014, p. 46).

We also paid heed to how and/or whether inquiry and collaboration were incorporated into policy, considering that these were identified as important from the literature review. Of the documents reviewed for this report, two jurisdictions, Scotland and California, refer to teacher inquiry as an aspect of professional learning. Scotland identifies "practitioner enquiry" as a core principle underpinning the *Standard for Career Long Professional Learning* (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2012, p. 4):

[The Standard] will support teachers as they develop as reflective, accomplished, and enquiring professionals who are able to engage with the complexities of teaching and learning, the changing contemporary world of their learners, and the world beyond the profession and its institutions, in order to enhance the learning experiences for all learners. In practice, this involves teachers having an enquiring disposition at the core of their professional practice. This means thinking critically and questioning their own educational beliefs, assumptions, values and practices. (p. 4)

While Scotland recognizes inquiry as a disposition rather than as carefully articulated behaviour of practice, documents from California (California Department of Education, 2015), specifically, identify inquiry as a key component of professional learning:

At the core of decisions about how to design and structure quality professional learning is the principle of planning and organizing processes that actively engage educators in inquiry centered on authentic problems and instructional practices to improve student performance. (p. 16)

These jurisdictions highlight the value of inquiry as both a professional disposition and as a means of professional learning and growth.

Notions of collaboration, on the other hand, were more prevalent in the state-level documents reviewed. In Hong Kong, collaboration was described as teachers working as members of the school community to "contribute to the collective intelligence of the whole school" (Education Bureau: The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2003, p. 12). In Australia it was interpreted as a "disciplined and purposeful approach to solve the challenges that are most important to improving student outcomes" (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2012, p. 6). In Texas, it was "actively participat[ing] in professional learning communities organized to improve instructional practices and student learning" (Texas Department of Education, 2014).

Ideas of collaboration and collaborative learning were pervasive in the documents from the state of California. As part of a comprehensive set of professional learning standards (California Department of Education, 2015), collaborative endeavors facilitate the development of a shared purpose for student learning and collective responsibility for achieving it. This document identified collaboration as critical in improving student learning:

Learning is an active, social process of constructing understanding and meaning.

Professional learning research confirms this concept and shows that educators improve when they work in community to build common goals, exchange practices, and share

accountability for outcomes. While educators can individually engage in some types of professional learning, tasks such as evaluating and solving problems of practice or implementing evidence-based instructional practices are usually best accomplished peer-to-peer or collectively. When successfully facilitated, collaboration among educators capitalizes on their multiple perspectives and experiences and distributes responsibilities across the group so that there is sustained interest and long-term focus on problem solving and improving practice. (p. 19)

Collaboration is featured in Canadian provincial policies, too. For example, in Nova Scotia (2016), collaboration was framed as a way for teachers to address their professional learning needs. Teachers are encouraged to "participate in and/or contribute to formal and informal professional learning activities" (p. 2). The Ontario College of Teachers (2016) described collaboration as a mechanism to inform teacher professional practice and as something that occurs in teachers' communities of practice.

As a whole, these examples emphasize that both inquiry into practice and collaboration within professional learning communities are viewed as instrumental in generating intentional dialogue to ensure that teacher growth planning and professional learning lead to positive outcomes for students.

Section Summary: The Literature on Teacher Professional Growth

This section of our systematic literature review addressed the first component of the research question: *How does the current state of the Alberta TGSE policy compare with the research literature and current best practices on educator growth, supervision, and evaluation?*

This policy overview highlighted ways that jurisdictions outside Alberta understand the notion of *teacher professional growth*. In addition, we traced the evolution of literature on teacher growth.

Taken together, the literature and policy review offered a synopsis that highlighted six themes:

1. Student learning should be clearly identified as the focal point of teacher professional growth and of all associated policy documents and plans.

2. The foundation for professional growth should arise from agreed upon teacher standards that are embedded and enacted in practice.

3. A hallmark of the shift from the paradigm of professional development to professional growth is the extent to which teachers engage in reflection on, during, and for practice.

4. A second hallmark is the extent to which teachers are provided opportunities to engage in frequent iterative cycles of inquiry.

5. Teacher growth should be viewed through the lens of daily practice. This implies that opportunities for learning and growth should be embedded at the school site during regular school hours.

6. Exemplars and rubrics should be used to provide clarity of expectations and consistent understanding of key vocabulary and terms that can support and enhance teacher professional growth.

The next section of this literature review highlights research and policy specifically focused on teacher supervision.

Section Two: The Literature on Teacher Supervision

Section Two synthesizes current scholarship on teacher supervision and provides a review of selected policies to demonstrate how supervisory practices and expectations are articulated in educational policy. Highlights from the literature and policy are discussed in five sections:
1. historical notes;
2. approaches to teacher supervision;
3. supervision and instructional leadership;
4. policy perspectives on teacher supervision; and
5. supervision, evaluation and education policy.

We believe it is important to illustrate the evolution of supervision as a concept and practice, and therefore preface the synthesis of literature and presentation of policy with an historical overview.

Historical Notes

A number of scholars have examined the history of supervision in North America. Three themes emerge from these pieces.

One theme is the ongoing relationship between the educational supervision literature and writing in the management field (Glatthorn, 1997; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2017; Pajak, 2003). Conceptions of supervision in education have paralleled prevalent ideas and images from business management literature through much of the past century.

A second theme is the recurring tension within the educational community between behavioural and technical conceptions of both teaching and supervising on the one hand and more progressive orientations to teaching and supervision on the other (Glanz, 2000; Ovando, 2000; Zepeda, 2017).

A third historical theme is the continuing struggle to determine the breadth of the teacher supervision field (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2017; Glanz, 2000; Blasé & Blasé, 1998, 2000; Brandon, 2005, 2006, 2008; Marshall, 2013; Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011; Zepeda, 2017). One important aspect of the literature that partially accounts for the variety of perspectives related to this third theme is that much of the writing in this field treats supervision as a function that can be carried out by various central office and school personnel. A large body of literature is devoted to the supervisory work carried out primarily by school administrators. Supervision and instructional leadership by school principals and other educators within the school is the primary focus of this portion of the review.

The three themes identified above recur in several histories of teacher supervision and educational leadership. Pajak (2003) examined the influences of management ideas on educational supervision through the past century. He discovered that early in the twentieth century, a distinction was made between administration and supervision, which persisted over time. Eventually this conceptual differentiation solidified to the point where it became customary to think of a school leader's management skills as very distinct from his or her abilities in the area of instructional leadership. Early twentieth century texts on supervision "emphasized an inspectorial function and described methods for improving the efficiency and objectivity of tasks" (Pajak, 2003, p. 163) that supervisors were expected to perform, including "monitoring and overseeing the curriculum and instruction and evaluating teacher performance and student achievement" (Pajak, 2003, p. 163).

Pajak (2003) and others (e.g. Callahan, 1962; Glanz, 2000) indicate that influential ideas from the world of management have not always been successfully adapted to the educational setting, for example, Pajak (2003) noted that education supervisors were more receptive to Dewey's notions of "consciously reasoned cooperative problem solving" than "Franklin Bobbitt's (1913) adaptation of Taylor's principles of scientific management" (p. 164).

The Dewey-inspired notion of the supervisor as a *democratic educator* prevailed until the 1960s. At that time the influence of social systems and management theory began to build acceptance for the concept of the *supervisor as organizational change agent.* Pajak (2003) found that a transition in expectations occurred in the early 1960s suggesting "school leaders should be less concerned about whether their behaviour was democratic and more concerned with whether it was effective in bringing about change" (p. 167). In his analysis, by the mid-1980s "literature on leadership – in both business and education – focused heavily on four concepts: vision, culture, reflection, and transformation" (p. 172).

Hence, the prevalent supervisory image became one of *corporate visionary* (Pajak, 2003, p. 172). The most recent image in this evolutionary depiction of the history of supervision is *leader as teacher*. Based on management scholar Senge's (1990) notion of the organic learning organization capable of adapting quickly to the rapidly changing environment through effective coordination of information, this conception called for each leader to take on the roles of designer, steward, and teacher. *Leaders as teachers* "help people restructure their views of reality to see beyond the superficial conditions and events into the underlying causes of problems—and therefore to see new possibilities" (Senge, 1990, p. 12).

Similar themes were evident in Glanz's (2000) division of the history of supervision into three eras. The *pre-modern period* lasted until the 1920s and was characterized by bureaucratic and inspectorial supervisory approaches "based on intuition rather than scientific knowledge" (p. 72). The *modern period* began in the 1920s but continues to this day as a response to authoritarian pre-modern supervision. It is built upon Dewey's "theories of democratic *and* scientific thinking" (p. 74). Cooperative, democratic, and scientific methods are emphasized with a focus on improving instruction. The third of Glanz's eras is the *postmodern*, in which supervision is "collegial, non-evaluative, and non-directive" (p. 71).

Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2001) revealed similar themes in their research. In this version, supervision has rotated through three successive paradigms: *conventional*, *congenial*, and *collegial*. Early teacher supervision "operated within a *conventional* paradigm (worldview), attempting to control teachers' instructional behaviours" (p. 6). The authors state that although early twentieth century scientific management involved bureaucratic inspection and control, the development of this management was still a positive step, as it replaced inspection and control by lay committees of citizens and began to professionalize the field. From the 1930s through the late 1950s, the *congenial* paradigm took hold in the form of *human relations supervision* premised on the belief that "by improving interpersonal relationships and meeting personal needs, the supervisor and teachers could improve instruction" (p. 6).

In this analysis, the 1960s saw a return to the *conventional* paradigm through the application of the behavioural science approach. "Direct supervisory control through inspection and criticism became indirect control through 'teacher-proof' curriculum and materials developed by outside researchers and publishers" (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001, p. 7). This trend reflected the neo-scientific management of the last third of the 20th century, which was marked by "a shift of external control from researchers and publishers to state legislators and state departments of education" (p. 7).

Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon, called for movement toward the next historical stage through "a shift away from conventional or congenial supervision toward *collegial supervision*" (p. 7).

Approaches to Supervision

As the preceding section revealed, a variety of meanings have been associated with the term *supervision o*ver the course of its history. Glanz (2000) listed no fewer than 36 modern definitions of the term before concluding "supervision is of vital importance to promote instructional improvement, promote teacher growth, foster curriculum development, and support instruction" (p. 77).

The consensus view that emerged from our survey of the literature is that *supervision's primary purpose is to foster teacher growth* (Pajak, 2003; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2017; Glanz, 2000; Blase & Blase, 1998, 2000; Zepeda, 2017). Sergiovanni (1992) summarized this perspective well: "We supervise for good reasons. We want schools to be better, teachers to grow, and students to have academically and developmentally sound learning experiences; and we believe that supervision serves these and other worthy ends" (p. 204).

Included within the growth orientation to teacher supervision are a variety of strategies and tasks: curriculum development, staff development, action research, mentoring (Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon, 2017). Glanz (2000) called for supervision that "utilizes a wide array of strategies, methodologies, and approaches aimed at improving instruction and promoting educational leadership as well as change" (p. 85). Pajak (2003) described four options: collegial supervision (peer coaching and cognitive coaching), self-directed supervision, informal supervision, and inquiry based supervision (action research). Several models of supervision are presented in the literature.

Five approaches developed by leading scholars in the field are briefly summarized below: developmental supervision, differentiated supervision, clinical supervision, constructivist supervision, and informal supervision.

Developmental Supervision

Developmental supervision is an integrated supervisory model first presented by Carl Glickman in 1985. In its most recent iteration "developmental supervision" is described as the "match of initial supervisory approach with the teacher's or group's developmental levels, expertise and commitment" (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001, p. 197). Essentially, this approach calls for an analysis of the teacher's developmental levels and an initial response with one of four supervisory approaches: (a) directive control, (b) directive informational, (c) collaborative, and (d) nondirective. They described three phases, which included:

- "choosing the best entry-level supervisory approach;
- applying the chosen approach; and
- fostering teacher development while gradually increasing teacher choice and decision making responsibility" (p. 204).

The Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon (2017) model is designed to respond to the principles of adult learning and teachers' stages of development, while acknowledging life cycle phases and life transition events. The tasks of supervision in this scheme include direct assistance to teachers through clinical supervision and peer coaching, group development, professional development, curriculum development, action research, and school improvement.

Differentiated Supervision

Glatthorn's (1997) research describes the term supervision as "a process of facilitating the professional growth of a teacher, primarily by giving the teacher feedback about classroom interactions and helping the teacher make use of that feedback in order to make teaching more effective" (p. 2). The thesis governing this approach is that teachers should be able to choose, within limits, whether they wish to receive clinical supervision, work with a colleague in a program of cooperative development, direct their own professional growth, or have their teaching monitored by an administrator" (p. 1). Supervision can take a variety of forms, including:

- Trained supervisors provide clinical supervision for novices and experienced teachers encountering difficulty.
- Cooperative professional development provides a range of group and paired growth activities — peer observation and reading groups, for instance.
- Self-directed development involves the fashioning of an individualized plan for professional growth, where the administrator serves as a resource.
- Administrative monitoring consists of brief and unannounced classroom visits "to ensure that the staff are carrying out assignments and responsibilities in a professional manner" (Glatthorn. 1997, p. 5).

In addition to providing choices to the teacher, Glatthorn's differentiated system created opportunities for administrative choice as well.

Clinical Supervision

Pajak (2003) presented a "style-guided" approach to clinical supervisory practice. This model is based on an understanding of teacher development as "a recurring cycle of growth that begins with (a) concrete experience, followed by (b) empathic reflection, (c) construction of meaning, and (d) active experimentation" (p. 88). The responsibility of the supervisor is to make a "deliberate effort to honour and legitimate perspectives and practices that differ from their own

preferred styles of perceiving, judging, and communicating about reality" (p. 4). Pajak offered a variety of strategies applicable to specific teacher experience and communication styles at each of the five stages of clinical supervision. These five stages are (a) pre-observation conference, (b) classroom observation, (c) data analysis and strategy, (d) conference and (e) post-conference analysis.

To assist supervisors in differentiating their practice so as to accommodate to teachers' styles, Pajak provided a series of mechanisms to select one of four families of clinical supervision.

"*Original clinical*" models (developed by Goldhammer, 1969 and Cogan, 1973) "emphasize the importance of collegial relationships with teachers, cooperative discovery of meaning, and development of unique teaching styles" and are based on "empirical, behavioural, phenomenological, and developmental perspectives" (Pajak, 2003, p. 8).

The second family, "*artistic/humanistic*" models (developed by Eisner, 1979 and Blumberg, 1974) "forsake step by step procedures and emphasize open interpersonal relations and personal intuition, artistry, and idiosyncrasy" and are based upon "aesthetic and existential principles" (Pajak, 2003p. 8).

"*Technical/didactic*" clinical supervision models (developed by Acheson and Gall, 1980 and Hunter, 1984) made up the third of Pajak's families. These "emphasize techniques of observation and feedback that reinforce certain 'effective' behaviours or predetermined models of teaching to which teachers attempt to conform" (Pajak, 2003, p. 8).

"*Developmental/reflective models*" (developed by Glickman, 1985; Costa and Garmstrom, 1995 and others) comprise the final family. These models are "sensitive to individual differences and the social, organizational, political, and cultural contexts of teaching" and "encourage reflection among teachers, foster growth, and promote justice and equity" (p. 8).

In describing clinical supervision, Glanz (2000) rejected "an either/or paradigm" in favour of "a diversity of approaches to supervision" (p. 78). Three approaches were described: (1) *applied science*, (2) *interpretive-practical* and (3) *critical emancipatory*.

The *applied science* model is a directive, behaviouristic and positivist approach within the modern as opposed to postmodern paradigm. It involves supervisors observing teaching, diagnosing classroom problems and prescribing or suggesting research-based ideas for improvement.

The other two approaches fall within the postmodern paradigm. The *interpretive-practical* approach focuses on person-centred communication and collegial relationships, in which a supervisor works with teachers to facilitate the development of a shared understanding of pedagogic problems, and to generate context-specific responses.

The *critical-emancipatory* approach to supervision goes "beyond mere collaboration in the development of instructional goals" by challenging teachers to "examine the moral, ethical, and political dimensions embedded in everyday thinking and practice" and to "take risks and construct knowledge for themselves" (Glanz, p. 79).

Glanz advocated a blended approach, which incorporates elements from all three of these orientations.

Constructivist Supervision

Zepeda (2000, 2017) developed a constructivist supervisory model that provides teachers with "multiple opportunities to transfer information and to construct deeper understanding of their own practices and those of others," within a capacity-building learning community (p. 96). Such supervision involves reciprocal processes that respect the differing developmental learning needs of novices and veterans. Like other forms of professional development, constructivist supervision is embedded into the fabric of the school to provide a "tailor-made approach for assisting teachers with their growth" (p. 100). Embedding supervision means "new skills are implemented *during* the supervisory process, not *after*. Moreover, new skills can become part of the teacher's *practice as they are learned*" (p. 102). Five features characterize this model:

1. differentiated forms of supervision (e.g., peer coaching, mentoring, and portfolio development);
2. an environment rich with dialogue;
3. autonomous relationships so teachers can negotiate their own learning based upon what makes sense to them;
4. activities extending reflection; and
5. self-analysis of practice. (p. 96)

Informal Supervision

Informal supervision is an element of several supervisory models (e.g. Ginsberg & Murphy, 2002; Glatthorn, 1997; Marshall, 2005, 2013; Pajak, 2003). Glatthorn (1997) called this *drop-ins as administrative monitoring* and advocated short, regularly scheduled classroom visits by administrators for openly communicated and mutually understood purposes, as one part of a more comprehensive supervision program. Similarly, Marshall (2005) reported on his own experience with short (five minute), regularly scheduled (five classrooms per day) visits to monitor classrooms to get a sense of the big picture and to find answers to five key questions:

1. Are teachers on track with the curriculum?
2. Are students learning?
3. Are teachers "happy campers" in terms of their jobs and their lives?
4. Do some teachers deserve special praise?
5. Do some teachers need redirection, emergency support, or a negative evaluation? (p. 703)

Ginsberg and Murphy (2002) also saw value in *walkthroughs* as one component of a more comprehensive supportive program of learning and teaching. Their five-minute visits are framed by supervisory questions about the existence of a clear academic focus, level of student engagement, and demonstrations of critical thinking skills. Walkthroughs "can foster focused, reflective, and collaborative adult learning: generally teachers welcome the opportunity for discussion that walkthroughs provide" (p. 34). The manner of supervisors as they participate in this program is a crucial aspect of its success. As Sergiovanni and Starratt (1997) pointed out, informal supervision can be viewed negatively as "informal surveillance" (p. 258) if the practice is not embedded within an overall program that fosters reflection, trust, and professional growth.

Instructional rounds (City, Elmore, Fiarman, Sarah, & Teitel, 2009) are a related form of informal supervision. The idea is to help school leaders and teachers develop a shared understanding of what high-quality instruction looks like and what is needed to support it. Inspired by the medical-rounds model used by physicians, the premise is to help educators develop a shared practice of observing, discussing, and analyzing learning and teaching.

Supervision and Instructional Leadership

While there is consensus in the literature emphasizing professional growth as the focus of supervision, scholarly opinion varies about the relationship between the concepts of *instructional leadership* and *supervision*. This subsection explores the links between these two terms and their connections to the notion of a *learning community*.

According to Scherer (2003) it was in the 1980s that "the Effective Schools research introduced the term *instructional leadership*" based on the finding that "in effective schools, principals focused on student and teacher learning and on monitoring progress and achieving key instructional objectives" (p. 5).

Blase and Blase (1998, 2000) preferred the term *instructional leadership* to *supervision*, though the terms are used somewhat interchangeably in their writing. Their analysis was based upon an extensive examination of both the literature on *supervision* (which they considered a sub-set of instructional leadership) and writings on *instructional leadership* to "see the connections between the actions a principal takes and the professional growth of teachers"

(p.10). Their study is "about good principal leadership and how it supports teacher and student learning. This has been called supervision, instructional or educational leadership, and/or administration" (p. 14). Their research claimed that effective *instructional leadership* is characterized by three general sets of behaviours: talking with teachers about practice, promoting teachers' professional growth, and fostering teacher reflection (p. 17).

Glickman (1992) captured the intensity of debate over the use of the two terms and, like others (Glanz, 2000; Blase & Blase, 1998, 2000; Sergiovanni, 1992), attributed movement away from the use of the term *supervision* to "its industrial roots of closely inspecting the work of employees" (p. 2).

Nevertheless, the two terms continue to be used together. For example, consider the adjustment of titles employed by Carl Glickman for his basic text: from *Supervision of Instruction: A Developmental Approach* (1985) to *Supervision and Instructional Leadership: A Developmental Approach* (2001 through to 2017). Similarly, his 2002 book for the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) on supervision is titled *Leadership for Learning: How to Help Teachers Succeed*.

In their study *Handbook of Instructional Leadership: How Really Good Principals Promote Teaching and Learning,* Blase and Blase (1998) considered the merits of continuing to use the term supervision. They provided the following quotation from Glickman, Gordon, and Gordon (2001) as representative of this discussion:

> To us, the lines between supervision and instructional leadership in successful schools are nonexistent. Successful school educators often do not use the term *supervision* in their work. Instead, words such as *collegiality, critical friends, moral leadership,* and *leadership teams* hold sway. (p. xiii)

Fullan (2014) echoed the sentiment that principals need to go beyond instructional leadership. Though in practice, few principals act "as genuine instructional leaders. The principal as instructional leader is a good idea, but only as far as it goes" (p. 26). Fullan called for principals to move well beyond the metaphor of "the principal as booster of achievement scores" (p. 41) to "build new cultures based on trusting relationships and a culture of disciplined inquiry and action" (p. 45).

Overall Instructional Leadership

A broader conception of instructional leadership is a significant way to frame more effective approaches to teacher supervision. Much of the instructional leadership and supervision literature focuses on what Fullan (2014) described as *direct* instructional leadership – principal actions that directly impact instruction (Hallinger 2003, 2005). In contrast, Fullan (2014) called

for *overall instructional leadership* – the wider range of purposefully employed leadership practices designed to positively impact teaching and learning in schools (Brandon et al., 2015, Brandon, Saar, & Friesen, 2017; Robinson, 2011, Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008).

Overall instructional leadership in relation to effective teacher supervision appears in two interrelated strands of the school leadership research literature: (a) shared instructional leadership, and (b) supervision as informed instructional support. These are discussed in the following two sections.

Shared Instructional Leadership

There is considerable evidence that supports the idea the instructional leadership is more effective when it is shared among teachers and school leaders. Seashore-Louis and Wahlstrom (2012) claimed that "leadership practices targeted directly at improving instruction have significant effects on teachers' working relationships and indirectly on student achievement" and that "when principals and teachers share leadership, teachers' working relationships are stronger and student achievement is higher" (p. 25). The effect occurs "largely because effective leadership strengthens professional community, a special environment within which teachers work together to improve their practice and improve student learning" (p. 25).

Leithwood and Louis (2012) focused on a few well-developed models of overall instructional leadership that posit a "set of responsibilities for principals that goes well beyond observing and intervening in classrooms – responsibilities touching on vision, organizational culture and the like" (p. 6). This conception is in keeping with an earlier view by Leithwood, Aitken, and Jantzi (2001) that instructional leadership has been mostly used as "a slogan to focus administrators on their students' progress" (p. 6).

A more detailed three-category model is described in Hallinger's (2003) review of the evidence on instructional leadership: (a) *defining the school's mission,* including framing and then communicating the school's goals, (b) *managing the instructional program,* including supervising and evaluating instruction, working with teachers in coordinating the curriculum and monitoring student progress, and (c) *promoting a positive school learning climate* encompassing protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, and providing incentives for learning.

Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe's (2008) landmark meta-analysis of the evidence linking school leadership to student outcomes resulted in five broad and similar categories of leadership practice that were elaborated in Robinson (2011): (a) establishing goals and expectations, (b) resourcing strategically, (c) ensuring quality teaching, (d) leading teacher learning and development, and (e) ensuring an orderly safe and caring environment. These five dimensions are inter-connected and work together with three leadership capacities to foster strong and

collaborative learning and teaching environments: (a) applying relevant knowledge, (b) solving complex problems, and (c) building relational trust.

Wahlstrom (2012) grouped overall instructional leadership practices into two complementary categories: *Instructional Ethos* and *Instructional Actions*. School leader efforts in the *Instructional Ethos* category aim to build a culture that supports continual professional learning. "Principals whose teachers rate them high on Instructional Ethos emphasize the value of research-based strategies and are able to apply them in the local setting" (p. 68). Wahlstrom found that setting a tone and developing a vision for student learning and teacher growth is present in high-performing schools of all grade levels, K-12. The second category– *Instructional Actions* – involves explicit engagement with individual teachers about their own professional growth and is more evident in elementary schools than in secondary settings.

Supervision as Varied, Informed Instructional Support

Wahlstrom's (2012) notion of instructional actions includes direct observations and conversations with teachers in classrooms and in team meetings. Similarly, a second feature of overall instructional leadership is the three component research-based image of *supervision as varied, informed instructional support* we have synthesized from foundational and recent teacher supervision literature.

Component one is the idea that teacher supervision should be *varied.* Both early and current literature support the contention that supervision should differentiate according to the pedagogic styles, developmental stages, and learning needs evident in the community of professional practice (Brandon, Hollweck, Donlevy, & Whalen, 2018; Brandon, Saar, & Friesen, 2016; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2017; Glatthorn, 1984, 1997; Le Fevre & Robinson, 2015; Marshall, 2013; Ozyildirim, & Bilgin Aksu, 2017, Pajak, 2003; Robinson, 2011; Timperley, 2011; Zepeda, 2017).

The second main idea is that supervision should be *informed* by evidence gathered from multiple sources – classroom observations, pedagogic dialogue, artifacts – to both inform supervisors about instruction and at the same time form the basis for deepening instructional leadership practice (Brandon et al., 2018; Brandon, et al., 2016; Glatthorn, 1984, 1997; Marshall, 2013; Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011; Pajak, 2003, Robinson, 2011; Timperley, 2011). "If increased instructional leadership is to make a difference to student outcomes, leaders' practices need to be informed by defensible and evidence-based understandings of how to improve teaching and learning" (Le Fevre & Robinson, 2015, p. 60).

Glickman's (1985) developmental supervision was based on matching initial supervisory approaches with the teacher's or the group's developmental levels, expertise and commitment (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2017). Pajak (2003) identified four options: collegial

supervision (peer coaching and cognitive coaching), self-directed supervision, informal supervision, and inquiry based supervision or action research. Zepeda's (2017) instructional supervision model indicates that teachers should be given opportunities to transfer information and to construct deeper understanding of their own practices within a capacity-building learning community. Such supervision is a reciprocal process that respects the differing developmental learning needs of novices and veterans.

The third key idea in this conception of *supervision as varied, informed instructional support* is that the focus of supervision should be on *instructional support* that seeks to improve learning, teaching and shared instructional leadership. The seminal study conducted by Blase and Blase (1998) reported the now widely held view that "the facilitation of learning and growth should be the number one responsibility of an educational leader" (p. 14). This consensus on the purpose of supervision is well supported in the literature (Blase, & Blase, 1998, 2000; Brandon, 2006, 2008; Brandon et al., 2018; Brandon, et al., 2016; Glickman, Gordon, & Gordon, 2017; Ozyildirim, & Bilgin Aksu, 2017; Pajak, 2003; Robinson, 2011; Sullivan & Glanz, 2013; Timperley, 2011; William, 2016; Zepeda, 2017, Zepeda & Lanoue, 2017).

Learning Community Leadership

Many studies highlight the importance of the principal's role in fostering professional growth and student learning through the establishment of a learning community (e.g. Barth, 1990, 2001; Blase & Blase, 1998, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Dufour & Eaker, 1998). These works generally view the principal's instructional leadership role broadly framed. As Glickman (1991) observed: "The principal of a successful school is not the instructional leader but the coordinator of teachers as instructional leaders" (p.7).

Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2017) also called for a "shift away from conventional or congenial supervision toward collegial supervision" (p. 7). They described five characteristics of this approach:

1. A collegial rather than hierarchical relationship between teachers and formally designated supervisors;
2. Supervision as the province of teachers and formally designated supervisors;
3. A focus on teacher growth rather than compliance;
4. Facilitation of teachers collaborating with each other in instructional improvement efforts; and
5. Teacher involvement in ongoing reflective inquiry.

As noted above, several other scholars have written about similar collective conceptions of leadership. Sergiovanni (1992) referred to the phenomenon as *leadership density*. Rosenholtz (1989) found such elements to be distinguishing characteristics in what she referred to as

learning-enriched schools. Barth (1990, 2001) used the phrase *community of leaders* to convey his culture building approach. Senge (1990, 2000) developed ideas in the same vein in the business world through his notion of the *learning organization. Shared leadership* and *leadership capacity* are Lambert's (2002, 1998) conceptions of this more collective approach. Lambert (2002) summarized the clear lesson from her work and that of a number of other scholars: "Instructional leadership must be a shared, community undertaking" (p. 37). She made the case on this basis:

> The days of the principal as the lone instructional leader are over. We no longer believe that one administrator can serve as the instructional leader for an entire school with the substantial participation of other educators. The old model of formal, one-person leadership leaves the substantial talents of teachers largely untapped. Improvements achieved under this model are not easily sustainable; when the principal leaves, promising programs often lose momentum and fade away. (p. 37)

Waite and Fernandes (2000) called upon the supervisor to "communicate their status as a learner" in that "under conditions of postmodernity, supervisory authority, what little there is, will be based upon mutual respect, vulnerability, and authenticity" (p. 207). Zepeda (2000) indicated that in "more reciprocal approaches coupled with mutual respect, teachers, as well as supervisors, are more likely to embrace formative learning" (p. 101).

Although supervision has undergone conceptual shift, what has remained stable is the view that supervision is a process that should support teachers' individual development over time, and not a time-stamped assessment with no clear trajectory toward improving teachers' pedagogy and knowledge.

Policy Perspectives on Teacher Supervision

In this section we provide a brief overview of the provincial and international perspectives of supervision as a formative process that supports the development of effective and innovative teaching practices. Typically, provincial (and territorial) governmental school acts and regulations in Canada do not discuss supervision in reference to teacher practice. If supervision is referred to at all in these documents, authority is given to principals to "exercise general supervision over the work of all members of his or her staff" (Saskatchewan Learning, 2015, E-02, s.175). Framed within a formative process, the legal obligations of supervision typically use a vocabulary that communicates the components of a probationary process for new teachers.

Throughout Canada, provincial and territorial governments have designated the responsibility of supervision to school boards. In conducting a search through school board policies across Canada, the conclusion is that there is a trend towards supervision as part of a

professional growth model. As an example, Frontier School Division in Manitoba (2009) states the following:

> The emphasis in the Supervision for Growth model is on professional growth for Teachers, Clinicians, Vice-Principals, Principals and Consultants. Through a cooperative approach to professional growth, all Teachers in Frontier School Division can maximize their effectiveness and truly become partners in learning. (p. 24)

As another example, Halifax School Board (2007) states:

> Supervision for Growth is a process that centers on the development and implementation of an Annual Professional Growth Plan that reflects a balance between an individual teacher's professional goals, classroom/school/system initiatives and the Board's Indicators of Quality Teaching. Supervision for Growth is a formative process that includes opportunities for self-reflection, dialogue between teachers and appraisers, formal and informal classroom observations, and professional development (individual, school and system-wide). (3.1.1)

In examining provincial and territorial collective agreements with teacher federations or unions, most outline a framework for performance appraisal in which supervision is part of the evaluation process. In those provinces where teacher federations and unions negotiate at the local school jurisdiction, a search using the terms "supervision" and "evaluation" revealed the same theme. That is, *supervision is a component of the evaluation process*. There are exceptions, as exemplified by the Saskatchewan Teacher Federations (2009), which distinguishes between the role of supervision and evaluation.

> Supervision is a collaborative process by which principals observe and gather information in order to support, guide and provide professional growth opportunities for teachers.

> Evaluation refers to formal processes that involve a point-in-time judgment and written appraisal by an employer of a teacher's professional competence and effectiveness. (2.4.2)

At the international level, there are multiple practices for teacher growth, but the methodology tends to be focused on teacher assessment (OECD, 2013a). Isoré (2009) examined the dimensions of teacher evaluation across OECD countries and found that there were two basic approaches to the assessment of teacher practice, summative and formative. Formative evaluation is described as "a qualitative appraisal on the teacher current practice, aimed at

identifying strengths and weaknesses and providing adequate professional development opportunities for the areas in need of improvement" (Isoré, 2009, p.6).

As an example, in describing effective professional practice, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (2012) explained the importance of "a rich and varied range of evidence that can inform meaningful evaluations of practice for both formative and summative purposes" (p. 6). As such, principals "are also more likely to provide informal continuing feedback to the teacher throughout the year and not only during the formal evaluation process" (Isoré, 2009, p. 21).

The Link Between Supervision, Evaluation, and Education Policy

Given that supervision had its early roots in inspection and evaluation (Pajak, 2003; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001), it is perhaps unsurprising that policy on supervision as reported above is couched in the language of evaluation (e.g. formative evaluation). Several scholars have been explicit in saying that evaluation is one of the functions of supervision.

Glatthorn (1997) reflected this view: "One of the supervisory responsibilities that seems to grow increasingly important is evaluating teachers" (p. 251). In their role-based conception of supervision, Wiles and Bondi (1991) portrayed "the supervisor in a constant evaluation position" (p. 23). They concluded:

> It appears that evaluating for effectiveness, for both teachers and programs, will not go away. There is no substitute for leadership in evaluation and the modern supervisor must be involved in the process of evaluation each step of the way (p. 315).

Glanz (2000) insisted that the evaluation function should not be overlooked in any comprehensive supervision program. In his view, evaluation is a key component of supervision. Supervisors must be responsible "to ensure that every teacher's best efforts are good enough and to initiate supervisory interventions that are needed, securing the student's right to meaningful learning" (p. 83). On the other hand, Mette et al. (2017) questioned whether "supervision, the formative feedback provided to teachers intended to promote growth as an instructor, can exist in practice within the current high stakes agenda of school accountability that predominately focuses on evaluation as a human resource function" (p. 722).

While agreeing with those who see teacher evaluation as one aspect of supervision, Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2001) advocated for the separation of evaluation into two types: formative (improvement oriented) and summative (accountability oriented). They addressed a need to disconnect the former evaluation approach (which they see as an administrative function) from the latter (which they see as a supervisory function). Based on evidence presented in their text, they reason "summative and formative evaluation are both

necessary but need to be separate. Formative evaluation is more likely to lead to the improvement of instruction" (p. 305).

Glickman (2002) outlined a series of supervision and evaluation systems that separate "direct assistance for continuous improvement from the formal summative school district or state evaluations for tenure, contract continuation, and contract renewal" (p. 98).

Linkages between evaluation and supervision carry over into the policy realm. Darling-Hammond and Sclan (1992) studied the relationship between the professionalization of teaching and the changing policy environment in the 1990s. Their conception of supervision aligns with the instructional leadership and learning community approaches identified earlier in this section. They discern between two opposing views of teaching held by policy makers. In contrast to their professional construction of teaching is the bureaucratic conception of education. Whereas bureaucratic policy instruments dictate standardized and routinized practice, a professional orientation to policy starts from an assumption that:

> Because students learn in different ways and at different rates, teaching must be responsive to their needs if it is to be effective. As a consequence, teachers must make decisions in non-routine situations using a complex knowledge base augmented by highly developed judgment and skill (1992, p. 8)

Darling-Hammond and Sclan (1992) advocated policy initiatives that view teaching as "informed judgment" rather than as "mastery of simple routines" (p. 15). Policies emphasizing the former take "a reflective teaching orientation stimulated by attention to teachers' individual contexts and felt needs" rather than emphasizing the "production of specific teacher behaviours thought to represent "effective teaching" (p. 15). Supervision and evaluation policies must not just view "teaching as complex and context-dependent" (pp. 24-25), they must also construct images of supervisors and evaluators who are distinguished by their ability to exhibit professional modes of thinking and judgment. This is evident in Darling-Hammond's more recent writing (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Darling-Hammond, Anrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2012).

Section Summary: The Literature on Teacher Supervision

This section of our systematic literature review addressed the second component of study's first research question: *How does the current state of the Alberta TGSE policy compare with the research literature and current best practices on educator growth, supervision, and evaluation?* We traced the evolution of instructional supervision, identified key aspects of current practice, and described tensions within this complex leadership field. Our appraisal and synthesis of the high-quality research evidence and arguments identified four key aspects of effective instructional supervision.

1. The primary focus of supervisory practice should be on instructional support that seeks to improve learning, teaching and shared instructional leadership.

2. Supervisory practice should be differentiated in accordance with such contextual factors as pedagogical approaches, developmental stages, and learning needs and aspirations evident in the school's community of professional practice.

3. A number of supervisory approaches should be utilized, including: clinical supervision, collegial supervision, peer supervision, professional learning community, coaching, and independent teacher learning.

4. Supervisory practice should be informed by evidence gathered from multiple sources, such as, classroom observations, action research, collaborative inquiry, pedagogical reflection and dialogue, and learning artifacts.

The last section of this literature review highlights research and policy that is specifically focused on evaluation.

Section Three: The Literature on Teacher Evaluation

Increased accountability for teachers has been a goal since the 1970s (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Pease, 1983). In Alberta the regulation of teaching quality became a priority after the James Keegstra case in 1984 (Fenwick, 2001). In earlier days, educators perceived teacher evaluation as perfunctory and disconnected from their practice (Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2012; Garrett, 2011). As the aforementioned sections on teacher growth and supervision showed, new empirical research and examination of the principles and purposes of teacher development have deepened understanding about effective teaching, and these findings have led to variation in the way teacher evaluation is practiced.

Evaluation, like supervision, has been brought into the instructional leadership domain, and so evaluation has come to reflect many of the principles that are promoted in designing teacher growth and supervision models. As Young, Range, Hvidston, and Mette (2015) warned, "administrators must ensure they possess a high level of instructional leadership regardless of a prescribed evaluation model if quality instruction is to occur" (p. 171).

There is, in fact, significant conflation of supervision with evaluation, and so in this section we consider literature that specifically invokes the term "evaluation." A key message from the literature is that even though research shows that teachers themselves have less tolerance for poor teaching (Adams et al., 2015), effectively coupling performance and

evaluation is a matter of weighing evaluation for improvement vis-à-vis evaluation for accountability, as this section will show. This final section is organized by the following topics:

- Why Evaluate? Philosophical and Theoretical Underpinnings of Evaluation
- Who, What, and How to Evaluate: Elements of Effective Evaluation
- Sources of Evidence in Evaluation
- Overview of Provincial Evaluation of Teachers in Canada and a few International Practices

Why Evaluate? Philosophical and Theoretical Underpinnings of Evaluation

In their influential review of literature on teacher evaluation, Darling-Hammond et al. (1983) emphasized that in designing teacher evaluation, it is not just instruments that must be considered, but the theoretical underpinnings of the evaluation policy. Organizational context and the assumptions underlying the purpose of schooling, and the nature of teachers' work all come into play. They conceptualized four ways to think about teachers' work—labour, craft, profession and art. We elaborated on their conceptualization to demonstrate the connection between the assumptions and how evaluation plays out in Table 1.

Table 2.2: Nature of Teachers' Work and Implications for Policy Implementation

Teachers' Work Viewed as:	Assumes that teaching is:	Teacher evaluation policy will focus on:	The principal's role is to:	Metaphor of evaluation
Labour	Rational and routine	Direct inspection of externally predetermined, concrete practices and behaviours	Provide assessment based on checklist of practices and behaviours	Evaluation is a checklist of external objective criteria
Craft	A "repertoire of specialized techniques" (p. 291)	Indirect assessment of teachers' skills	Manage teachers' acquisition of skill	Evaluation is a guideline, outlining a range of techniques
Profession	Based on special knowledge and judgment	Demonstration of pedagogical decisions	Prepare the administrative conditions for teachers to exercise judgment based on their knowledge	Evaluation is a prism, refracting agreed upon knowledge base applied in various ways

Art	Not predictable or codified	Teachers' autonomy, creativity, flexibility, and adaptability	Provide leadership and encouragement so teachers can flourish	Evaluation is a canvas for teachers to explore and shape

Organizational assumptions also drive the teacher evaluation model. If schools are viewed as rationalistic organizations, hierarchy and predictability are assumed. Thus, teacher evaluation will reflect an input-output model based on pre-established outcomes about which a specialist in a high-ranking position will assess. A strict rationalistic model, one that might have been applied in the early days of schooling, positions the supervisor as the authority of teaching, compelling her/him to "pass those absolutes to his subordinates" (Ibara, 2013, p. 239). Under this assumption, evaluation was autocratic and prescriptive (Ibara, 2013), involving a supervisor sitting at the back of a classroom and passing judgment.

Contrarily, a natural systems model is characterized by loose coupling of organizational elements such that principals and teachers have autonomy in directing evaluation, rather than complying with an imposed set of objective criteria. Viewed through this lens, evaluation might involve organic processes such as *walkthrough* evaluations (Garza, Ovando, & Doherty, 2016; Ovando, 2001) whereby *real teacher episodes* (Ovando, 2001) are the focus of discussion regarding both teacher and student needs. In reality, schools are a combination of predictable and unpredictable features, and both formative and summative assessments have merit, but the research indicates that evaluation models that lean toward a natural systems model are viewed by teachers as more credible, productive, and valuable (Adams et al., 2015).

The above discussion underpins the debate around teacher growth, supervision and evaluation overall: is improvement or accountability the aim? If the goal is to improve teaching, formative evaluation is emphasized. If accountability is the aim, summative evaluations are emphasized. Evaluation aimed at improving teacher quality is characterized by professional development planning, action research projects, and teacher learning. Evaluation aimed at accountability is used largely for personnel decisions (e.g. promotion, tenure, termination), and tend to be linked to labour agreements. Merit pay and other reward schemes such as sabbatical leave, financial support for graduate study, awards, and opportunities to conduct school-based research are used in various ways in American states, and in other countries such as Korea, Chile, and Mexico. How evaluation is used likely reflects national culture and the values that undergird the educational system.

Although accountability is important to quality education, the reports on whether and/or how a reward scheme improves teaching is unconvincing. The OECD (2013a) report, *Synergies for Better Learning* on evaluation concluded that when evaluation is used for explicit reward

schemes, it does not impact on teachers' learning. Their report based on the TALIS (2013) suggested that because of the flatness of school structures, promotional opportunities for teachers may be limited, and therefore inconsistently effective as an evaluation strategy. According to Santiago and Benavides (2009) accountability aims of evaluation can impede teacher growth and development because when teachers fear the impact of evaluation on their salary or career advancement, they are less likely to discuss areas of weakness. Lavy (2007) provided many challenges of performance-based pay such as difficulties in measuring attainment and progress towards goals, can create unfair competition between teachers, reduced productivity of teachers due to resentment and decreased loyalty, and repeated failures of poorly designed and implemented merit pay have impacted credibility.

If improvement is the driver, teachers are more likely to address self-improvement needs and apply formative feedback (Santiago & Benavides, 2009). Contrary to this lesson, however, one of the evaluation trends reported in *Synergies* is the increased use of accountability measures, including public reporting of standardized test results and school annual reports, use of external examiners, sanctions for underperforming school agents, and rewards for good performance.

One such example is in Denver, Colorado, where they have been using the performance pay system known as Professional Compensation for Teachers (ProComp) for the past ten years (Denver Public Schools, 2017). It is a complex pay system that provides incentives for individual teachers and schools; pay increases are attached to improvements in student and school performance, professional development and higher education degrees, evaluation ratings, and the context a teacher works in (e.g. a hard-to-staff school) (Denver Public Schools, 2017). The OECD (2012b) argued that in some contexts, performance-based pay systems are worthy of some consideration, however:

> making it work well and sustainably is a formidable challenge. Pay levels can only be part of the work environment: countries that have succeeded in making teaching an attractive profession have often done so not just through pay, but by raising the status of teaching, offering real career prospects, and giving teachers responsibility as professionals and leaders of reform. This requires teacher education that helps teachers to become innovators and researchers in education, not just civil servants who deliver curricula. (p. 4)

A Tale of Two Models: Value-Added Models and Teacher Improvement Models

Emerging from the debate between accountability and improvement are two models that dominate the teacher evaluation landscape. Value-added models (VAMs), like Marzano's (2012) Causal Teacher Evaluation Model, use both formative and summative assessment. A VAM

"evaluates the academic growth students experience over the course of a school year, rather than comparing the current year's cohort with the previous years" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 15).

In general, VAMs make extensive use of student assessments, including standardized tests, to gauge teacher quality, while controlling for factors outside teachers' control, such as student and home variables (Centre for Development and Enterprise [CDE], 2015b). In some jurisdictions where VAMs are employed, performance-related pay is used to incentivize teachers who significantly contribute to student learning (Huang, 2015; Liang, 2013; Liang & Akiba, 2011; Podgursky & Springer, 2007; Woessmann, 2011).

VAMs are criticized for ignoring the contextual conditions of teaching (Braun, 2005; Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2012). Furthermore, Cohen and Goldbar (2016) argued that not only do the measures used in VAMs have low face validity with teachers (e.g. they do not believe standardized tests represent the range of student learning), teachers also lack skills to interpret and apply the results. Consequently, teachers have a difficult time using test results to apply to specific improvement goals (Kupermintz, 2003).

From an organizational perspective, VAMs inevitably result in teacher rankings (Johnson, 2015), which may impede the culture of shared responsibility for student learning, considered fundamental to effective evaluation models (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012; Jackson & Bruegmann, 2009; Holdheide, 2015), and act as a disincentive for teachers (California Department of Education, 2015). The strength of VAMs is that by directly linking to student learning outcomes, the discrepancy between teachers receiving excellent evaluations when their students are underperforming is eliminated.

VAMs also allow for comparison between schools, enabling a system-level view of student performance. Caution with attributing student test scores to teacher performance is warranted, however, based on the numerous studies that have pointed out the statistical pitfalls of VAMs (e.g. Ballou & Springer, 2015; Lockwood, et al., 2007; Papay, 2011).

The potential downfalls of accountability-driven evaluation such as VAMs are contrasted with the perceived benefits of evaluation models that are motivated by improvement. Danielson's (1996) Framework for Teaching focuses on a range of features of teaching such as classroom environment and professional responsibilities, along with instruction. Teacher learning is the object of evaluation. Although Danielson's model is competency-based, it broadens the notion of teacher quality and student learning. Danielson's approach takes into account the fact that classroom composition is not uniform, and that teaching environments, teachers' individual strengths, and subject areas can significantly impact the teaching context. The model allows for flexibility and adaptability. The link between teacher evaluations and student learning is not tight as in the case of VAMs, even though student learning is still the

focus of Danielson's model. In the state of Delaware, this has been addressed by updating the Delaware Performance Appraisal System to incorporate a fifth element, student learning, into Danielson's four-part framework (OECD, 2013b).

From an international perspective, it seems the accountability versus improvement debate is addressed through compromise. Most countries use a combination of accountability and improvement approaches to meet various purposes. Korea's Teacher Appraisal for Professional Development, for example, uses evaluation for determining professional development (improvement), for management of teacher performance (accountability), and for determining rewards such as research sabbatical for teaching excellence (improvement and accountability). At the same time, however, there is caution against the "distortion" of "teaching to the test" (OECD, p. 3) created from overreliance on test results. The type of summative evaluations used is an important consideration. Standardized tests that are externally administered (e.g. Alberta Diploma Exams) are highly reliable but have low validity. Teacher-based summative evaluations have higher validity but are unreliable. A combination of external and teacher-based summative assessments is a viable solution (California Department of Education, 2015).

In an OECD review of 28 countries' evaluation policies in 2013, 22 were reported to have policies, and of those, most implemented regular formative teacher appraisals. Common among the policies reviewed was the centrality of student learning; ensuring evaluation initiatives coherently adhere to the goal of student learning was a key policy lesson gleaned from this OECD study. Globally speaking, more attention is given to formative evaluation (OECD, 2013a), and it is deemed to have positive effects on improving teaching quality because of the utility of the results for targeting professional development (Dulbertson, 2012). Teachers have more incentive to improve through formative evaluation, compared to summative evaluations, which often work as a disincentive (California Department of Education, 2015).

Young et al.'s (2015) study is instructive in trying to assess the merits of accountability and improvement models such as Marzano's and Danielson's. Young et al. (2015) studied principals' perceptions of the most effective evaluation for teacher improvement in 354 American schools that were using Danielson's (2013) Framework for Teaching, a tool called McREL's Teacher Evaluation System (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, 2009), a "rubric-driven evaluation system" (Young et al., 2015, p. 162), or other models created by non-profit companies. Based on survey data and examining 15 teacher behaviours and strategies (e.g. content knowledge, varied instructional strategies), overall, principals felt the Danielson model assessed teacher quality better than the other models compared.

Studies that have examined how teachers and principals experience evaluation provide qualitative insights into the merits of VAMs versus improvement-focused evaluation. For example, Ford, Van Sickle, Clark, Fazio-Brunson and Schween's (2017) recent study of

Louisiana teachers' perspectives regarding their new high-stakes evaluation system (HSTE) emphasizes the importance of considering the effects of evaluation programs on teachers' self-efficacy, autonomy, satisfaction, and perceptions of feeling supported.

What is unique about Louisiana's program, called *Compass,* is that it incorporates concepts of VAMs and teacher-directed evaluation, *and* used a rubric based on Danielson's model. *Compass* seems to capitalize, proverbially, on the best of all worlds. Some teachers in this study selected their own student learning targets (SLTs) as benchmarks, and others were evaluated based on VAMs – student achievement results from prescribed standardized tests about which teachers had no control.

Interestingly, both SLTs and VAMs proved problematic because teachers did not have training and support in developing appropriate SLTs, and VAMs made teachers feel like they had lost control over their practice.

The important conclusion was that teachers who were evaluated as highly effective might not *feel* effective as a result of being evaluated by a system that threatened their sense of efficacy and control. Specifically, teachers in this study who were evaluated according to VAMs reported that teaching was no longer fun, even those in high-performing schools where they felt supported.

Principals' experiences with evaluation models are important to consider, too. Flores and Derrington's (2017) comparison of two studies of principals' experiences implementing evaluation models in the United States and Portugal found that principals felt conflicted about ranking or scoring teachers and applying value-added test scores to their evaluation of teachers. They reported, "principals identified a conflict between what they perceived as two separate purposes of evaluation: supporting formative professional growth and conducting summative evaluation judgments" (p. 421). Principals prioritized evaluation for professional growth, but the need to comply to externally-imposed criteria and processes made formative evaluation penumbral to summative.

This study, along with other recent studies, encourages policy makers to consider how student test performances should be used when evaluating teachers. The unintended negative consequences of using high-stakes evaluation schemes, such as tying performance to merit pay, induces teacher stress (e.g. von der Embse, Schoemann, Kilgus, Wicoff, & Bowler, 2017). Mental health is an emerging factor in the discussion about teacher evaluation, especially with respect to high-stakes evaluation schemes.

Flores and Derrington (2017) found that principals are concerned about how evaluation affects professional relationships and teachers' motivation to learn. This raises important

questions about effectively balancing the need for evaluation to reach its student learning target against the equally important factors that contribute to teacher excellence. Many of these factors, such as collaboration, investment in innovation, and inquiry that are inherently important to teacher growth and supervision, are also important to evaluation.

Thus, evaluation goals are inevitably bound by philosophical and theoretical assumptions regarding good teaching, student achievement, the role of teachers, and the importance of teachers' experiences as objects of evaluation. While it is important to examine the assumptions underlying an evaluation policy, at the level of implementation it is also necessary to be conscious of the "cross-pressures" (Darling-Hammond, et al., 1983, p. 289) that exist between principals' tendency to focus on accountability and bureaucratic requirements, and teachers' need for efficacy.

As Looney (2011) found, principals tend to conflate the summative and formative purposes of evaluation. This may be their way of reconciling their feeling of being "caught between the seemingly immovable rock of policy and the hard place of leading school change" (Derrington, 2013, p. 26). A number of studies support the notion that professional approaches to teacher evaluation can both support teacher growth and ensure quality teaching (Danielson, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Darling-Hammond et al., 2012; Marzano, 2012; OECD, 2012a). The next section provides an overview of the elements of effective evaluation that might be considered in the development and implementation of an evaluation policy.

Who, What, and How to Evaluate: Elements of Effective Evaluation

It is clear that evaluation processes should align with the intended purpose of evaluation (Young et al., 2015). Regarding the elements of effective evaluation, four significant ideas emanate from our review of the teacher evaluation literature (Danielson, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2010, 2012; Darling-Hammond et al., 2012; Marzano, 2012; OECD, 2013b).

First, good teacher evaluation approaches should provide a variety of options or tracks that target the specific requirements of four groups: (a) beginning teachers, (b) experienced teachers, (c) teachers whose practice is marginal and requires assistance, and (d) teachers whose practice is unacceptable due to incompetence or unsatisfactory commitment. The first two tracks acknowledge that a high percentage of teachers are committed and successful professionals, who seek and benefit from helpful, evidence-informed feedback and dialogue (Brandon 2005; Robinson, 2011; Timperley, 2011). The third and fourth tracks recognize the need to address problematic teaching practice in two stages. Track three provides a combination of further evaluation and support for those identified as requiring more structured assistance. The fourth part of this multi-track approach is a termination track. It provides policy direction for the fair, just and timely removal of the incompetent or uncommitted.

The literature about track two, experienced teachers, does not show a clear consensus with respect to *who to evaluate*. Danielson (2001) indicated that in most districts "experienced teachers are evaluated on a regular basis every second, third or fourth year" (p. 13). In Sawyer's (2001) differentiated system, successful teachers move into three-year post-probationary cycles: "Teachers who have been post probationary for five years can choose self-directed growth options in their minor evaluation years" (p. 46). Some jurisdictions rely solely on the regular monitoring of the practices of experienced educators rather than subscribing to cyclical evaluation. With this proviso in place, such teachers operate on what Danielson and McGreal (2000) called the *growth track* through planned, ongoing professional learning. "In some districts, career teachers are never formally evaluated," commented Danielson (2001), "once they have attained tenure, teachers engage only in self-assessment, goal setting, and self-directed professional growth" (p. 14).

Internationally, there seems to be a range of practices differing according to how and whether processes for teacher registration, certification, and career advancement are organized (OECD, 2013b). For example, in Australia they changed from an annual evaluation process to a cyclical format with no timeframe associated with it (Education Services Australia, 2012). In the Netherlands, individual school boards set evaluation policies for their school leaders. Competency files are created and maintained for teachers, but there are no guidelines provided on how or when to evaluate teachers (OECD, 2011).

Connected to the question of who to evaluate is *who should be doing the evaluation*. Traditionally, principals were assumed to be the authority of schools and therefore the authority in teacher evaluation. However, there is growing recognition that principals do not have content expertise in all subject areas (Adams et al., 2013), and that peer evaluators have classroom insights that enhance evaluation feedback (OECD, 2013a).

The time-intensive nature of teacher evaluation also justifies including teachers and other experts as evaluators. In the Palo Alto School District in the United States, teachers serve as instructional supervisors. A number of American states use a program called Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) whereby joint committees of teachers and administrators oversee evaluation. The panel or committee approach to evaluation is most often used when personnel decisions are being made (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012). So that evaluations are conducted in a constructive, professional, and sensitive manner within recognized ethical, legal, and contractual guidelines, it is essential to ensure that evaluators, whether they are principals, teachers, or external evaluators, are trained in the use of evaluation instruments and procedures.

Second is the question of *how to evaluate*. Evaluation must be linked to clearly defined standards and research evidence of teaching practices and behaviours that improve student learning. This is especially important given the diversity of today's classroom (Holdheide, 2015).

This implies: (a) clear and coherent articulation of standards that couple evaluation and performance, and reflect the complexity of teachers' work and the local, contextual factors influencing the teaching environment; and, (b) teachers' familiarity with and ability to apply evidence-based practices (Adams, et al., 2015; Darling-Hammond et al., 2012; Fenwick, 2001; Holdheide, 2015; Marzano, 2012).

Many provinces and countries have responded to this need and established professional standards. For example, in Alberta, we have the *Teaching Quality Standards and Descriptors of Knowledge, Skills and Attributes* (Alberta Education, 1997). Recently in Australia, they implemented the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Education Services Australia, 2011) and the Teacher Performance and Development Framework (Education Services Australia, 2012) for evaluation. This framework focuses on improving student outcomes and improving teaching, and emphasizes the role of principals in improving school performance and creating a culture of performance and development. This example, among others, reinforces the above discussion and the importance of employing both formative and summative evaluation.

A third consistent message in the literature is that data from multiple sources needs to be used to inform the evaluator's professional judgment. When multiple data sources are used, teachers are able to develop better assessment tools and improve their capacity to define measurable outcomes in areas that are difficult to qualify (e.g. art). Furthermore, the use of multiple data sources helps teachers to align with curriculum and school district goals.

A range of evaluation methods are in use internationally, including videotaping class lessons for viewing by internal and/or external supervisors, teacher self-appraisal, portfolios (lesson plans, samples of student work with commentary), teacher testing, and student and parent surveys (OECD, 2013a). There are also peer programs being established where teachers mentor or assess each other, including the Peer Assistance Review program, where lead teachers mentor new or struggling teachers (Young et al., 2015) and the peer-assessment program in the Netherlands, where teachers from one school visit and assess teachers from another school (California Department of Education, 2015a).

A three-year study based on the Gates' Foundation Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project confirmed that a balance of student achievement measures and teacher-specific measures creates a comprehensive picture about teacher effectiveness (California Department of Education, 2015). Emerging from a clinical supervision model, classroom observation continues to be a common practice among OECD countries, although internationally the perception of its value ranges. Overall, 75.3% of the countries reviewed in the OECD (2013a) study reported that classroom observations were valuable.

But in Denmark, only 40.7% of teachers found classroom observations to be useful. A MET project study found that student surveys are a more reliable indicator of teacher effectiveness than visitor evaluations, because the students provide a long-range and comprehensive view, rather than a snapshot of teaching events (California Department of Education, 2015). Nonetheless, the research indicates that classroom observation is an effective way to ensure that teachers are using effective teaching practices (Cohen & Goldhaber, 2016; Isore, 2009; Overland, 2014; Young et al., 2015). The OECD (2013a) study of 28 countries' evaluation policies and practices also suggested more holistic criteria for evaluation. Examples included evaluation of professional development completed, contributions to school development, working on teams, building community partnerships, project planning and management, and contributions to school development.

Effective teacher evaluation must be more than a "checklist" of appropriate teacher behaviours" (Donaldson & Peske, 2010, p. 3). A culture of shared ownership and responsibility for student learning (Holdheide, 2015) is the fourth element of effective teacher evaluation policy and practice. Collaboration has been shown to lead to better outcomes (Jackson & Bruegmann, 2009); high-performing countries like Singapore, for example, emphasize collaboration in their teacher evaluation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012). Collaboration was also highlighted as important to teacher growth, and for creating what Wahlstrom (2012) coined an instructional ethos in the context of teacher supervision.

Developing a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration necessarily requires administrators to model this behaviour, so that when they adopt self-critique, teachers are more likely to buy into evaluation processes (Donaldson & Peske, 2010). Trust is a crucial factor when it comes to developing a culture of continuous improvement within an evaluation context.

This was clearly indicated by Fenwick's (2001) study of Alberta's TGSE policy after it was first implemented. Her findings in five districts showed that teachers' initial response to the evaluation policy was anxiety; teachers felt vulnerable about their principal judging their goals, and they worried about repercussions of not meeting them by the end of the year. This was alleviated when principals were reassuring and not restrictive, and teachers trusted the process when they saw professional development resources flowing in the direction of their growth areas. Based on our review of the growth, supervision and evaluation policies, we see that trust is an essential ingredient to policy in these areas, for it encourages risk-taking behaviour, which reinforces a culture of continuous learning (Wei et al., 2009).

The cultural element of evaluation also speaks to the importance of supervision as an ongoing process that is linked with evaluation. A number of studies on the evaluation of beginning teachers support the claim by Peterson and Peterson (2006) that assessments should be combined with mentoring and induction programs. Danielson and McGreal's (2000) *novice track*

involves several educators in both the mentoring and evaluation functions. Feiman-Nemser (2003) and Beerens (2000) provide similar views on the importance of both supporting and evaluating novices. In the final sub-section, we take a more in-depth look at some of the teacher evaluation systems from across Canada and internationally.

Policy Perspectives on Teacher Evaluation

In this section, we provide a brief overview of the variance in evaluation policies across Canada and then provide a comparison to international evaluation procedures in Australia, the Netherlands, and Chile. For the most part, evaluation procedures across the provinces and territories in Canada are similar. All teachers are evaluated against a set of provincial/territorial standards or competencies, and teachers new to the profession must go through an evaluation process in order to receive their permanent teacher certification and contracts. For veteran teachers though, there is some variance in how and when evaluation takes place.

In British Columbia, teachers are required to participate in the evaluation process, but these processes vary for each school district. Evaluation methods are outlined in a school district's collective agreement and they are slightly different from one district to another in terms of process and procedure. This is outlined in the British Columbia *School Act* (Government of British Columbia, 2016). An example is taken from the Vancouver School Board (1999), where teacher evaluation occurs through a teacher request or a principal's decision and is based on criteria outlined in the *School Act* and School Regulations. The basis of this criterion includes standards for planning, context of teaching, instructional techniques, classroom management, and inclusion of parents and community (BC Ministry of Education Governance and Legislation Branch, 2016).

Other provinces that follow a similar model of providing school boards with the responsibility of establishing evaluation procedures are Manitoba (Manitoba Teachers' Society, 2017), New Brunswick (Bouchamma, 2005), and Nova Scotia (they are in the midst of an educational reform of their 2007 *Supervision and Appraisal Policy*) (Halifax School Board, 2007).

Some of the school boards in the aforementioned provinces vary from the Vancouver School Board, where they utilize cycles for the formal evaluation process and evaluate teachers more frequently. In the Frontier School division in Manitoba, after their first year teachers have a formal written summative evaluation. They have another one after completing their fourth year of employment, and then once every four years after that (Frontier School Division, 2011). Teachers, principals or the school board may request more frequent evaluations.

In other provinces and territories, such as Saskatchewan, Ontario, and the Northwest Territories, ministries of education establish provincial and territorial teacher supervision and

evaluation policies that all school boards follow. In Saskatchewan, the policies and procedures for the evaluation of teachers must comply with the *Education Act* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2015) and professional associations, such as the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF), also have guideline positions and policies for school officials to follow (e.g. Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Policy) (STF, 2016). These policies and positions do not specify detailed procedures for principals to follow, such as a four-year cycle, and there is no set timeline for the evaluations to occur.

This is different from Ontario, where in their *Education Act* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1996/2007), it stipulates that experienced teachers are to be evaluated or appraised at least once every five years. There are also a set of guidelines and procedures for principals to follow, which are indicated in the *Teacher Performance Appraisal: Technical Requirements Manual* (Ontario Education Act, 2010). The Northwest Territories operates similarly to Ontario, where teachers have to be evaluated at least once every five years and there are set procedures for principals to follow (Northwest Territories Ministry of Education, Culture and Employment, 2004).

Other countries present other options. In Australia, teacher evaluation or appraisal occurs to gain and maintain registration/accreditation to teach within the state or territory, but teachers are evaluated against national specific standards (Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, 2011). The *Teacher Performance and Development Framework* was implemented in 2012, and it focused on improving student outcomes, improving teaching, and the role of principals in improving school performance and creating a culture of performance and development (Education Services Australia, 2012). This framework is a cycle with five components (focus on student outcomes, clear understanding of effective teaching, leadership, flexibility, and coherence) but there is no time frame associated with it (Education Services Australia, 2012).

Schools use their own procedures for evaluation. The premise for this methodology rests on performance management processes, which are linked to educational goals set at the national, state, or school levels; school improvement initiatives; and the annual improvement plan. Teacher evaluation is also used by teachers as a way to measure the quality of their teaching performance for probation, promotion, or pay increments (OECD, 2011).

In the Netherlands, individual school boards are required to create human resource policies for their schools, keep competency files on teachers, and ensure that they maintain certain competencies. There should be regular performance interviews with teachers but there are no real guidelines on how to evaluate teachers (OECD, 2011). School leaders have this responsibility and procedures vary from school to school. The *Education Professions Act* (Government of Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science, 2006) stipulates competencies for teachers. The Inspectorate of Education provides indicators for lesson

observation. As mentioned previously, there is also a Peer Assessment program in place, where teachers from one school visit and assess teachers from another school (CDE, 2015a).

Teacher evaluation in Chile is compulsory for all teachers that work in public schools. There are four possible results for teachers upon the evaluation: Outstanding, Competent, Basic, and Unsatisfactory (OECD, 2013c). The main evaluators are external, and as a result, the schools usually remain distant with their support for teachers related to items such as as time to work on the portfolio.

The National Teacher evaluation has four main parts: (a) self-evaluation, (b) third-party reference report, (c) peer evaluation, and (d) teacher performance portfolio (OECD, 2013c). Teachers who are evaluated as Competent or Outstanding may get a monetary incentive, as long as they have high results in another voluntary content test called the Variable Individual Performance Allowance programme (AVDI) (OECD, 2013c). The AVDI test assesses the teacher's knowledge of each subject area. If for some reason teachers do not take the AVDI test, their results from the national Chilean teacher evaluation are worth nothing.

Teachers who are evaluated as Basic or Unsatisfactory are supposed to receive training from the local education department. Overall Chilean teachers tend to have a negative perception of the national teacher evaluation (Taut, Santelices, Araya, & Manzi, 2011). Some of the reasons that teachers do not like it are because (a) it is time-consuming and stressful, (b) there is not a lot of support provided from the schools, (c) teachers fear being labelled, (d) the evaluation tends to add more work for teachers, which increases an already heavy workload, and (e) overall, the evaluation provides few opportunities to improve teachers' professional practice.

Section Summary: The Literature on Teacher Evaluation

In our synthesis of the teacher evaluation literature, we identified differences in the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of evaluation, in how effective evaluation was carried out, and in the sources of evidence used for evaluation. The following findings warrant consideration for the effectiveness of evaluation with respect to Alberta's Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy:

1. Effective evaluation emphasizes teacher growth and improvement in relation to student learning outcomes.
2. Effective evaluation models reference clearly articulated standards to ensure teaching excellence.
3. A culture of continuous learning and improvement is nurtured when evaluation is part of a process of growth for teachers at all career stages. The sole use of summative evaluations for high-stakes purposes such as job security or reward incentives demotivates teachers. These high-stakes summative evaluations jeopardize teacher learning as an integral aspect of evaluation processes.

4. To address contextual variances in the teaching environment (e.g. teaching experience, subject, grade level, class composition) and make it meaningful for teachers, strategies include (a) using multiple artifacts of evidence for teaching performance, (b) differentiation of evaluation based on career stage, and (c) incorporating collegial evaluation processes (e.g. involvement of subject experts, not only the principal)

CHAPTER THREE: CONCURRENT MIXED METHODS RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter outlines the research design that guided our study of teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation in Alberta in six parts. Part One itemizes the study's four research purposes and five research questions. Part Two provides a brief description of the concurrent mixed methods research design determined to best suit the research questions and purposes. Parts Three, Four, and Five provide short overviews of the three methods that have been *mixed* in the study: policy content analysis, multiple case analysis, and quantitative analysis. Part Six explains the processes through which the policy, case study, and survey results were mixed during the study's overall interpretive phase to generate 14 merged findings and 10 recommendations.

Research Purposes and Questions

This review of the provincial *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy* (TGSE) (Government of Alberta, 1998) was an identified priority under the Ministry of Education's *Teaching and Leadership Excellence in Alberta* initiative. The purposes of the study were to provide education stakeholders and the Ministry with

- an independent, objective review of the provincial TGSE Policy in Alberta and of related policies at the school authority level;
- recommendations on how best to support implementation of any proposed changes to the TGSE policy;
- recommendations on how the TGSE model should inform related policy on growth, supervision and evaluation of principals; and
- recommendations on how the TGSE model should inform related policy on growth, supervision, and evaluation of superintendents and school authority leaders.

The research team determined that a concurrent mixed methods study was the most suitable research design to address these four purposes. In consultation with the members of the Ministry's *Leadership Excellence* team, the following five research questions were adopted:

1. How does the current state of the Alberta TGSE policy compare with the research literature and current best practices on educator growth, supervision, and evaluation?
2. What aspects of the current policy are perceived to be working well? Which aspects of the policy, if any, are not working well?
3. To what extent, and in what ways, do teachers, principals, and superintendents perceive that teacher growth plans have a demonstrable relationship to the TQS?
4. To what extent, and in what ways, do teachers, principals, and superintendents perceive that ongoing supervision by the principal provides teachers with the guidance and support they need to be successful?

5. To what degree, and in what ways, does the implementation of the TGSE policy provide a foundation that could inform related policy development for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and superintendents?

Concurrent Mixed Methods Research Design

A concurrent mixed methods research design was deemed the best methodology to comprehensively address our research purposes and questions. As explained by Creswell (2012):

> The purpose of a convergent (or parallel or concurrent) mixed methods design is to simultaneously collect both quantitative and qualitative data, merge the data, and use the results to understand a research problem. A basic rationale for this design is that one form of data collection supplies strengths to offset the weaknesses of the other form, and that a more complete understanding of a research problem results from collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. (p. 540).

In keeping with the principles and assumptions of this research approach, qualitative and quantitative methods were given equal value, gathered independently at the same time, and were combined in the interpretive phase to provide a better understanding of the research questions than either method by itself (Creswell, 2011, 2012; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). The rationale for using a concurrent mixed methods approach was to gain insights from both quantitative and qualitative data within a limited time frame. Three provincial online surveys (one for teachers, one for principals, and one for superintendents) generated quantitative data from a large number of Alberta educators, which, in combination with qualitative data collected through education partner organization leader interviews and the policy content analysis in Chapter 6, provided important insights into how the policy was being broadly experienced across the province.

Finally, a deeper, richer, and more complex understanding of how teachers, principals, and superintendents were experiencing teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation was gathered by focus group interviews. These nine illustrative settings provide thicker descriptions and more nuanced interpretations, stemming from the qualitative multiple case study data.

The study was conducted within the protocols of the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board.

Multiple Case Study Design: Teacher Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation in Nine Illustrative Alberta Cases

Chapter Four describes the multiple case study methods we employed to enhance understanding of teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation as practiced by educators in nine illustrative Alberta contexts (Merriam, 1998, 2009; Stake, 1995, 2005, 2006). Each of the *instrumental* cases was first described and analyzed with the larger intent to provide insight into an *issue* through Cross-Case analysis (Merriam, 2009, p. 480). The issue under investigation within the bounded system of the Alberta school system in 2017 was *educator experiences with teacher growth, supervision and evaluation*.

Rich, specific, and relevant perspectives were sought from teachers, principals, and central office interviews through *constructivist* focus group interviews (Brinkman &Kvale, 2015, p. 197). We tried to use time effectively, while giving participants sufficient opportunity to explain their views. The meanings of participant responses and comments were probed and clarified throughout each interview and we attempted to verify our interpretations of participant answers over the course of each session. These intentional interview strategies adhere to the criteria for effective qualitative interviewing itemized by Brinkman and Kvale (2015, p. 192).

Among the strengths of focus group interviews is the ability to effectively and efficiently collect in-depth information that is relatively easy to understand. Focus group interviews can provide both shared understandings and shed light on different perspectives (Creswell, 2012). Focus group interviewing is seen to be effective with groups of similar individuals, such as we have just described (Creswell, 2012).

Individual Case Analysis

Focus group data, field notes, and documents provided during the field visits were reviewed and analyzed through iterative processes of reading, re-reading, theme development,, "deep reflection and interpretation," and review. Analysis of the qualitative data was informed by the view that "coding is deep reflection about, and, thus, deep analysis and interpretation of the data's meanings (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014, p. 72).

From our very first case visit to Purple Lilac School Division in March 2017, the interactive nature of data collection and preliminary analysis became an important part of our process (Merriam, 1998, p. 148). Throughout the fieldwork period we were engaged in simultaneous data collection and analysis. As a regular practice, a minimum of two research team members reviewed interview notes and engaged in reflective dialogue that generated tentative themes at both the case and the cross-case levels.

As we proceeded into more detailed analysis for each individual case, additional researchers read focus group transcripts in their entirety to a get a sense of their content and

context. Subsequent readings of the texts looked for emerging themes and descriptive details that would shortly thereafter be fashioned into early drafts of the case descriptions.

In second-level coding, pattern codes were developed (Miles et al., 2014, p. 86–104). Using the descriptive categories and criteria that emerged from the initial data analysis, more detailed pattern codes – larger categories or themes – were created to form the basis for the case descriptions. We followed Stake's advice by having a single research team member do the more complete analysis and report writing for each of the nine cases.

Cross-Case Analysis

Building on the findings and emerging themes from each individual case study, the cross-case analysis identified 13 larger themes. In so doing, we were guided by processes outlined by Creswell (2012), Merriam (2009), and Stake (2006). Though this theme development process was ongoing and continuous over the entire course of the study, four distinct stages can be itemized:

1. From the second data collection day onward, we began to informally identify and discuss commonalities among the cases and to generate a list of possible themes;
2. In a second stage, following data collection from all nine settings, one researcher generated a preliminary list of possible themes;
3. In the third stage, all other researchers had an opportunity to discuss, revise, and develop more fully articulated themes during team meetings in August and September; and
4. In stage four, researchers reviewed and refined the themes through three drafts of the report.

<p align="center">Quantitative Study Design
Perceptions of Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents</p>

Chapter Five describes the quantitative component of this report, which aims to answer three research questions within the larger study. Survey data were collected from 710 teachers, 131 principals, and 33 superintendents from across Alberta through the Qualtrics online software system from May 15 to July 31, 2017. The surveys asked participants for their perceptions with teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation. Based on our extensive review of the related literature, the primary quantitative investigator developed three draft survey instruments that were then reviewed and revised by the whole research team with input from members the provincial TGSE Advisory Committee and panels of teachers and administrators through the Werklund School of Education.

Controls were enacted to ensure validity, reliability, and fairness evidence in instrument design and development. The use of four separate panels of experts in the review process and the

use of applicable statistical measures to ensure internal consistency were important aspects of the quantitative research design.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the different sets of data for a broad overview of perceptions of Alberta teachers, principals, and superintendents toward teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation matters. The demographic data enabled us to examine differences among individual, school, and jurisdiction profiles. The descriptive statistics included mean and standard deviation while the inferential statistics involved ANOVA, *t*-test, and post-hoc analysis.

Policy Content Analysis
Fidelity, Accessibility, Currency, and Implementability

The policy content analysis section of this study is presented in Chapter Six, and analyzes the content (Krippendorff, 2004) of policy documents from 30 randomly selected Alberta school jurisdiction websites. We chose this method because the procedural elements in a policy statement (*implementability*) influence how available the documents are through current technologies (*accessibility*), and to understanding how recent and responsive to current conditions policies are (*currency*) in conformity with stated Ministry expectations (*fidelity*).

In determining the implementability of policy documents, we proceeded in five steps to ensure sound, reliable, and objective analyses. Our aim was to indicate where and why the 1998 provincial policy on *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* has been successfully or unsuccessfully interpreted by local school authorities over the past two decades.

Merged Results, Interpretations, and Recommendations

In our concurrent mixed methods design, qualitative and quantitative methods were given equal value, gathered independently at the same time, and were combined in the interpretive phase to provide a better understanding of the research questions than either method by itself. Chapter Seven details the processes and analyses that generated 14 merged findings leading to 10 recommendations, which provide directions for *building, supporting, and assuring quality professional practice that results in optimum learning for all students.*

**CHAPTER FOUR: TEACHER GROWTH, SUPERVISION, AND EVALUATION
IN NINE ILLUSTRATIVE ALBERTA CASES**

Case study data were collected through individual and focus group interviews with teachers, principals, superintendents, and other jurisdiction leaders in seven illustrative school jurisdictions, and in selected charter and independent schools. The seven school jurisdiction cases were selected through stratified random sampling processes (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015; Creswell 2012; Merriam, 1998, 2009; Stake, 1995, 2005, 2006) designed to achieve a representative mixture of public, separate, and Francophone school jurisdiction cases in metro, urban, suburban, and rural settings. Both the charter school and the independent school cases were determined through consultation with the executive directors of their respective provincial organizations. Table 4.1 provides an overview of selected demographic information about the cases. Each case was given a pseudonym to protect its anonymity.

Table 4.1. Demographic Information – Nine Illustrative Alberta Cases

School Authority	Students	Teachers FTE	Schools	School Authority Type
Purple Lilac School Division	6,500	320	35	Rural
Lodgepole Pine School District	98,000	5000	210	Urban
Black Cottonwood School Division	4,500	190	22	Metro
Cinquefoil Conseil Scolaire	3,200	160	19	Francophone
Silver Buffalo-Berry School District	40,000	2,094	90	Metro
Red Currant Charter Authority	2000	150	4	Charter
Twinning Honeysuckle Schools	800	60	3	Independent
Lowbush Cranberry School Division	1,500	103	18	Rural
Tamarack School District	10.000	550	25	Urban

* Demographic information has been approximated and in some cases adjusted to further protect the anonymity of the school authority.

This chapter begins with an overview of the multiple case study data collection methods followed by a presentation of each of the nine illustrative cases. Each case opens with a brief description of the school authority. Next, research findings are then described in three categories: teacher growth, teacher supervision, and teacher evaluation. Finally, each case concludes with several key themes. This pattern was informed by Merriam's (1998) advice to balance *particular description* (quotes from people and field notes), *general description* (tells readers whether the comments are typical or unique), and *interpretive commentary* (provides the framework for understanding) (p. 235). The chapter concludes by identifying thirteen themes that were determined to be evident across the cases and that serve to inform the merged findings and recommendations presented in this report.

Multiple Case Study Data Collection Methods

Data collection and analysis in these nine cases were steered by multiple case study methods (Merriam, 1998, 2009; Stake, 1995, 2005, 2006). In multiple case studies, four to ten *instrumental* cases are described and analyzed to provide insight into an *issue* (Merriam, 2009, p. 480). The issue under investigation within the bounded system of the Alberta school system in 2017 was *educator experiences with teacher growth, supervision and evaluation*.

A total of 32 focus group interviews were conducted in April, May, and June of 2017 in the schools and education offices of the nine cases. Through arrangements made by school and system personnel, two to four members of the research team visited each setting to conduct one or more 60 to 90 minute focus group interviews with teachers, school leaders, and central office leaders. We prefaced each focus group with an overview of the ethical requirements of the study, obtained written consent, and permission to record the interviews. Voice data were uploaded to Dropbox and transcripts were completed by a service obtained by the University of Calgary. In most cases, we returned transcripts to participants for the purpose of member checking, allowing participants two weeks to provide feedback. No transcripts were returned with editorial comments. In some instances, drafts of the individual case descriptions were emailed to the school authority representatives for verification purposes.

Case One: Purple Lilac School Division

Purple Lilac Division (PLSD) is a rural jurisdiction with 6500 students, in 35 schools served by 320 teachers in situated in the northern portion of the province. The following sections capture the main ideas from central office leaders, principals, and teachers on the subject of professional growth planning, supervision, and evaluation. We synthesized responses in each section with respect to (a) how participants understood growth, supervision and evaluation, and the processes involved in implementing these; (b) perceived strengths and challenges regarding implementation of TGSE policy, and (c) potential improvements for policy implementation.

Teacher Growth in Purple Lilac School Division

There was overall support for the TGSE policy in PLSD; participants described the policy as necessary for establishing teaching excellence as a priority and expectation not only within individual schools, but also across PLSD and throughout the province. Teacher growth was conceptualized in terms of continual learning and improvement, and reflection on one's knowledge and pedagogy in accordance with the *Teaching Quality Standard* (TQS) (Government of Alberta, 1997). PLSD teachers were provided with a customized professional growth-planning template, which outlined the school and division goals. PLSD priorities – the "Everyday 4" – included creating welcoming, caring schools, teaching and learning for the 21st century, literacy, and numeracy. Teachers were expected to align their growth plan with these goals. Growth planning was considered a professional responsibility, all teachers reported

completing and submitting plans to their principals. The division offered sessions to teachers on creating an effective growth plan. The extent to which growth plans were utilized, however, was contingent upon career stage and contract conditions.

Some teachers reported that aligning their professional growth plans with school and/or division goals, was helpful for creating structure and focusing their goals in areas they might not have otherwise considered. Beginning teachers especially valued the opportunity to reflect on their practice in a formalized way. A more common perception, however, was that the expectation to align with school/division goals was a restriction on teachers' autonomy and professional judgment. This teacher's comment reflects this:

> It's becoming more prescribed. We are now directed to link it in to school goals. Link it in to your district goals. It's moving away from your own professional development. What you need to develop to what the school wants you to develop. For me, professional development isn't mine. It's someone else telling me how to grow: "Here's what we want you to move to so you're focused on numeracy, literacy, technology, 21st century."

Those who taught outside of core subjects were especially impacted by the expectation to align with the literacy and numeracy foci, but understood that the requirement came from central office. One teacher put it quite simply: "[*the growth plan] has become less ours and more theirs.*"

Principals were optimistic about the alignment between teacher professional growth planning and school and division goals. They valued a consistent approach as a form of quality assurance, but they also recognized teachers' growth and planning were potentially hindered:

> It helps with at least a little bit of consistency so when you have the transfer of a principal from one school to another school, then there's an easy process in there to follow, or a teacher goes from one school to another school – there's some consistency along there. I do like that part, but I do understand the restrictiveness part.

The open-endedness of the TQS was appreciated, but central office leaders identified a challenge with assessing teachers' growth with respect to the indicators. The expectation that teachers develop competencies in First Nations culture was a central concern, for example, as noted by this division leader:

> I'm not sure how you measure someone's background knowledge and understanding. Through supervision, you may see that if you're in a social studies classroom quickly. But will you be able to determine that in math class?

The lack of specificity and the absence of standardized metrics meant PLSD leaders would have to "*figure out how they're going to do that*."

A challenge most often reported with respect to teacher growth was principals did not engage in meaningful discussion with all teachers regarding their professional growth. There was a discrepancy in perception about the value of professional growth planning between beginning and experienced teachers. Beginning teachers valued the process and the support they received, including sessions on how to create a growth plan. But experienced teachers viewed it as a perfunctory exercise to satisfy a policy: "*…we make a mockery of the growth plan. Veteran guys go, 'Okay, another one. Change the year on the form, because there's nothing that follows up on it.'*"

Some principals admitted that despite their intentions to regard the growth plan as a "living document," they lacked sufficient time to meet with all teachers. The context of their school had implications for how well principals were able to fulfill their role as instructional leaders in this regard.

The following suggestions about the teacher growth process were offered in the focus group interviews:

1. Strike a balance between standardizing growth plans in alignment school/district goals, and providing flexibility for teachers to create meaningful growth plans according to their pedagogical and epistemological needs;
2. Make the process meaningful for experienced teachers by engaging in authentic dialogue at multiple points throughout the school year; and
3. Continue to provide multiple opportunities at the school and division level for teachers to engage in professional development, and to allow teachers to opt out and choose learning opportunities that meet their specific needs.

Teacher Supervision in Purple Lilac School Division

In the last three years, PLSD has made supervision a major focus, according to central office leaders. Organization of an Administrators' Institute was a focus of the past year. The Administrators' Institute included PD support through sessions with the Alberta Teachers' Association on effective supervision, templates to support meaningful follow-up conversations with teachers, and practice sessions on observation and feedback using YouTube videos.

Releasing principals from teaching was a structural change to enable principals to visit classrooms regularly. The division expected principals to visit each classroom five times per year. The most commonly reported approach to supervision was what principals described as "drive-byes" and "dip-sticking." Principals and vice principals were the primary agents of

supervision, although department heads and teachers were also encouraged to participate in this process.

Teachers enjoyed principals' informal visits to their classrooms, as long as principals clearly communicated the purpose for their visits and it was part of the school culture. They preferred frequent visits—planned and unplanned—that would provide principals with a true picture of the classroom environment. Teachers believed that the Administrators' Institute enabled principals to do this.

Teachers perceived that supervision was more effective when teachers were able to request that principals note certain aspects of their teaching or classroom during their visits. Principals talked about this as a strength as well, and shared ideas, such as having teachers indicate areas for feedback on a whiteboard or sticky on the classroom door so that the principal would know on what to focus.

Teachers also appreciated when department heads and other peers provided these kinds of informal visits, because mutually beneficial discussions about teaching took place, and they appreciated having varying perspectives on their teaching performance. Importantly, teachers experienced supervision as a benefit when they could have subject-specific discussions. PLSD had division-wide cohorts for some subjects (e.g. math), and teachers felt this form of collaboration across the division was useful for supporting their development.

Despite being released from teaching, time to conduct the required amount of supervision was an enduring challenge for principals, as this principal noted:

I struggle with regular, ongoing supervision because I'll be going for a few days and then I'll have to stop because there are three deadlines. Literally, your supervision ends because you're so engulfed with that and replying to email, then you jump back into it a little bit later... I know it's a successful day if I can get into one or maybe two [classrooms]. Just not realistic.

Based on teachers' comments it seemed that regular supervision was not routine at all schools, and not always routine for experienced teachers. One experienced teacher emphasized the need for principals to establish supervision as part of the school culture to eliminate teachers feeling suspicious and anxious: "*Why would they be in a veteran's room? Why all of a sudden are they in the back of your room?*"

Teachers were aware of discrepancies between different schools in the division, suggesting it was not a "level playing field" and that some teachers were "over-supervised" while others were "under-supervised." The authenticity of the process was jeopardized when

principals rushed to fulfill their supervision quota. These were exceptions, and in fact, central office staff indicated principals were diligent at keeping a log of their classroom visits, and "*some of them have gone as far as to keep notes on what they've given as feedback*." The division's aim for consistency indicated it was a division priority.

Because supervision was as an "informal" and "continual" process, it was a non-threatening way for teachers to improve their practice. One teacher described supervision as formative feedback, contrasting this with evaluation as summative. Teachers, principals and central office leaders were in agreement that supervision was a transparent process, and one that included open dialogue. From a division perspective, supervision was an important step in ensuring teaching excellence, which meant division leaders expected principals to do more than affirm teachers: "it can't always be good feedback, there has to be some suggestions for improvement." Principals emphasized their role as "supportive," and believed "constructive coaching" was a central element of the supervisory process that led to enhanced relationships with teachers. Teachers expressed supervision as a necessary process to prevent teachers from failure. There was a fine line between supervision and evaluation.

The following suggestions about teacher supervision were offered in the focus group interviews:

1. Supervision is effective when it is a cultural component of the school. Building trust by clearly communicating to teachers the purposes of, and approach to, supervision enhances the process.
2. When teachers identify the focus of supervision, and principals follow up with helpful discussions about their practice, teachers view supervision as a valuable aspect of their growth.
3. Innovations such as the Administrators' Institute positively enhance principals' ability to be effective and confident with supervision, but some principals still find supervision to be a "gray area," suggesting that ongoing education would be helpful.
4. Managerial expectations and requirements continue to make it difficult for principals to find the time to implement consistent and regular supervision; therefore, continuing to examine ways to alleviate time pressures, for example by distributing the role of supervision among others (e.g. experienced teachers, department heads), may increase principals' ability to perform their role as instructional leaders.

Teacher Evaluation in Purple Lilac School Division

In participants' testimony, evaluation was a clearly defined and understood process. There were primarily two circumstances under which evaluation was understood: for certification and employment purposes for beginning teachers and those seeking continuous contracts, and to address concerns about teaching competence among experienced teachers.

With respect to the latter, a central office leader described the official line between supervision and evaluation as follows:

For me it's very clear. When a teacher needs evaluation, I'll say, I've supervised you, but now I'm at the point where I'm giving you notice officially. You're not meeting this standard. Here's why you're not meeting the standard. Here's what needs to be done to meet the standard. It's all formalized now.

There was direct implementation of the TQS in evaluation procedures, and evaluation was clearly a requirement for beginning teachers, but not experienced ones. The division mandates ten evaluation periods with teachers—six planned and four random. Teachers and principals to be insufficient, as it did not adequately match teachers' growth and development perceived the provincial requirement for two evaluations for beginning teachers.

The strength of teacher evaluation was that the processes seemed relatively straightforward compared to supervision. These participants understood when evaluation was required, and for beginning teachers, principals had clearly laid out the expectations. From the principals' perspectives, establishing benchmarks of excellence was challenging. One principal articulated a concern with the interpretive nature of evaluation:

I would like more developed criteria about levels of excellence…because I think there's a misunderstanding of what is excellent….and I think some people are kind of saying, "Well, I'm doing that"… but I think there are different levels of achievement.

Exemplars were suggested as one way to complement metrics so that personal bias would not reduce evaluation into an "individual interpretation." Further, it was suggested that other factors might contaminate the assessment of teacher competence. For example, one said:

Maybe that person does a little extra in your school, does a little more coaching, so maybe the relationships – like, you're going to make something out of nothing if there isn't an example of what [the competency] means. It would be nice if that was more specific. Tell me exactly what this means. Show me some examples.

Principals wanted assurance that teachers transferring from other schools held the same mark of excellence. Teachers pondered the same problem:

There are some open questions there and it's left up to the interpretation of, say, the principal. And I've seen principals interpret the TQS quite differently because there are some areas that are not specific, and that's my concern. For similar reasons, teachers did

not want all their evaluations conducted by the same person. They emphasized the need for evaluations to be conducted by a principal who had understanding of the school's context, but also felt an outsider could provide a fresh perspective.

For similar reasons, teachers did not want all of their evaluations conducted by the same person. They emphasized the need for evaluations to be conducted by a principal who had an understanding of the school's context, but also felt that an outsider could provide a fresh perspective.

Central office leaders likewise expressed concern over the vagueness in the language of competencies. They also suggested that provincial coordination of tools and resources for evaluation would alleviate duplication: "*I sometimes see so much time, human time, and I saw money and resources wasted when we could be creating it provincially and sharing all the knowledge provincially.*"

Experienced teachers' perspectives on evaluation in Purple Lilac School Division may be distilled from the following comments:

I think that there needs to be more frequent evaluations of teachers, because you basically get your permanent contract and then you're not evaluated ever again unless there are glaring issues, like you're in the newspaper for something.

I think that a lot of people get into the profession and, we have all known people like this, who have carved in their little niche somewhere and they stay at that same school for 35 years and they're very mediocre.

Some confusion regarding the distinction between teacher competence and teacher conduct was evident, but at the heart of the problem for them was that evaluation was something only beginning or failing teachers experienced. Veteran teachers craved evaluation to ensure teacher excellence, and as proof of rigour in the profession.

It was interesting that both teachers and principals gave examples of other professions – law, nursing, and accounting—that required evaluation at regular intervals. Moreover, it was important that evaluation be more than compliance to policy. An example was provided of a teacher who underwent four evaluations under different temporary contracts before obtaining a continuous contract, and this was characterized as "contrived" evaluation, completed for contract purposes but offering little value for the teacher's learning. Most importantly, they wanted evaluation processes that contributed to their growth in the same way as professional growth planning and supervision.

The rural context was an important consideration, because teachers felt that if evaluation was conducted with experienced teachers only when competence was in question, then remediation or termination had potential social repercussions for that teacher, as well as for colleagues who could then experience awkwardness when seeing the teacher in the community.

The following suggestions about teacher evaluation were offered in the focus groups

1. Evaluation must be an ongoing, authentic process for all teachers.
2. Establishing benchmarks or exemplars would standardize excellence throughout the division.

Leadership Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation in Purple Lilac School Division

We asked participants for their thoughts on whether and/or how the processes of growth, supervision and evaluation of teachers might inform those for principals and superintendents. Two key ideas emerged from those discussions. First, participants felt similar processes would ensure leadership excellence, and they proposed evaluation should be regular and consistently implemented. Second, it was suggested that evaluation could be more effective if non-partisan colleagues of similar rank and an experiential background were responsible for the process. Principals wanted to know how they "measured up" compared to other divisions.

Emerging Themes from the Purple Lilac Case

The *Teacher, Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation Policy 2.1.5* (TGSE) (Government of Alberta, 1998) served as the basis of the conceptual framework applied to the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006). We asked participants about what they thought growth, supervision, and evaluation meant, and about their knowledge of approaches, processes, and experiences. The following themes were evident, concerning these concepts:

1. Teachers' ongoing learning and continual growth were important. Beginning teachers experience the process positively, but experienced teachers did not find it as meaningful. There was a general appetite by participants for improving the professional growth planning process to support new and experienced teachers.
2. Growth and supervision were perceived as kindred processes. They were characterized as formative assessment. Evaluation was clearly understood as a contractual requirement for new teachers seeking certification and continuous employment. Leaders tended to view evaluation as an administrative and labour requirement.
3. A balance between flexibility and standardization was desirable for teacher growth planning, supervision, and evaluation..
4. Quality supervision and evaluation was impeded by lack of time, resources, and metrics to guide interpretation of the *Teaching Quality Standard* (TQS) (Government of Alberta, 1997).

Unequivocally, policy was viewed as a way to ensure teaching excellence in Purple Lilac School Division. The division's commitment to ensuring quality teaching was illustrated by participants' full awareness of the Teaching Quality Standard. Perceived needs for growth included (a) consistency in implementation across schools and for all teachers, (b) authenticity in the process through clear communication and meaningful dialogue, and (c) supports for both principals and teachers. Teacher supervision and evaluation were considered as complementary processes throughout their careers for ensuring these add value to ongoing professionalism.

Case Two: Lodgepole Pine School District

The Lodgepole Pine School District (LPSD) serves approximately 98,000 school students in a large Alberta's city. With 210 schools and 5000 teachers it is one of Canada's largest districts. The following sections capture the main ideas from central office leaders, principals, and teachers on the subject of professional growth planning, supervision, and evaluation. We synthesized responses in each section with respect to (a) how participants understood growth, supervision and evaluation, and the processes involved in implementing these; (b) perceived strengths and challenges regarding implementation of TGSE policy, and (c) potential improvements for policy implementation.

Teacher Growth in the Lodgepole Pine School District

Educators in all eight focus group interviews expressed appreciation for their school district's sustained, coherent, and shared focus on student and educator learning over the past decade. Participants at every level articulated the commitment to these highly intentional, and research-informed strategies and actions that have been intensively employed to develop the capacity of formal and informal leaders across the system.

Though the focus on the TGSE policy is not emphasized at the system level to the degree that it was when first implemented 20 years ago, participants described an array of exemplary efforts that foster teacher growth. Issues were raised and a number of suggestions were offered. A system leader observed, "*we are doing the growth piece and I think we're actually doing better at the supervision piece for the most part but it isn't necessarily in relation to a TPGP.*"

Teacher and principal descriptions of experiences with the teacher professional growth planning process ranged from an unhelpful bureaucratic routine through to an integrated set of collaborative, reflective, and meaningful learning processes with significant impacts on practice. A number of participants indicated that the stage is for successful and meaningful attention to growth plans when the school leader's focus is more solidly on teacher and student learning.

One teacher participant offered an example of a practice that underlined the importance of principal modelling:

In our school, we are asked to get into groups of four or five...

We share our goals and our plan to reach our goals with each other, and we sign forms that the principal offers to keep in her office, if we like. And then at the end of the year, she will bring them out, we'll get back into those same groups, and go over the success rate of our goals. That is really all that is expected of us, and the principal, her TPGP is included, as is the assistant principal's plan.

Another teacher spoke about the impact her growth plan and evidence of its impact:

Working with teachers this year in my capacity as a learning leader, one of my goals is building my own and others' capacity in literacy instruction. I've felt that there has been a significant impact on my own and others' learning, through leading professional development and facilitating professional learning communities.

Some of the evidence that I collected to demonstrate this improvement included video evidence of student work brought forward for teachers to discuss. It includes using artifacts and a template for teacher's reflections, and using the Teaching Effectiveness Framework to highlight progress, like the TEF rubric to highlight where we are right now, and hoping to highlight where teachers think they are in the future.

Another form of collaborative dialogue used in some schools is the "fireside chat." In such settings teachers can schedule time with administration to share their questions, and, in some cases, their self-reflections on current practice and future professional goals. Self-reflection questions might include: What has been successful? What impact has practice, related to the growth plan, had on student learning? What do I need to improve? And, what are the things that I really want to learn about? Such questions can also be used for self-reflection, as one teacher noted:

I personally feel that it's really important to help us reflect on our practice in an ongoing way, and bring us always back to learning and to the TQS and to the teacher effectiveness framework. I find that yes, it's work, but it's good because it forces you to go back and reflect on your practice.

Whether this is the most effective way to do it, there's always room for improvement. But I think it's a good practice to create our goals, just like we expect the students to self-assess and to take the feedback and improve, I think our own practice should promote that growth mindset and that improvement mindset, and that lifelong learning.

Almost all of the views shared about the influence that school and system goals should have on teacher growth plans were supportive of this practice. From this teacher's perspective, it has always been beneficial to align personal, school, and system:

I've always seen the connection, and especially in the last couple of years... I've created a Teacher Professional Growth Plan, which has always been personalized for me. I've used a couple of different templates, but it was always about the same concepts, including the learning goals, the strategies, the resources that I'm going to try to use, and always connected to teaching quality standards.

At the district level there was some worry under the new provincial Alberta Teachers' Association collective agreement about the erosion of the principal's purview to ask teachers to link their growth plans to school and district priorities.

A number of suggestions for improving the teacher professional growth planning practices came forward in the focus groups, including:

1. Provide opportunities to work with colleagues to reflect about teaching practices and to seek ideas to strengthen strategies for improvement;
2. A TQS or TEF rubric could be used for a more flexible, less bureaucratic self-assessment and growth planning process; and
3. Setting up planning sessions to support reflective processes between colleagues and using evidence to determine success and next steps was suggested.

Teacher Supervision in the Lodgepole Pine School District

Participants talked about LPSD's ongoing emphasis on instructional leadership over the past several years. School and system leaders spoke about an increasingly coherent, shared approach to leadership learning spearheaded by area and service unit directors. They further indicated that the career pathway to the principalship is also changing through this heightened attention to teaching and learning. Those moving into school leadership positions are now more frequently educators who have embraced and accelerated their personal professional learning agendas in tandem with the system's focus on teaching and learning. The focus on professional leadership learning and educator engagement through overlapping professional learning communities resonates with the teachers and principals who participated in our focus group interviews.

Each of the participating principals indicated appreciation for the district's support of their instructional leadership development. Within their schools, they indicate that they are expected to be knowledgeable of the quality of their teachers' instruction. Principals viewed leading teacher learning as an important part of their role. District leaders felt that teacher growth benefited from the fact that principals "*are supervising or supporting them better now, because school development or in-school professional learning has gotten much better.*"

A teacher, who serves as a learning leader in her school, articulated the following description of supervision:

Teacher supervision to me means being present, ensuring effective teaching and quality teaching through providing feedback and gathering evidence, and analyzing this evidence with teachers too, to identify the impact on student learning. Following up on PD initiatives to support teacher implementation [is important]. Sometimes we bring a lot of PD, but it stops there. We don't know [if it's working] unless we help teachers with implementation and bringing back evidence to discuss the impact.

Teacher Evaluation in the Lodgepole Pine School District

Although the importance of teacher evaluation was underlined and many positive aspects of the TGSE evaluation process were identified, a number of issues related to current approaches surfaced in the focus group interviews. Specific components of the evaluation approach were seen to be clear, fair and professional, including the provision of notice, development of shared understanding of criteria within the TQS, and using evidence from multiple sources over a specified time period to inform a principal's reasoned judgment of whether or not a teacher is meeting, not meeting, or exceeding the standard.

Three of the teacher evaluation issues identified had to do with time. Participants at every level were concerned about intensive emphasis on evaluation at the onset of a teacher's career, followed by ongoing supervision, rather than scheduled, periodic evaluations. The first timing concern is captured through the words of a system leader, "*my overall thoughts are that the process occurs too quickly for new teachers and that they need a much longer... time before the actual evaluation takes place.*" A second central office colleague agreed, "*There has to be a period of growth. We have to give people the opportunity to grow with support and supervision before we move in to evaluation.*" Another said, "*we're asking principals to go in within the first two months of school with a brand new teacher and say, 'I'm coming to evaluate.'*"

Another participant saw the opportunity of early teacher evaluation, if the focus were primarily on growth:

I think the strength of the approach is helping teachers even at the very beginning, and mostly at the very beginning, to realize their strengths and help in supporting them with identifying areas for growth in relation to the TQS. But it shouldn't stop there, and the focus, in my opinion, should not be merely evaluation. It should be the development of teachers. So again, back to promoting a growth mindset, an improvement mindset, rather than, "Oh, I mastered the teaching skills and I'm stuck here."

The second recurring time-related frustration is the amount of time required to complete teacher evaluations in larger schools. "*The evaluation process is so arduous, because it's such a time-consuming process, there is no time for supervision. We have schools that have seven, nine, 14 new teachers being evaluated,*" observed one central leader. A number of principal participants cited the large numbers of required, early career evaluations as a major impediment to their instructional leadership work.

The length of time that it takes to adequately deal with a teacher's practice that is not meeting the standard is third time-related challenge. Frustrations with managing the transition from supervision to evaluation were cited as a related issue. School and system leaders indicated the lack of shared understanding of the TGSE policy's distinction between teacher supervision and teacher evaluation mentioned in the supervision section above created additional problems in the context of dealing with teaching practice flagged through ongoing supervision as practice that "may not be meeting the teaching quality standard."

Another teacher evaluation challenge brought up in the focus groups has to do with making the process more meaningful. From one central leader's viewpoint, "*many evaluation reports are meaningless really. They don't always speak to the person... I think they often speak to what* that *principal values, not necessarily the Teaching Effectiveness Framework or the TQS*."

Several voices advocated for a greater emphasis on instructional leadership, professional learning, and forms of ongoing supervision that would address teachers' desires for more regular feedback. As one teacher noted, "*I just saw evaluation as another thing that I'd have to go through. But my principal's in my room all the time, so I feel that she is aware of what's going on, so I feel like the evaluation is ongoing*." A central office leader pushed strongly for a simpler approach:

> *That's where, to me, the issue always goes back to the actual process, and simplifying the process. We need to beef up the supervision part and really streamline the evaluation part because people are spending so much time evaluating those people they must or the letters for the temps that there is no room for the other piece [which is] ongoing assessment, and again, we don't like that idea because we think of evaluation as this monstrous thing, which it doesn't have to be. It can be very streamlined but we should have checks and balances.*

Individual and focus group interview ideas for improving the teacher evaluation portion for the TGSE policy included:

1. Enhance ongoing supervision to proactively address problematic situations; and
2. Rather than implementing cyclical evaluations, add the requirement for the provision of yearly written feedback to teachers, based on ongoing supervision.

Leadership Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation in the Lodgepole Pine School District

In relation to the three draft provincial standards on teaching and leadership quality, all three levels (teachers, principals, and central office leaders) supported the idea of growth, supervision, and evaluation for principals and district leaders. In fact, growth planning, supervisory conversations, and evaluation are already in place for many principals and central

office leaders. One participant suggested that there is a significant opportunity to align what it means to practice professionally from the teacher right up to the superintendent.

In each standard statement, quality practice is based on the professional's reading of the context and the application of the professional's judgment about the professional knowledge and skills that will most likely lead to optimum learning for *all* students. All three of the standard documents are structured in the same manner: one standard, six to nine required competencies, and several optional indicators. For the first time in this province, there will be quite a strong through line in the professional practice expectations for teachers, principals, and superintendents.

Emerging Themes from the Lodgepole Pine Case

The *Teacher, Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy 2.1.5* (TGSE) (Government of Alberta, 1998) served as the basis of the conceptual framework applied to the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We asked participants about what they thought growth, supervision, and evaluation meant, and about their knowledge of approaches, processes, and experiences. Five themes emerge from our analysis of LPSD data collected:

1. The system is focused on teaching and learning in a persistent, highly intentional, and ongoing manner.
2. These efforts are coherently organized about the work of key respected scholars and are implemented with the support of credible internal and external experts.
3. Teachers' ongoing learning and continual growth are important, but connection to the TPGP varies significantly from school to school.
4. The distinctions between supervision and evaluation are not widely understood.
5. Evaluation was clearly understood as a contractual requirement for new teachers seeking certification and continuous employment and is seen by many as primarily an administrative and labour requirement.

Case Three: Black Cottonwood School Division

The 22 schools of Black Cottonwood School Division (BCSD) are located on the edge of one of the province's largest urban centres. A teaching staff of 190 serves its 4500 students.

Teacher Growth in Black Cottonwood School Division

Central office leaders and school leaders shared their appreciation for the front matter of the existing TGSE policy, its philosophy, and the way in which it distinguishes between supervision and evaluation. All participants described a previous professional growth process in the division that involved teachers being offered a variety of exemplars and templates for goal setting, a variety of one-on-one meetings with principals to discuss goals, and sporadic check-ins regarding goal achievement.

One school leader explained:

The administrator meets with the teacher to review, have the conversation, discuss what else we can do to help you support your goals and so forth. We don't meet at the very end of the year, no kind of formal meeting, to wind it up.

A teacher reinforced this process flow: "*We've had it in the past where we're supposed to sign up when we can. And sometimes we just don't.*"

Similarly, central office and school leaders' experiences with the growth planning process were not always productive:

My experience when I was in the school... and I would say it's a pretty normal experience... was the principals would meet at the beginning. The teachers would sometimes reluctantly put some growth plan together. And you look at some of them and say, okay... but then there was never really any kind of follow-up with it. And at the end of the year, sometimes some of them would put a little bit of meat to that. But for the most part, it was just, okay... and then it disappeared. Then it was over. There was no sustainability in that action.

Teachers echoed these thoughts about the conventional planning model and its lack of effectiveness in causing professional growth. One teacher stated that, "I found that between schools and admin, the format of what it's supposed to look like and how many goals there are supposed to be are always very different, and we wind up with all these random different things."

Goal alignment and team-based collaboration was noted to be effective in making the growth planning process more consistent throughout the division with greater impact on teacher growth. One principal explained:

When teachers come to see us in January or February, for our meeting, they'll bring a document to us that shows what the school's working on, what they developed as a team, and then individually what they want to do. And quite often you'll see it correlate. Teachers might say 'my team's really interested, I'm really interested, but I'm also interested in this.'

So, we talk about that and offer support. And then at the end of the year, instead of meeting with the administration, they meet with their colleagues, and their last team meeting of the year is usually a lunch where they review their PGPs together.

Several teachers noted the importance of including reflection in the growth plan process. One suggested that, "*The model's been really good, because it gives us the time and space to actually do the learning and the planning and the implementing and the reflecting. It's all built in.*" Another explained that, "*We found this year we could reflect on our PGP and put in our professional development. And then it tied together very well. What I signed up for is something I wanted to grow in.*"

However, others believed that growth plans played a tangential role in professional learning, in some cases, were seen as a "distraction" (Central Office Leader). These limitations

caused the division to move towards a professional growth model that focused on team planning; goals that were more aligned with school, divisional, and individual priorities; frequent collaborative conversations about goals and growth in teams and with school leaders; and reflective practice that was central to the growth process.

The following suggestions were made in focus groups for the teacher growth portion of the TGSE policy:

1. Build increasing opportunities for reflection into the growth planning process
2. Require the growth plan to be viewed and frequently reviewed by school leaders and collaborative teams.
3. Make professional growth a more purposeful, collaborative, and sustained process.
4. Encourage more accountability throughout the process by increasing levels of conversation between principals, teachers, and teams about growth and growth planning.
5. Encourage the inclusion of increased measures and evidence of growth.
6. Integrate professional growth time into existing professional development structures at the school and division levels.
7. Balance the individual and system priorities as part of professional growth.
8. Use prescriptive exemplars of practice to guide growth planning to support a more robust model.

Teacher Supervision in Black Cottonwood School Division

To describe their understanding of supervision, all participants made reference to the division's distinct policy, which is referred to as Enhanced Supervision. The division put protocols and practices in place to specifically enact the existing provincial policy.

For example, a central office leader said, "*supervision is a form of evaluation for growth and improvement and shouldn't be evaluative in nature, but it can lead to evaluation.*" Enhanced supervision was described by another central office leader as follows:

Each administrator has selected a quarter of their staff. And over a four-year cycle, they do what we call a more enhanced supervision model, where there are more formal conversations and discussions... Not just the straight, normal walk-throughs that would occur.

[In this more formal part of the cycle]there would be a discussion about, "What would you like me to observe? What do you want to grow in?" and at the end of that, an opportunity for the administrator and the teacher to have a more formal kind of letter, indicating, "Well, this is what we've worked on. Here are some strengths that we saw. Here are some things that you could still consider." So, it's a little bit more attentive on both points: on the administrator, but also on the teacher.

A teacher described her experience with this process: *I love the idea of having admin and peers, department heads and curriculum leaders, division leaders, whoever, come in and give me feedback. That's awesome."*

Another teacher confirmed:

I always found that observers would notice things that I wouldn't even really realize that I was doing, that were good ideas. I think that, in terms of working together as team... If I recognize I did that, and that seemed to work really well, because someone else noticed that I did it, then it just provides the awareness that I should probably share that good strategy for teaching.

A principal reinforced the idea that making Enhanced Supervision a requirement of being a principal forced him to visit classrooms and work with teachers on their professional growth:

I like that our division started this enhanced supervision model, where it's official. We are mandated by our division to get into classrooms on a cyclical basis, so that we don't have teachers sitting 20 years with nobody touching base with them, talking to them.

Participants noted a number of strengths in their distinct interpretation of the provincial policy on supervision: honoring professionalism of the teacher; increasing incidences of reflective conversations; focusing on growth; involving numerous professionals in the process of observation and providing feedback (peers, department heads, curriculum leaders, central office leaders, principals, vice principals); sharing a common understanding of the criteria of effective teaching built upon the Teaching Quality Standard; and increasing visibility in classrooms to provide guidance and support.

Before their movement toward an Enhanced Supervision model, central office leaders and principals had identified a number of challenges associated with the term *supervision*:

1. a lack of clarity in the process of actually supervising teacher practice;
2. the time commitment required;
3. a lack of consistency in implementing the existing policy; and
4. ensuring high levels of quality teaching practice.

The following suggestions were made in focus groups for the teacher supervision portion of the TGSE policy:

1. Mandate cycles of observation,
2. Focus more on a team approach,
3. Formalize criteria for observations, qne
4. Embed observational time available for purposeful and focused presence in classrooms followed by feedback.

5. Identify best supervisory practices.
6. Encourage an explicit link between supervision and evaluation.

Teacher Evaluation in Black Cottonwood School Division

All participants viewed evaluation as an opportunity to actualize the Teaching Quality Standard, rather than it being a punitive process. Participants understood the associated meanings of teacher evaluation, specifically, that it entailed a judgment about the quality of teaching. One central office leader said:

> "*That's what we are looking for when we say we are doing ten visitations. Four of those can be walkthroughs… we only require two full class observations. And then the other types of visitations…which is three to five minutes. And we have a 15-minute visit and a full class visit. If I put those in a category, I'd call them both clinical supervision, because they are based upon a pre-defined kind of behavioral evaluation tool*."

Participants noted that, even though judgments were being made about the quality of teaching when evaluation was undertaken, the process was also perceived as being fair. One teacher noted that, "*Only one out of the four reasons to evaluate is negative, the rest are focused on growth or advancement.*" Participants agreed that the evaluation policy was clearly laid out and that the criteria were fair and transparent. A teacher stated that, "*The evaluation reasons and purposes, the process, criteria, standards, timelines, and possible outcomes are fair. It's transparent.*"

A central office leader agreed: "*I think when you look at the openness of the process its very good. Teachers know the criteria…they understand the process of how they will be evaluated.*" A principal concurred by stating, "*I think that the strength of it is that it is laid out clearly from the moment you start teaching.*"

Participants contended that the competencies for effective teaching as outlined in the Teaching Quality Standard were not sufficiently illustrative to provide specific guidelines for evaluation purposes, so the school division developed nine prescriptive exemplars of effective teaching. These exemplars were linked with the growth, supervision, and evaluation practices. A school leader explained that:

> *This gives us a chance to say 'here's what the standards are' and really go through that with teachers. With our evaluation document, it kind of takes these pieces and enhances it a little bit, goes into more detail about what that looks like as a teacher, and basically, it's very clear what we'd expect what you need to demonstrate successfully to be a teacher.*

However, teachers and school leaders had varying understandings of teacher supervision and evaluation as defined by the TGSE policy. The terms *supervision* and *evaluation* were often

used interchangeably. Superintendents understood the difference when they built the Enhanced Supervision model to guide the practices of the division, but this teacher's comment about evaluation highlights the miscue in understanding: "*When I think of evaluation, I think of someone coming in and sort of giving me a check-up or a report card about how I am doing. I think of supervision as, I've done something wrong, this is serious, and it's going to go on my permanent record.*"

Participants acknowledged that the existing TGSE policy required too many steps before a teacher can be moved onto a formal process of evaluation and that the process is onerous and not prescriptive enough. Once again, the Enhanced Supervision model was put in place to formalize ongoing supervision with new and continuing contract teachers, without having to impose the evaluation procedures as outlined in the TGSE policy.

As identified by the following quotes, challenges were expressed about the implementation of the existing evaluation aspect of the TGSE section of the policy:

When there are problems it is hard being up front and honest.

I'm just bringing a whole bunch of effort on my part, and is it worth it?

Where are you going to get the most bang for your buck? Maybe you get the law of diminishing returns when you evaluate.

What scares me is quantifying things and saying you have to do good professional development and jump through the hoops.

I think you would damage a lot of the relationships and connections.

Participants acknowledged their support for the evaluation portion of the TGSE policy, however, they also felt that the policy could be improved by a greater emphasis on supervision rather than evaluation.

The following suggestions were made in focus groups for the teacher evaluation portion of the TGSE policy:

1. Enhance the rigor of the evaluation protocol;
2. Clarify the implicit and explicit meanings of and connections between the terms *supervision* and *evaluation*;
3. Consider consistent evaluative instruments across all jurisdictions in the province; and
4. Consider differentiated evaluation procedures for beginning, experienced, and new context-teachers.

Leadership Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation in Black Cottonwood Schools

In relation to the pending provincial standards for principal and superintendent leadership, both the principal and central office focus groups agreed that a similar policy would be value for school leaders. Principals indicated that, currently, they are being evaluated on a rotational basis. Part of the evaluation entails a self-reflection and part contains feedback from the superintendent. When asked, "Do you think there should be a provincial policy that describes this process?" the most frequent answer was, "*Yes. Absolutely.*" When asked about whether a similar process should be used for teachers holding a superintendent designation, uniformity in answer was noted. Principals felt that "everybody should be accountable."

When teachers were asked, "What are your thoughts about the development of a policy similar to the teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation policy, but for principals?" They too indicated that the division had a policy in place for the evaluation of principals. They felt that a policy similar to the TGSE should be in place for principals. When they were asked if that policy should also extend to the superintendent, they were hesitant to answer yes or no; the general sense was that they were unsure who would conduct such an evaluation.

Central office leaders believed a policy similar to the TGSE should be considered for principals as well as central office leaders. This central office leader expressed the consensus of the group:

> *I think it would be ideal to have the same kind of situation for principals and superintendents. I like the idea that they're moving in that direction. Because, just like any other professional person, we should want to know how we could grow, how we could move forward. So yeah, I think it's a great direction to move.*

Emerging Themes from the Black Cottonwood School Division Case

The *Teacher, Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy 2.1.5* (Government of Alberta, 1998) served as the basis of the conceptual framework applied to the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We asked participants about what they thought growth, supervision, and evaluation meant, and about their knowledge of approaches, processes, and experiences. The following themes were evident in their responses:

1. Limited work was being done with teacher professional growth plans. However, teacher growth, in a more holistic sense, was important and processes were in place to support it.
2. Enhanced Supervision was a process put into place to ensure that principals were interacting with teachers' instructional practices throughout their careers. This model was created and implemented from a belief that the TGSE Policy did not offer enough direction.
3. However, time was an issue for conducting the Enhanced Supervision practices, in addition to principals' responsibilities for teacher evaluation.

4. Support was apparent for a more defined process that includes guidelines and mandates for frequency and timelines for supervision and evaluation.
5. Teachers were very supportive of increasing opportunities for reflection to be built into the growth planning process, along with opportunities to reflect on their work directly with their principals.

Case Four: Cinquefoil Conseil Scolaire

Cinquefoil Conseil Scolaire is a composite board, operating 12 Catholic and 7 public schools. It offers French as a first language instruction to approximately 3200 students, in accord with constitutional guarantees under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Alberta School Act*. It employs approximately 350 teachers and other professionals.

The following sections capture impressions from central office leaders, principals, and teachers on the subject of professional growth planning, supervision and evaluation. We synthesized responses in each section with respect to (a) how participants understood growth, supervision and evaluation, and the processes involved in implementing these, (b) perceived strengths and challenges regarding implementation of TGSE policy, and (c) potential improvements for policy implementation.

As part of a comprehensive set of personnel policies for ensuring a francophone education of high quality, the Division has had a thorough teacher evaluation policy statement on its books since 1996. There are accompanying policies for (a) annually evaluating the overall leadership of the central office (since 2003), (b) for the Alberta School Boards Association to contractually review overall evaluation criteria, processes and timelines (since 2001), (c) for the evaluation of central office and school administrators (since 2003), (d) for mentoring new teachers in the division (since 2005), and (e) for recognizing staff service (since 2008, amended 2011).

These policies clearly articulate goals, values, criteria, linkages with a strategic plan, and divisions of responsibility. These statements are referenced to the Alberta *School Act*, and the ATA Code of Professional Conduct, not to the provincial *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy*. This makes this case study different from others in this chapter. No board policy statement relating to personnel evaluation has been amended or adjusted in the past decade.

Teacher Growth in Cinquefoil Conseil Scolaire

Under the direction of a new superintendent, principals have been required to develop school goals as part of the district's new Continuous Improvement Plan. This has had implications for teacher growth planning, since the expectation for principals to develop school goals in line with district goals has been extended to teachers, who are also required to develop growth plans that reflect district goals.

All participants discussed and embraced the notion of continuous improvement, but the new requirement for goal alignment created some ambiguities and tensions with respect to the content of teachers' professional growth plans. This new expectation dominated the discussion on teacher growth for teachers and principals, and while system leaders acknowledged that the new requirement "*doesn't please everybody*," they also anticipated that some adjustments would be required.

Central office participants reported that teacher growth plans were mandatory. For some teachers, growth planning drove decisions about professional development, such as which sessions they attended at Teachers' Convention, however, teachers have not consistently used the growth plans as vehicles for self-reflection or self-evaluation. Some saw the growth plan as a "work in progress," indicating that sometimes what they ended up working on did not match their growth plans.

One teacher admitted:

I don't reference back to it very often. It kind of changes as the year goes by because maybe…what I wrote down might not actually be what I needed. And I change it, but I don't change it in writing necessarily.

Thus, teachers were aware that growth planning is important, but plans seemed to become paper work rather than living interactions They expressed a desire for the growth plan to be meaningful, and for principals to use it as a focus for discussion. In previous years, principals had only periodically verified that teacher growth goals have been achieved at the end of the school year. While beginning teachers saw more value in growth plans, experienced teachers especially questioned the value of the process, since their experience was that once the plan was submitted, there was no follow-up discussion. While principals were aware of the connection between growth plans and the Teaching Quality Standard, not all teachers used the TQS to develop their plans.

Principals varied in their procedures and the evidence they required from teachers to demonstrate that growth goals have been attained. They reported meeting with teachers to discuss their growth plans, and we understood that they were diligent around this with beginning teachers. For some principals, the primary concern was supporting teachers to create growth plans that targeted their development with student outcomes in mind:

I've learned over the years to question certain things that certain teachers put in their professional growth plan because there tend to be some personal things. For example, "I will do more yoga so that I can feel better in the classroom," which is not a bad thing, but …there's an education that needed to be done between the principal and the teachers as far as what should be in that growth plan as far as your pedagogy et cetera... anything you do [in the TPGP] should be with the students' success in mind.

The legal implications around whether and/or to what extent principals had the authority to challenge teachers' goals on their growth plans were front of mind for other principals, however. One principal said, "*It's not clear exactly, legally, as far as the ATA, what we can impose or what we really should insist upon as far as content for the professional growth plan.*"

Another challenge from an administrator's point of view was that principals are members of the same professional association, and thus professional colleagues, but nevertheless in a position of responsibility and authority. These principals were cognizant of the ATA's position that growth plans should be self-directed by teachers, so they were unsure about mandating a strict alignment between teachers' goals and school and/or district goals. They felt caught, as one principal put it, between the "*bark and the tree.*" They were looking for guidance.

Individual and focus group interviews suggested that improvements could be made in the following ways:

1. Principals may benefit from more support in learning the balance between teachers' professional autonomy with respect to their growth plans, and district expectations for teachers' goals to align with district and school goals.

2. Teacher growth plans may be more meaningful for teachers at all career stages if feedback processes were part of regular practice.

This francophone school district is now introducing a fresh, more holistic approach that looks at teacher growth, supervision and evaluation in terms of a broader requirement for sustaining minority language education in an English-majority context. Given that many francophone teachers come from outside the province, the district has focused on three junctures during a professional's career to offer better support and thus better retain teachers in Alberta: (a) during their first two weeks of employment, (b) during their first two months of teaching, and (c) their first two years of their career with the board.

The goals appear to be able to assist francophone teachers from outside the province to better adjust to a new teaching context and to better match linguistic skill and teaching demands in a minority language situation. The practices also seem to uphold fair and equitable hiring practices within a small linguistic community. Central office people affirm that in light of these personalized approaches "*we've definitely focused more on the whole hiring process, and on engaging with the principals to identify and place the teachers on their personal profile.*"

Teacher Supervision in Cinquefoil Conseil Scolaire

Many of the participants described supervision in terms of ongoing dialogue between principals and teachers, yet it was evident that the line between supervision and evaluation was blurry. According to the central office participants, the district had been working on a collaborative framework to support new principals, in particular, to become instructional leaders

with the capacity to perform supervision effectively. Just as there was variation in the way supervision was conducted, teachers' experiences differed both in terms of the extent to which supervision happened, and how it supported the development of their practice.

One of the recent changes to supervision in the district that was reported by central office members was that the Assistant Superintendent, the Human Resource Director, and the Superintendent were spending time in classrooms of both new and experienced teachers. From a system perspective, *"The most important thing in supervision and evaluation and all of that, it's not a one day shot. Our big thing is follow up, follow up, follow up. So how you can demonstrate clearly that you have been following that teacher?"*

They linked teacher growth and supervision. They recognized that principals were unsure of, and in some cases, uncomfortable with, being instructional leaders, particularly those that did not see themselves as a "superstar in teaching." System leaders were aware of the need to support principals in developing their capacity as instructional leaders, and moving away from viewing the principalship as a management position only.

Principals also said that ideally supervision should be linked to teacher growth, but the time required to conduct regular supervision created challenges for bringing this ideal to fruition, as noted in the following:

> *Teacher growth should be connected with the supervision because it gives aim or a purpose for the supervision, and the conversation that follows. At least, that's in the ideal world…In reality I teach, and I'm the school principal of a very small school, so the reality is completely different from that…it's more about how I can help, and lots of quick walk-throughs.*

Various supervisory practices were used. One principal conducted supervision by informally chatting with students at the end of the day: "*When I do school supervision at the end of the day, as I let the students out, I say, 'Tell me something that you've learned today.' So you get the whole idea of what happened and the feeling that the kids have about it."*

Peer observation was another way supervision happens in *Centre Nord,* where the principal asks a teacher to observe another colleague. Such strategies, which focus on the impact of teaching rather than its direct observation, were viewed as a way to open up "a window of conversation" among professionals.

Another efficient strategy a principal used was to have a laptop handy when observing in a classroom so that the principal could send an email during the lesson offering feedback on something like questioning techniques, or describing what was witnessed regarding teacher and/or student actions. Follow-up discussions sometimes happened, and were more likely to occur with beginning teachers, than experienced ones.

Teachers were interested in ongoing feedback on both "strengths and weaknesses" and indicated that in the past, principals observed classrooms twice for contract purposes: *"They came in, they observed me two times, and that was the only time I've ever had a principal in my classroom, ever."*

Teachers recognized that the new superintendent was incorporating positive changes "for continued growth." One experienced teacher suggested that supervision could be conducted by someone other than the principal*, "seeing supervision as "support" and "help.."*

We heard about peer observations in the principal focus group where one principal talked about the "window of conversation" that opened when colleagues spent time in each other's classrooms to focus on the impact of teaching, rather than strictly the teachers' performance or behavior. It was clear, however, that from the teachers' perspective, their ideal of supervision as "ongoing" remained as potential rather than actual in this district.

In light of the foregoing, the following improvements were suggested in the interviews to support the school division's implementation of supervision:

1. Continue to expand on the ways to supervise instruction and learning, beyond principals' direct classroom observation as a way to meet teachers' desire for helpful feedback, and to alleviate time pressures for principals; and
2. The three universities (University of Alberta, Universities of Calgary, and University of Lethbridge) could articulate and expand the range of models, theories, and practices available for teachers, principals, and district office staff to exercise instructional leadership in schools.

One principal mentioned the unfairness of being mandated by the superintendent all of a sudden to evaluate a teacher who has been transferred into a school from another. One principal asked:

> *Are you insubordinate if you're not doing what your employer asks you to do, but on the other side, you would not be respecting the Code of Professional Conduct, of teacher growth evaluation and supervision?"*

Teacher Evaluation in Cinquefoil Conseil Scolaire

Specifically as pertains to teacher evaluation, school board policy provides for continuous and regular evaluation by school leaders in a constructive manner that emphasizes growth, improvement, and professional development. Evaluation policy as it now stands in Centre Nord underlines the dignity and value of all individuals.

Among the objectives for the policy is to communicate Board and Ministry aims, to maintain and improve teaching quality, to recognize successful teaching, to provide teachers with

tools for professional growth, to assure that professional assignments are adequate, and to assist teachers in becoming effective when working with students. Key beliefs that emerged from the focus groups were that (a) evaluation was viewed as a formal process, (b) principals conducted evaluation for certification and contract purposes, and when teachers requested it before moving to another school, and (c) principals and teachers desired a clear, but limited set of criteria for assessing teacher competence.

System leaders reported that evaluations were conducted for new teachers seeking permanent certification and continuous contracts, and those on continuous contracts were to be evaluated every three years after earning a continuous contract. We heard about this latter expectation from system leaders only, however. Both principals and teachers said evaluation was for new teachers only.

In keeping with district policy, at least three observations of new teachers are mandated, two pre-announced and one unannounced. Teachers felt that principals might engage more often to see the success of their teaching practices: "you can't know me as a teacher…if you just come in my class like two or three times. You have to do it at least five or six time, just to make sure you cover all the subjects."

A beginning teacher described her experience with evaluation in positive terms, describing it as both "helpful" and "nerve-wracking" in the first year, and more comfortable in the second year. The other teachers indicated that once they received permanent certification, they did not get evaluated, and they did not have knowledge of any expectations that they be evaluated. Principals, too, saw evaluation as a formal process, and they did not want it to be "threatening." They alleviated the threat by discussing the process with teachers beforehand, sharing the documentation, and repeating classroom observations when lessons "[fell] apart," or did not go as well as planned.

A perceived shortcoming of the evaluation process was that the district required evaluation of any teacher not under continuous contract. This meant that teachers new to the district and under temporary contract had to be evaluated, and principals wondered about the value of this. From the teachers' perspective, those who were new to the district, but not new to teaching, were treated as if they did not have experience. One teacher described it this way:

> *I came in here, and I am like, "I'm not new. I'm supposed to know those things." I was achieving, I was more than just good. But I'm not mettrisé (mastered)... It seemed like the evaluator said "Oh, but it's your first time, so you're not good at all." It's like you can't have a perfect score, so "I'm going to put you here so you have things to improve on."*

This teacher felt that because she was new to the district, her previous experience was discounted, and she had to navigate a proving ground before she would be recognized as an excellent teacher.

The number of criteria used to evaluate teachers was an area both principals and teachers described as problematic. Evaluation documentation was described as unwieldy; some suggested the checklist was over 100 items, and others described it as a 14 to 15 page document. Principals said that some of the items were irrelevant and redundant. For example, one criterion focused on the teachers' classroom library, which was deemed inappropriate for high school teachers.

One administrator surmised that matters relating to francophone culture, Catholicity, and community involvement should not be part of evaluation, and that principals were not in a position to "judge someone on whether or not they attend church regularly, or live their faith." Evaluation was time consuming because of the document. Participants also suggested that a provincially standardized document for evaluation would be helpful.

The evaluation ratings now include 'masters', 'respects the norm', 'doesn't respect the norm', or 'without observation' or 'not observable.' The teachers were particularly interested in knowing what constituted being given a rating of "masters," and in general they did not find the language explicit enough to be meaningful.

Focus group participants suggest the following improvements for evaluation:

1. Reduce the number of criteria upon which teachers are evaluated, to make it meaningful for teachers and less time-consuming for principals;
2. Create more and varied opportunities for evaluation feedback to supplement the three required classroom visits, so that teachers feel the evaluation reflects the range of their teaching abilities;
3. The Ministry could provide *guidelines* but avoid mandating or imposing a standardized or province-wide set of procedures and template forms for the supervision and evaluation of Alberta teachers; and
4. The Alberta Teachers' Association should develop and provide several learning options for teachers, for principals, and for school boards for the evaluation of professionals in schools, allowing the employer to adopt one or several alternatives in local school board policy.

Leadership Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation in Cinquefoil Conseil Scolaire

System leaders and principals agreed the *Teaching Quality Standard* has been helpful in clarifying goals for supervision and evaluation, and that analogous standards are required for principals and for school district leaders. However, they questioned whether these should be labelled as *policies*, given the obligations that accrue to policies. They preferred the term "guidelines" to avoid conflict with local board and human resource policies.

Teachers, too, agreed that principals and superintendents should have a policy that required them to make plans for continual growth, and to be supported in supervision and

evaluation. They suggested that evaluation criteria would be different than those for teachers because "*the skills that you need to be a principal are not the same as for teachers.*"

The focus groups did not settle on who should be responsible for conducting evaluations of school leaders. Principals emphasized that it should not be the view of a single person, and suggested that an ATA representative might provide valuable input into the evaluation of principals. System leaders also suggested principal portfolios were important vehicles for collecting evidence and supporting evaluation by some in district office.

System leaders envisioned evaluation of the superintendent to be the jurisdiction of the employer (i.e. the school board), since the superintendent was the only out-of-scope employee in the district. The idea of standardization was again raised with respect to principal and superintendent evaluations, as participants felt that it would benefit Alberta education as a whole if all school and system leaders underwent similar growth, supervision, and evaluation processes.

Emerging Themes from the Cinquefoil Conseil Scolaire

Local policies, alongside the Teacher, Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy 2.1.5 (TGSE) (Government of Alberta, 1998), provided the conceptual framework for reviewing commentary supplied by respondents. We asked participants about what they thought growth, supervision, and evaluation meant, and about their knowledge of approaches, processes, and experiences.

The primary messages derived from meetings with Cinquefoil Conseil Scolaire system leaders, principals and teachers were that:

1. There was inconsistent understanding about the connection between the TQS and teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation. Whereas system leaders and principals were clearly aware of the connection, the importance of the TQS for teachers was not understood.
2. Evaluation was clearly identified as a necessary process for contract and certification purposes. System leaders, principals, and teachers did not always agree about what teacher evaluation for those with continuous contracts should be.
3. Overly paper-bound approaches to evaluation by burdened principals, though intended to be comprehensive, did not have meaning for all teachers.

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Case Five: Silver Buffalo-Berry School District

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The Silver Buffalo-Berry School District is a school jurisdiction of 90 schools, with 40,000 students served by over 2, 000 teachers.

The following sections capture the main ideas from central office leaders, principals, and teachers on the subject of professional growth planning, supervision, and evaluation. We synthesized responses in each section with respect to (a) how participants understood growth,

supervision and evaluation, and the processes involved in implementing these; (b) perceived strengths and challenges regarding implementation of TGSE policy, and (c) potential improvements for policy implementation.

Teacher Growth in Silver Buffalo-Berry School District

The teachers, principals, and central office leaders described the growth plans as valuable and beneficial to teachers. Professional growth planning provided teachers with opportunities for self-reflection about their teaching practices. One teacher expressed the value in this way:

> *I used self-reflection... It's always a building process, growing as a teacher. You're always learning... with the self-reflection throughout the rest of the year, you kind of check things off your list as far as suggestions you may have been given, or different directions to take.*

Reflection and goal setting were iterative processes whereby teachers' thinking about their growth contributed to the setting of future goals.

Teachers spoke often about the development of relationships as a benefit of collaboration in both planning professional growth and participating in learning opportunities. For example, teachers shared experiences of collaborating with colleagues to create growth plans for their professional learning community to guide their year. Principals also commented on the positive relationships that developed as a result of these conversations and interactions, and central office leaders encouraged collaboration.

Silver Buffalo-Berry teachers, principals, and central office leaders generally expected teachers to write individual growth plans that coincided with the district's three-year plan and the yearly school plan, although the expectations seem varied from school to school. The teachers indicated that some, but not all, principals looked for this direct connection in growth plans.

Both the teachers' and principals' focus groups discussed the necessity of matching a teacher's professional growth plan to that of the school and school board, and they expressed a desire for more flexibility in allowing teachers to create more personalized, professional goals. This supported teachers' preference for professional development for achievement of their own goal, which may or may not align with those of their employer.

Central office leaders spoke about tensions they had experienced historically with reconciling the individual nature of growth planning and the expectation that teachers engage in *professional* goal-setting.

For example, one official noted:

The problematic aspect of it was that teachers tended to take personal goals and make them part of their growth plan. Such as 'I will get more rest at night'... There is an indirect link to teacher growth in that fashion, but that's not what the intent is.

This suggested that these leaders valued direct workplace connections amongst teacher growth, district, and school plans and alignment with the *Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes* (KSAs) as required in the *Teaching Quality Standard* (TQS) (Government of Alberta, 1997).

The school board did not provide a template for the teachers to use to complete their growth plans. Teachers reported flexibility in format and goal setting; some used templates from the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), while others were creative in conveying their plan for the year. Principals and central office leaders were open to creativity in presentation; however, a focus on professional goals was required.

While each teacher who participated in this study described consistent attention to the development of professional growth plans, they perceived inconsistent practices in administrators' review of their plans. Some teachers described having three meetings with their principal throughout the year (beginning, middle, and end of the year), while others only described having an initial meeting. A few teachers did not meet with an administrator during a school year to review their growth plan. Follow-up in the process was lacking, and they thought these should be mandated.

Principals' self-reports of the process diverged from the teachers as they described their role in steps: meeting with teachers to discuss their plans, checking in with them throughout the year, and seeking input about their professional development needs. They viewed this as a positive and exciting process as teachers are growing and wanting to learn, "It's a very vibrant place to watch these teachers grow." Central office leaders said they encouraged their principals to have one-on-one meetings with their teachers. However, they also recognized that time was a challenge for principals, as this central office leader indicated:

One of the challenges—I think it's really important for the principal or assistant principal, depending on the size of the school, to meet one-on-one with teachers for teacher professional growth. However, there is that time element.

I also think that it's very difficult to do touch point meetings by mid-October, in February and a concluding meeting at the end of June. I think that's just not happening.

They emphasized the value of principals meeting with teachers to help them identify areas of growth, and at the same time they admitted principals prioritized first and second year teachers because of evaluation requirements. They recognized the need to link professional growth planning closer to supervision.

The following suggestions for improvement were offered in the focus groups:

1. Professional growth plans warrant routine review and feedback to enable all teachers to support a culture of continual learning.

2. Principals should follow up with teachers periodically, rather than just at the end of the year, to ensure that growth plans are treated as helpful guides and tools for ensuring teaching quality.

Teacher Supervision in Silver Buffalo-Berry School District

Supervision was viewed as an ongoing process, with principals conducting informal weekly or monthly classroom visits. These were perceived as positive and valuable. Teachers expressed appreciation for principals who visited the classroom regularly to demonstrate their interest in the students, if there was clear communication about their intentions and their presence was not disruptive to the learning environment.

Frequent visits, or "fly-bys" as they called them, were thought to give a truer picture of the teaching environment, rather than staged or rare unexpected visits that might raise suspicion and change the tone. If done well, fly-bys were effective in role modelling that the principal was interested in student learning. As one teacher said, "*It showed me and the students that they care. They're showing an interest in the kids at their school.*"

Primarily, these informal visits created a foundation for constructive conversations about teachers' practice, which was viewed as a positive form of supervision for them. Principals also reported these conversations with teachers as opportunities to register teachers' engagement, passion, and professional commitment. The school board officials promoted principals' regularly visiting classrooms, followed by constructive feedback, and discussion about growth plans.

Informal visits also served an administrative function for principals because it enabled them to respond to parent concerns, as one principal noted:

> *It's important to be in those classrooms because then you can see how the teacher is with those students and what he or she is attempting. It helps, as I've said to teachers, to be there to support you so that when I get a call from a parent saying, "I've heard that so-and-so is such a yeller," you can say, "I've been in that classroom a lot. I've never observed that." I can cut some of the problems off at the knees a little bit, because maybe it happened once.*

> *It helps to support the teacher, but also then the next step for me is, if there are issues for growth, how do I approach that with the staff member? It's lucky I haven't had to worry about that. I've had some very strong teachers. It's just a matter of, love it. Keep it going.*

Love that project. Very positive, supportive. They invite me back to see the end of the project, so that's all very positive.

Thus, supervision included support for teachers' growth, but it also ensured principals could advocate for their teachers if issues arose.

Based on what was described as the expectation of the Alberta Teachers' Association, Silver Buffalo-Berry School Division required principals to conduct 10 visits in each teacher's classroom per year. Central office leaders and principals both expressed concern about the viability of that expectation, and whether there was flexibility for principals to appraise teachers' growth. Some teachers questioned whether principals who do not regularly witness and/or observe their teaching should have the right to comment on their growth plans. Beyond the 10-visit expectation, there did not seem to be a consistent approach to supervision. Some used a checklist to guide observations and to initiate discussions with teachers; others left sticky notes on the teacher's desk with affirming comments and verbally asked if they wanted further discussion.

Teachers were concerned about principals lacking subject-specific expertise. They suggested peer or collegial evaluation might be more effective if peers had similar subject backgrounds. Another concern was principals' subjectivity. Teachers welcomed feedback from multiple perspectives, and most importantly, to avoid bias that conflicted with their philosophical views or pedagogical approaches.

The following suggestions were offered in the focus groups:

1. Supervision should be an ongoing process, and connected to growth plans.
2. Peer-to-peer supervision, and including assistant principals in supervision may provide varying perspectives for teachers, reinforce accountability for growth, and alleviate time pressures for principals.

Teacher Evaluation in Silver Buffalo-Berry School District

There was consensus that evaluation was a formal process compared to growth planning and supervision. Evaluation was perceived as pertinent for beginning teachers seeking a continuous contract, and teachers in jeopardy of not meeting the TQS. Silver Buffalo-Berry School Division has clear guidelines for evaluation, including the expectation that principals conduct six scheduled lesson observations, pre- and post-discussions, and write a report.

Due process was emphasized, and teachers were given the opportunity to give input into the report. The principals described the division report as offering two evaluation categories: "meet" or "does not meet." They said this was limiting, and they wanted a way to describe teachers' progression.

Among the practices of growth, supervision and evaluation, evaluation seemed to elicit the most critique. Principals reported the evaluation form was long and cumbersome with the inclusion of all TQS indicators, and suggested a condensed version of the form would be helpful. Given that the evaluation was predominantly a labour and administrative concern regarding contracts and teacher competence, it was disconnected from teacher growth and supervision. Thus, evaluation had negative connotations for teachers, and principals were aware of the sensitivity required to ensure the process helped struggling teachers to improve.

Despite the procedures outlined by central office, teachers reported inconsistency in the way evaluation was carried out at different schools. Teachers said some were observed more often than others, and the amount of feedback varied. Sometimes evaluation was rushed, and teachers endured observations in a three-week period near the end of the school year. Inconsistency with principals' assessment contributed to negative teacher experiences. For example, the same principal might give a positive evaluation one year, but a negative one the next, and not provide sufficient explanation for the discrepancy.

According to the teacher participants, securing a continuous contract in the school district meant that a teacher was never evaluated again. Teachers considered this a disadvantage to teacher growth, and they suggested that some teachers let their standards and professionalism deteriorate after the contract was in place. Several teachers believed that "veteran" teachers should be held to a standard of excellence, and suggested that evaluation be conducted for all teachers at regular intervals.

Based on the above, these suggestions for improvement are worthy of consideration:

1. Evaluation must be viewed as a supportive process that applies to *all* teachers, not just beginning teachers for contract purposes and teachers who are in danger of failing.
2. Provide clear metrics for assessing teachers' performance according to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes document, to ensure consistency and transparency for all teachers in the division.
3. Provide creative ways for principals to engage in evaluation as an authentic process to alleviate pressure and help teachers feel supported rather than judged.

Leadership Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation in Silver Buffalo-Berry School District

Participants supported the development of supervision and evaluation of principals and superintendents. A concern that teachers identified was the potential conflict in teachers' providing feedback on principals' performance, in light of the Professional Code of Conduct. The current approach used in the Division, therefore, was perceived as perfunctory because teachers felt compelled to provide only positive feedback.

Along a similar vein, several noted a power imbalance in educators' relationships, which potentially jeopardized the authenticity of feedback. In general, the need for supervision and evaluation of school and division leaders was not at question, but rather how and who was best positioned to evaluate administrative or leadership performance.

Emerging Themes from the Silver Buffalo-Berry School District Case

The primary messages derived from meetings with the Silver Buffalo-Berry teachers, principals, and school board officials were:

1. Growth and supervision were greatly valued, but there was inconsistency in the procedures as to how the growth plans were reviewed, the frequency of the reviews, and in how the principals carried out their supervision. An expressed desire for more structure was provided but not at the cost of professional autonomy. There still needs to be flexibility within the structure.

2. Within this district, supervision was perceived and understood to be more informal and something that occurred on a regular basis. Evaluation was a formal process, albeit with inconsistencies, but there were procedures and processes in place. Perceptions were that teachers were only formally evaluated for certification and contract purposes, or if a teacher was not fulfilling TQS expectations.

3. Overall, *time* was the biggest challenge described in the processes surrounding teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation.

Case Six: Red Currant Charter Academy

Red Currant Charter Authority (RCCA) is a public charter school that provides education to approximately 2,000 students in four campuses distributed across a large Alberta city. As is the case for all 13 of Alberta's public charter schools, a government-approved charter guides RCCA educators.

The following sections capture the main ideas from central office leaders, principals, and teachers on the subject of professional growth planning, supervision, and evaluation. We synthesized responses in each section with respect to (a) how participants understood growth, supervision and evaluation, and the processes involved in implementing these, (b) perceived strengths and challenges regarding implementation of TGSE policy, and (c) potential improvements for policy implementation.

Teacher Growth in Red Currant Charter Authority

RCCA educators in all five focus groups were appreciative of the system's emphasis on "good" teaching, reflective practice, peer coaching, and collaborative approaches to professional growth in recent years. An experienced high school teacher said, "*I think for many of us... the*

professional growth plans have become much more a living, breathing document." Collaboration and reflection are seen as significant components of this new growth planning process. An elementary school teacher highlighted interconnections between reflection and collaboration:

> *I think self-reflection definitely is the beginning process. Because we've done our coaching pods in different ways where individual people in our pod come and observe you. We've also done it where the whole pod came and observed one lesson. For me, I also find that self-reflection comes after the lesson is taught when we have that discussion with our coaching pod.*

Other teacher observations included:

> *The professional growth planning process in the UK is quite solidly in place. There is a lot of support and expectation that every teacher undergoes that process, right from the first year. I have actually been quite fortunate to work with RCCA in the same sense, that there is the same level of expectation within our organization, that the staff is also part of that growth process.*

> *Apart from everything else that has been said today, I would like to add, we also have a very, I would say, evolving staff coaching program, where we have groups of teachers who work together as coaches. That incorporates our professional growth plan. We can use strengths within our staff to allow us to grow at the same time. That is quite beneficial.*

These teacher comments paralleled the views of school and system leaders. The chief executive officer was excited by the "*unusual transparency of practice*" emerging in RCCA schools along with the amplification of a "*growth mindset.*" Other central office and school leaders spoke about their eagerness to model growth, engage in generative professional conversations, to provide resources, and to help teachers demonstrate fidelity to the RCCA Direct Instruction Teaching and Learning Framework.

The system's current emphasis builds on the growth plan as a launch pad toward exemplary professional practice, which is much better than when growth plans used to be seen as accountability and compliance documents, which were often stored in dust-gathering binders. Administrator efforts to provide opportunities to reflect on practice, share evidence of progress, set goals, and to collaborate with colleagues were appreciated, as one teacher articulated:

> *For me, constant reflection is important. Our administration, currently, have adopted a policy where they give us time throughout the year to repeatedly reflect and to have discussions with them. We have initial discussion at the beginning of the year about what it is that we'd like to focus on, how administration can best support us in that regard. Then moving forward throughout the year, how we're meeting our goals, what we're*

finding that's a burden or challenging to us in these pursuits of goals, and then reflecting upon the successes that we've had throughout the year as well.

Participants in the principal focus group identified a number of factors that were contributing to the growth and development momentum in RCCA. An experienced school leader itemized the following key components in his school: (a) linking the growth planning and enactment process with a collaborative coaching model, (b) providing opportunities for teachers to see other people practice, (c) asking for evidence of progress toward measurable outcomes, and (d) seeking feedback from students and parents.

Focus group suggestions for improving the teacher growth planning process included:

1. Have school administrators use professional growth plans for more purposeful and more frequent classroom visits;
2. Draw stronger associations between the Teaching Quality Standard, which is not widely used, and the more universally used RCCA Direct Instruction Teaching and Learning Framework;
3. Further embed collaborative growth planning processes into the school schedule;
4. Help teachers learn how to provide even more supportive feedback during the peer coaching visits to other classrooms; and
5. Balance individual and system priorities as part of professional growth.

Teacher Supervision in Red Currant Charter Authority

In contrast to how teachers felt about historic teacher supervisory practices, they were generally impressed by recent school administrator efforts to enact the Generative Dialogue model of growth planning. To most RCCA participants, teacher supervision means school and system leader presence in classrooms.

In a variety of ways teacher participants described supervision as spending a lots of time in classrooms to really know instruction in the school. Administrators included a number of other practices in their descriptions: planning with teachers; engaging in a wide range of ongoing, learning-oriented conversations; asking empowering reflective questions; encouraging and "watering the flowers"; providing feedback; building trust and community. For the central leadership team's perspective, school leaders are expected to display intentional and effective leadership to promote teacher growth.

School leader supervisory competence is scaffolded in a number of ways. In addition to the establishment of a collaborative instructional coaching program across the system, central office leaders marshaled external expertise from the University of Lethbridge to create and sustain the RCCA Generative Dialogue approach to growth planning, professional learning and instructional leadership. In addition to providing time, training, and structures to enable such

purposeful leadership, the central office team strives to model team leadership, visibility and transparency, generative questioning, and life-long learning.

Teacher views of the nature and effectiveness of supervisory guidance and support vary. One teacher stated, "*Teacher supervision, especially in this school, is very much watching and having others watch you.*" He went on to describe the benefits of this open door approach.

> *And the kids are aware that sometimes they're watching the teacher; sometimes they're watching the kids. Sometimes they're there to see how it's different... For me, that's supervision, the way we all watch each other to all help each other improve. Whether it's our administration or our superintendent or our parent counsel or just us.*

Teachers from a second school understood teacher supervision in similar ways. One saw supervision as:

> *The support of the principal, to make sure that you're following professional standards, that you have the support and professional development that you need and that you're keeping up with expectations.*

Her colleague's view was that:

> *Teacher supervision implies that there is someone who is holding you accountable to what standards are supposed to be met, and what attributes you have that you can share with your students as a teacher.*

Another teacher provided this overview of his school's approach to new teacher mentoring through coaching:

> *I would also say that we have an informal coaching sort of supervision. We have senior teachers paired up with newer teachers to provide ongoing mentoring. That's very specifically done so that each newer teacher has someone that is not their boss to go to and ask for help and to initiate that first process of, "I'm going to observe, I'm going to offer help."*

> *The coaching process is observation, conversation, observation, conversation, and it might even be flipped where the mentor is doing the teaching and the newer teacher is doing the observation and then conversation around that.*

> *So that's an intentional pairing for all of our new teachers that come in: they're paired with a teacher that's been here for a while, who has taken on the role of a coach and has the specific intention of assisting them to get through the first year..*

Individual and focus group interview ideas for improving the teacher supervision portion for the TGSE policy included:

1. When the occasional teacher struggles, provide timely feedback and support rather than allowing the practice to deteriorate.
2. Take explicit steps to connect growth plans, professional growth, and supervision.
3. Support and provide ongoing professional learning within each school.

Teacher Evaluation in Red Currant Charter Authority

The importance of teacher evaluation was recognized in all five focus groups. Support was consistently evident for the evaluation portion of current TGSE policy. A number of specific components of this evaluation approach were seen as being clear, fair and professional: the provision of notice, development of shared understanding of criteria, gathering evidence from multiple sources over a specified time to informed the reasoned judgment of the principal were prime among the noted principles. The importance of building and maintaining positive relationships throughout the evaluation process was seen as being a fundamental aspect of evaluation.

Participants at every RCCA level saw the benefits and drawbacks of the TGSE policy approach of intensive evaluation at the onset of a teacher's career, followed by ongoing supervision, rather than scheduled, periodic evaluations. One teacher shared:

I was evaluated in my first year with RCCA in 2006. It wasn't until last year, when I had requested one, that I was evaluated again.

Though she and others were concerned about the incompetent or disinterested teachers slipping through the cracks, the option of being evaluated for the sake of accountability every few years was also seen as problematic.

Both school and system leaders argued that a greater emphasis on ongoing supervision and growth was preferable to conducting additional evaluations for continuing contract teachers. Ongoing attention to growth, professional learning, and leadership development were seen as core structures within an emerging culture founded on generative dialogue, reflection, and collaboration.

Evaluations based on concerns arising through ongoing supervision were seen as problematic by some administrators and some teachers. A principal indicated, "*it heightens anxiety*" and "*can be a punitive rather than a proactive approach.*"

Focus group ideas for improving the teacher evaluation portion for the TGSE policy included:

1. Enhance ongoing supervision to proactively address problematic situations.
2. Rather than implementing cyclical evaluations, add the requirement for the provision of yearly written feedback to teachers based on ongoing supervision

Leadership Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation in Red Currant Charter Authority

In relation to the pending provincial standards on principal and superintendent leadership quality, both the principal and central office focus groups indicated that similar processes are already in place, seem to be working quite well, and could be extended in directions similar to the TGSE quite readily.

Teachers thought that the idea of "administrator growth, supervision, and evaluation" was "*logical*" and that "*if there is a standard that your teaching staff should be following, and the expectation here with the evaluation is that they're following that, it should be part of administration and leadership as well.*"

Ideas such as the following were voiced in each of the three teacher focus groups:

So we agree there should be a similar process for principals and superintendents and we're also saying that teachers should be engaged in that process of giving feedback through some mechanisms in terms of their principal and in terms of their superintendent.

Emerging Themes from the Red Currant Charter Authority Case

The primary messages derived from meetings with teachers, principals, and central office leaders from the case for the most part were very positive:

1. Teachers, school leaders, and the senior leadership team understood professional growth as a major, legitimate, and motivating focus.
2. The system placed high value on feedback, opportunities for reflection and engagement in generative dialogue. A culture of sustained collaborative inquiry was emerging.
3. Educators at all levels stressed the importance of ongoing professional learning: teachers, principals, and senior leaders.

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Case Seven: Twinning Honeysuckle Schools

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Three schools identified to represent independent schools are members of Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta (AISCA). Two of the three schools we visited are faith-based rural schools offering kindergarten to Grade 12 education. The third school is designated a special education school offering educational programs from Grade 3 to Grade 12 in a large Alberta city.

A member of the research team visited each of the schools during the month of June. Individual and focus group interviews were conducted on site and were approximately 60

minutes each. Based on the focus group questions and subsequent data analysis, four categories emerged about teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation, including: (a) the meaning, processes, and practices of policy, (b) strengths of the policy, (c) challenges of the policy; and (d) suggestions for consideration. Each of the four categories will be addressed throughout the following sections.

Teacher Growth in in Twinning Honeysuckle Schools

The leadership teams indicated that teacher growth plans were key in connecting teachers with setting school direction and meeting school goals. Two teachers and two administrators respectively said:

> *Every year at our school it seems…Admin sort of makes a focus for us for professional development. One year it was executive functioning; another year it was zones and regulations. So they identify needs that our school could have with our special population, and I know for myself I always try to incorporate [into my growth plan] what I see as a school-identified goal. If the Admin identifies we need to work on this I try to somehow implement that into my growth plan too, so that I can work on it more specifically.*

> *One of the school identified goals that influences my growth plan the most is the emphasis here on evidence bases practices and trying just to stay current with the latest research and best practices.*

> *From an administrator's perspective it's really interesting for us to get a sense of where teacher's interests are, it gives us a good sense of future professional development for the whole staff population.*

> *The challenge of it, in my experiences, is those staff who don't always identify an area where they need to grow. It's being able to guide those staff to find those areas where they can continue developing in the profession.*

It seems growth plans acted as a guide for teachers and the leadership team in identifying professional development that was appropriate both for the school and individual teachers. This is evidenced in the following comments from teachers and administrators:

> *We had a teacher growth plan for gamified learning and that now is spread to a lot of other classrooms, so it's really impacting the whole school.*

> *One staff member's growth plan was all about coding. He did some coding courses for his growth plan and now that's turned into an elective in the school.*

> *We've had growth plans to do with mindfulness and yoga and they've become kind of school initiatives for entire grades.*

Another growth plan was about positive partnerships with post-secondary, collaborating with post-secondary, and that has not only enhanced that teacher's practice but we've actually re-crafted her teaching assignments, her role in the classroom has become much more focused just on those transitions and planning for post-secondary. So we've got some really significant impact in the classroom from the growth plans.

These growth plans were critical in helping to establish professional learning communities within the schools.

Leadership teams acknowledged that teacher growth plans were individualized, but through an established process that included the use of templates, formalized meetings, one-on-one meetings and key deadlines, teacher's goals, similar to those captured in the above growth plans, had varying degrees of alignment with the school goals. One administrator stated, *"we really like the idea of keeping it simple and as specific as possible."* A teacher said, *"a lot of times we start the year with a theme, and we support that theme throughout the year."* Another teacher stated, *"all teachers need feedback if you are serious about your craft as a teacher."*

All three schools indicated that there was an emphasis on the adoption of new curriculum and or technology. Specifically, the faith-based schools indicated a connection to spiritual training. One school reported that the growth plans provided a culture that encouraged a fluidity of professional relationships.

All three leadership teams indicated that they still struggle with how to make growth plans more meaningful, formalizing the structure even further. These teams struggle with interacting with teachers who do not identify goals in an area where growth is required. One principal stated,

> *"I don't really know how to interact meaningfully with teachers who have a growth plan that I think is maybe poorly constructed."*

In two of the three schools, teachers described teacher professional growth planning as a process that occurred throughout the year. Even though there was an expectation of completing the plans by a certain date, teachers discussed the importance of the process of self-reflection and collaboration with peers.

In one school, the culture of teacher professional growth plans was one of "trusting professionals." Teachers were encouraged to identify their own priorities and determine what the work would look like within that school year. They formalized the process by identifying an "accountability partner." These partners help to clarify goals and partner in establishing and enacting plans to meet the goals. Three different teachers said:

My goals are not always clearly laid out like, read this book on this or develop this for this kind of learner. If I am working with somebody else [my accountability partner] they might have ideas on how to broaden it or change it in ways I might not think of.

You have to be disciplined in meeting up with that person [accountability partner]and seeing how your goals are coming along.

The years that I've been the most successful with completing my growth plan would be the years that I had an accountability partner, and we actually met and discussed our goals and worked on them during PD days.

In another school, the teachers describe the process of writing and enacting individual teacher growth plans as a form of accountability. Within this school, teachers worked from a common template and were required to turn the plans into the principal by a specific date. Administration would then meet one-on-one with each teacher. The growth plans were not shared with anyone else in the school.

Understanding that the Teacher Quality Standard (TQS), including the Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes, frame the work within the teacher professional growth plans, teachers in two of the schools said:

I have not looked at it since I graduated.

I'm sure it exists but I have not seen it.

Those teachers who were aware of the standard are relatively new to the profession and their evaluation for certification was connected to the standard. Instead of the TQS, teachers described how growth plans focused on one of two central themes.

The first theme is the Programs of Study, whether they are new to the grade or the curriculum is new, there is a focus on understanding the scope and sequence including the integration of technology. The second focus is school-specific, of being faith-based or special education. In the third school, teachers were encouraged by administration to align their growth plans with the TQS.

Teachers in all three schools recognize that the effectiveness of the teacher professional growth planning process depends on the principal. They described how principal involvement varied with their experiences at different schools. Those schools that are actively involved in the process, the "administration is intentional with the direction" and there was "*a lot of involvement of the principal in your growth plan.*" Teachers also described the opposite, recalling administration that did not actively engage in the process.

The biggest challenge that teachers identified was finding the time to enact their plan. They felt they were good at identifying goals at the start of the school year and then "just completely forget about it" as they kept putting the work off. Several teachers acknowledge time allocated to doing this work during staff meetings or early dismissal days was critical in keeping them focused.

Teacher Supervision in Twinning Honeysuckle Schools

All three of the school leadership teams could clearly distinguish between supervision and evaluation. The teams see supervision as an integral part of being aware of what is happening in classrooms. As one principal called it, supervision was about "*having a finger on the pulse.*"

The teams recognize that supervision is a means of effectively supporting teachers in the classroom, creating a culture of collegiality. One member of a leadership team said "*ongoing supervision is ongoing conversation.*"

Each leadership team recognized the importance of creating a culture where supervision intentions are not misconstrued as either being one-off or part of a formal evaluation process. All three teams emphatically indicated that the biggest challenge is time. One leadership team member articulated the challenges in this regard, stating that they needed to "*do it regularly enough to just make it normal.*"

Teachers in all three focus groups had difficulty distinguishing between supervision and evaluation. They described supervision as "*making expectations clear and holding people accountable*" and "*holding people to a standard.*"

In looking at supervision as a formative process, teachers described the importance of open dialogue. Teachers identified the importance of trust in creating a culture of open dialogue. In this culture of trust, teachers describe the ability to invite administration into their classroom, an open door that fosters "mentorship." One teacher describes their ~~ideal~~ principal as "*approachable and that you can bounce ideas off them without fear of reprimand.*"

Teacher Evaluation in Twinning Honeysuckle Schools

Each leadership team indicated that the teacher evaluation component of the policy makes the process transparent, both for the teacher and the administrator. The leadership teams see the policy protecting both the teacher and the school, and teams indicated they have had extensive experience with the evaluation policy with respect to both provincial certification of and contractual agreements.

Two administrators indicated that they had very little experience with respect to evaluation of teachers with permanent certification and on a continuous contract. Two administrators indicated personal inadequacy in implementing the "evaluation process" and the

need for their own professional development so that they could better provide guidance on strategies and components of the policy when working with teachers. One administrator said,

> *I still feel like I'm fumbling in the dark a little bit when it comes to teacher supervision and how do we give the feedback? How do we make it constructive? How do we hold teachers accountable when it's not going well?*

In particular, they were not clear on how to move from supervision to evaluation. One administrator stated,

> *I don't really know when one stops and the other starts. When does supervision become evaluation?*

Another leadership team indicated a concern with the policy with respect to standards set for evaluation and how principals at different schools interpret them. All three of the school leadership teams indicated that time is a concern in that the process can be lengthy.

Each teacher focus group understood there is a policy for evaluation. They all had experienced the process of evaluation connected to certification and/or for employment decisions. Several of the teachers stated that they believe evaluation ended once they had their permanent certificate and continuous contract and were not aware of how the evaluation process worked beyond certification and employment. Others expressed a concern about how teachers are "*able to keep going even though they don't seem to necessarily meet those teaching quality standards.*"

Some teachers were aware that some teachers left but did not know "*what led to his or her leaving.*" They thought that the position might not have been a good fit for those individuals and did not see a connection to the evaluation process. Some teachers stated that they did not want to be evaluated again, "*It's like the being retested for your driver's license.*"

They then went on to describe how supervision and evaluation is "mixed together" in their school, focusing on helping people being successful.

> *We're in a situation where we're small enough and we have enough points of contact and we have I would say a competent enough administrator that he can know what's happening and shape the way things are going.*

Leadership Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation in Twinning Honeysuckle Schools

In reference to an evaluation policy for principals and superintendents, the three schools agreed that everyone needs to be held accountable and that teachers need to be part of the process. Currently, two of the schools complete an annual performance review questionnaire of the principal. There was clear support for extending teacher growth, supervision and evaluation processes to principals.

Emerging Themes from Twinning Honeysuckle Schools Case

The primary messages derived from meetings with teachers and principals in the Twinning Honeysuckle Schools were as follows:

1. Teachers and principals stressed the importance of ongoing professional learning and valued opportunities for dialogue and inquiry.
2. There was a general appetite by participants for improving the professional growth planning process to support new and experienced teachers.
3. There was an expressed desire among teachers for a more consistent and robust professional growth planning process, one not subject to change simply with a change in the Principal.
4. The distinction between growth and supervision was not clear to many participants.
5. Quality supervision and evaluation were impeded by lack of time and uncertainty about how to provide worthwhile, ongoing support to teachers.

Case Eight: Lowbush Cranberry School Division

Lowbush Cranberry School Division is a geographically large and sparsely populated jurisdiction. Its 100 teachers serve 1500 students in 18 schools: 9 community schools and 9 schools located on Hutterite colonies.

Based on the focus group questions and subsequent data analysis, four categories emerged about teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation, including: (a) the meaning, processes, and practices of policy, (b) strengths of the policy, (c) challenges of the policy, and (d) suggestions for consideration. Each of the four categories will be addressed throughout the following sections.

Teacher Growth in Lowbush Cranberry School Division

Participants in the three focus groups consistently identified the value of growth plans and mentioned the use of an important element in goal setting. Teachers were well aware of the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) and the role the document played in the development of their growth plans. This connection was made explicit when, as one teacher explained that:

They always hand out the TQS in our school, almost every year, at the beginning of the year...Which I actually really enjoy, receiving that.

Another noted, "*I've been asked by principals to tie the TQS to each of the goals.*"

A principal described the connection between goal setting, growth planning, and professional development:

I meet with the teachers at the beginning of the year, after they've created their growth plan. And we sit down and we talk about their role in this growth plan, and my role in

this growth plan, and how can I support them with this? It gives me something beyond the basic supervision to look for when I'm in their classroom. Or, do I see that that is part of their everyday drive and growth…And are they looking for professional development in that area? And how can I help them and facilitate that?

These types of conversations were identified as opportunities to support teacher growth. In this division, it was expected that all teachers would write a growth plan that integrated divisional, school, and individual goals. "You have your professional goal. And then you have to tie a divisional goal into that professional goal. So, one of the goals of the division, you'll find a matching one to it" (Teacher). A central office leader confirmed this process,

I think the expectations that we have put out the last couple of years to make sure that growth plans are aligned not only with personal growth as a professional, but we wanted to see how we're making our division grow as well. A few years' back, we decided we were going to align all of our improvement efforts…school improvement is going to be aligned with divisional improvement, and we're not going to go off on a tangent in a hundred different ways. People started to realise that we're all in this together, we're all moving it for the sake of students.

Teachers and school leaders identified reflection as an important part of the growth process. One teacher believed that:

I think you want all your goals to be met. Like, I reflect on, am I actually going to meet these goals? Because if I'm not, there's no point in me putting them down.

Another teacher agreed when stating, "*as a professional I think self-reflection is just part of our work.*"

A school leader supported the assertion about the power of reflection when noting, "*And then, to grow as a professional, I think you need to become a stronger and stronger... Or more... better and better reflector on what you're doing.*"

Moreover, focus participants identified the value of collaboration in the reflective process:

This year, we did, a staff preview and shared our goals with the rest of the teachers. It was good, just to get some ideas on what they're working on. We're working on the same thing. We actually, like... There's a group... There's probably about three groups in our school that get together and do our growth planning. They are not... None of them are the same. But we get together and do them together. (Teacher 1)

You bounce ideas off of each other, then? (Teacher 2)

Yeah. Oh yeah. (Teacher 1)

That's nice.? (Teacher 2)

And did you initiate that yourself? Like, as yourselves, as teachers? Or was... (Teacher 3)

Yeah. It was just... Hey, let's go and do our growth plans. And you take about half an hour, and get it done. And then there's a group at school that know it. ? (Teacher 1)

Even though this dialogue illustrates a clear process for the use of growth plans in one school, comments by teachers, school leaders, and superintendents highlight challenges regarding growth as outlined in the TGSE.

Apparent in the transcripts was a lack of understanding of the nature of professional growth. One superintendent noted:

I think there are some issues regarding some individuals not going through the policy and taking their time at understanding the process. I think when they don't understand the process that is where we have a lot of issues with not moving in the direction growth needs to go.

Similarly, a principal questioned:

What is growth? How do we grow as professionals? And it's not clichés, and it's not lip service. This is meaningful. This makes you a professional. This is so much more than... I'm doing a checklist.

However, establishing common understandings and clear definitions about the nature of professional growth is hindered in this division by small school size and vast geographic distances.

The following suggestions were made in individual and focus group interviews for the teacher growth portion for the TGSE policy:

1. Make professional growth a more purposeful, collaborative, and sustained process;
2. Provide ear-marked time for central office, school leaders, and teachers to engage in conversation facilitating that enhances understandings about the nature of professional growth and its relationship to reflection;
3. Require the growth plan to be viewed and frequently reviewed by school leaders;
4. Balance the individual and system priorities as part of professional growth;
5. Provide exemplars of the Teaching Quality Standard to guide growth planning; and
6. Continue to use professional growth plans as a tool to implement the Teaching Quality Standard.

Teacher Supervision in Lowbush Cranberry School Division

Participants in all three focus groups consistently defined supervision as *principals knowing what is going on in the classroom*. In this division, supervision was characterized by school leader presence in classrooms, having conversations with teachers, having administration as part of the classroom, maintaining the school vision, walking the halls, speaking with parents, and looking at results.

One principal described supervision as:

Knowing what's going on in your school. Being into classrooms. Having conversations with teachers that are driven by both their growth plan and by your observations. Being an integral part of your school. Right? So that you know what's going on.

A teacher concurred by defining supervision as, "*Making sure things are running smoothly.*" A central office leader described supervision as "*a verb*":

I think one thing that we talk about at our principals' table all the time is that supervision is a verb. It should be a verb, and you're gathering up data all the time. That's how you supervise. Supervision is not a noun; it should be a verb. I think if our school leaders understand that, it helps their work immensely and they will be continually gathering information. Having that mind-set is critical for good supervision.

It was evident that the active nature of supervision was well received by participants in all focus groups who perceived supervision, as described in the TGSE, offered school leaders the latitude to engage in a number of activities. For one principal the process began with establishing a common school vision:

I think that the supervision part is... you, as a staff, have sat down, and you've identified your vision, and what your school is, and what your culture's going to be. And then your supervision is going to maintain that, or make sure that everybody's pulling the wagon in the right direction.

Another spoke of supervision as being connected to growth and the growth planning process: "*The growth plan gives me something beyond the basic supervision to look for when I am in their classroom.*" The importance of feedback was illustrated: "*One of my greatest jobs is just providing feedback.*" Another mentioned:

I feel the supervision piece really adds to your building that relationship with the teacher. So, you're actually really getting to know all of their practice, and best practices, and things that they need to work on. And you can kind of build that partnership. And then work on that, rather than making a quick judgment. If you're

doing your supervision properly... You're in classrooms, and you have a relationship with each one of those teachers.

Teachers were very cognizant of the time required for school leaders to provide quality supervision and were hesitant to expect more frequent or sustained classroom presence. Time to be in classrooms on a regular basis and offering feedback to teachers seemed to be a challenge. This teacher noted, "*Our administration is so busy... they do not have time to come to my classroom. They're juggling.*"

Similarly, a principal mentioned lacking time to give feedback. "*It's not easy to sit down and talk to people about what you saw.*" Central office leaders acknowledged the limitations of time and have adopted workload strategies.

We have allocated more FTE time towards that administration time, and just being really supportive that way. And I think even though we have small schools we still give a very generous amount of time to be able to do that job, because if you were to get them on 0.1 or 0.2 time administration how do you get through? How do you properly supervise?

A superintendent mentioned a final challenge unique to this rural division relates to the relational issues that arise with small staffs in small communities when:

You go curling or play hockey with the same people who are on your staff. I believe it is more difficult to cause change and it becomes really hard to separate those two roles.

The following suggestions were made in focus groups for the teacher supervision portion for the TGSE policy:

1. Define teacher supervision;
2. Identify best supervisory practice;
3. Make time available for purposeful and focused presence in classrooms followed by feedback;
4. Educate school leaders to implement a supervisory model;
5. Encourage the explicit link between growth plans, professional growth, and supervision; and
6. Encourage professional conversations to be at the heart of supervision.

Teacher Evaluation in Lowbush Cranberry School Division

One central office leader's comments illustrate the recurring tension and misunderstanding of the reasons for evaluation outlined in the TGSE policy:

The word evaluation, *I think, gets confused. When we do an evaluation for a beginning teacher who's on probation or they want to get their accreditation with permanent certification, and so we have different reasons for doing an evaluation, which are*

normal. And then we have this thing called being placed on evaluation. It gets so confusing in terms of the wording, and it gets really confused as evaluations being a normal thing versus an evaluation being leading to a letter of remediation.

This misunderstanding may grow from various interpretations of the term as it is applied to probationary versus continuing contracts. When applied to teachers on probationary contracts, the term is deemed positive. However, it is punitive when applied to teachers on continuing contracts. Yet, teachers were uncertain about the reasons why evaluation might occur.

School leaders were satisfied with their understanding of their role in teacher evaluation and acknowledged the importance of Member Services of the Alberta Teachers' Association in educating them about the evaluation aspect of the TGSE. However, they were hesitant to conduct evaluations. Various reasons were provided for this hesitancy, including:

Paperwork and intricacies of the steps are so detailed its almost like, do I want to do this?

It is too lengthy and difficult.

It is inevitable that I'm probably going to goof up somewhere along the way because there are so many steps and it takes so long.

 School leaders and superintendents expressed these concerns with particular reference to the negative impact on students' learning that may occur during the process as it is unfolding. Participants were further uncertain about evaluation and infractions of the Professional Code of Conduct.

The following suggestions were made in the individual and focus group interviews for the teacher evaluation portion for the TGSE policy:

1. Continue the ongoing partnership with the Alberta Teachers' Association;
2. Establish a shared understanding of the difference between supervision and evaluation;
3. Make a transparent and explicit link between the processes of growth, supervision, and evaluation; and
4. Base evaluations on the primacy of student learning.

Leadership Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation in Lowbush Cranberry School Division
Teachers were supportive of a policy similar to the TGSE being adopted for principals and central office leaders. One stated that, *"I feel like if it is laid out, just like that, it would adhere to everyone."* Principals indicated that the same level and degree of accountability that is applied to teachers through the TGSE should also be applied to principals and central office leaders. One principal captured the sentiment of the focus group when stating:

Why wouldn't you have one for principals? Why wouldn't you have one for superintendents? Right? Because we should be held as accountable for what we're doing as we are putting onto our teachers."

Currently, principals do write professional growth plans and have on-going conversations about the plans with one of the central office leaders. The group felt that this growth plan, just like with teachers, plays a role in the continuing supervision they receive from their central office leaders.

Central office leaders were asked, "What are your thoughts about the development of a policy similar to the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation for principals? And what about for superintendents?" A central office leader responded in the affirmative by saying:

I'd like it. I think it's a step in the right direction for the simple fact that we are trying to do this already. Everything we do within our small, little jurisdiction, we want to be in alignment, so it's just a natural fit for that to happen. Even though we are outside of the ATA we are still educators, we're teachers. We're teachers, you're a teacher, we want to make sure that we're all in alignment there, and that just strengthens the whole process. You can't have – it's not that it's a one-off – but you can't have different systems or different processes for different levels, in my mind.

Emerging Themes from the Lowbush Cranberry Case

The *Teacher, Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy 2.1.5* (TGSE) (Government of Alberta, 1998) served as the basis of the conceptual framework applied to the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We asked participants about what they thought growth, supervision, and evaluation meant, and about their knowledge of approaches, processes, and experiences. The following themes were evident about these concepts:

1. Regular and frequent reference was made to the TQS when writing and implementing professional growth plans; in fact this is a state expectation within this school division. In addition, there was a recognized connection between the TQS, growth plans, and ongoing principal supervision.
2. Growth plans were not only developed in connection to the TQS, but also to school and division priorities.
3. Reflection and collaboration occurred simultaneously in this division. Teachers used self-reflection to stay connected to their goals. Reflective conversations were also used with principals and colleagues.
4. Growth and supervision were perceived as kindred processes, characterized as formative assessment. Evaluation was clearly understood as a contractual requirement for new teachers seeking certification and continuous employment. Leaders tended to view evaluation as an administrative and labour requirement.

5. Time was provided to principals to carry out their supervision responsibilities with teachers.
6. A balance was desirable between flexibility and standardization of teacher growth planning, supervision, and evaluation.
7. A tension existed between the meaning of evaluation as it was applied to probationary teachers as distinct from permanent teachers. The former was perceived as helpful and positive, while the later was perceived as less helpful(i.e. "being placed on evaluation").
8. Principals wrote growth plans that played a role in the ongoing supervision they received from their central office leaders.

Case Nine: Tamarack School District

The Tamarack School District is located in an urban setting of 100,000 people in and serves 10,000 students in 25 schools with approximately 500 teaching staff members.

Based on the interview and focus group questions and subsequent data analysis, four categories emerged about teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation, including: (a) the meaning, processes, and practices of policy, (b) strengths of the policy, (c) challenges of the policy, and (d) suggestions for consideration. Each of the four categories will be addressed throughout the following sections.

Teacher Growth in Tamarack School District

Participants in all three focus groups consistently identified the value of professional learning and growth. One principal explained that, "teachers are looking at identifying real tangible goals that they can work towards, and reviewing them regularly throughout the year." The experience most repeatedly observed as supporting effective professional growth was associated with collaboration. A teacher said:

I think having somebody there to kind of follow you in the journey really allows you to not only hold yourself accountable, but have somebody else hold you to that same accountability. You're more focused on the improvement aspect of it…it's not just something you say at the beginning of the year…

In this district, collaboration was also understood to be among and between teachers, principals, and system leaders. A central office leader noted:

It has led to some amazing synergy between the three levels, so teachers, the administrators, and our senior admin. We have literally the whole district rowing at the same time and in the same direction.

Other phrases used to describe the growth planning process included:

working together side-by-side, positive conversations, regular review, personalized, individualized, getting others' perspectives, encouraging.

Teachers described the growth planning process as valuable when they had regular opportunities to share their goals, strategies, and progress with a principal and/or colleague. Teachers identified two notable models.

At our school, we meet at the beginning of the year with one of our administrators for kind of an instructional coaching format, where we take some time and go through the PGP progress, look at our strengths, and where we would like to grow in our professional development. And from there we are coached and asked questions to help us get to where we want to be. Then throughout the year we meet with our instructional leader and kind of evaluate the process, see what has worked well, change anything that needs to be changed to help us continue to grow.

Another teacher described the process of growth planning that had recently been adopted in her school.

This year we did it a little bit differently. We did our independent work, and then we met with small collaborative groups to talk about what our goals were and to have feedback and conversation about our individual goals. And then, throughout the year, we have been following up at various staff meetings with where we are at with our PGP goals and reflecting upon those.

Based upon experiences with an instructional leadership project that included a Generative Dialogue model of growth planning, principals articulated the important role that growth plans play in teacher professional learning. Principal involvement in this process included role modelling the traits of growth and vulnerability, providing regularized opportunities for growth plan discussions with other staff and with school leaders, and using the information gleaned from growth plans to facilitate opportunities for teachers to access resources. When done this way, teachers echoed their support for the growth planning process and the role it played in their development. A teacher said,

Truthfully, I just looked at mine yesterday and said, okay, have I done this? What's coming up? What am I going to say at my meeting? And I realised, whoops, I need to do more of this. So, I printed off some things today to have more exit slips for kids when they leave the classroom, and more check-ins with their learning. So, it's better to have it on a monthly basis rather than the stuff it in the closet and pull it out at the end of the year.

Key challenges in implementing sustained growth planning were identified as competing professional priorities and the lack of job-embedded time. Teachers indicated that when growth plans were written at the start of the year, handed in to their principal, and only sporadically

reviewed at the end of the year, the process was seen as irrelevant, an add on, or something that was "done to me."

Most saw limited value for this process, describing it as compliance. The following dialogue occurred between two teachers in one of the focus groups:

To be honest, I haven't looked at mine since the meeting. We met in September. I put it away and I haven't looked at it.

I'm in the same boat. I haven't looked at mine since September. I have some of it in the forefront because I can remember my goals.

Truthfully, like, it should be something that I do on my own, but it's just never been in the forefront of my mind. Not that that's a good thing. It should be more important to me, but it's just one of those things that you add to your list to try to get to.

The following suggestions were made in focus groups for the teacher growth portion for the TGSE policy:

1. Make professional growth a more purposeful, collaborative, and sustained process;
2. Embed collaborative growth plan processes into the school schedule;
3. Provide ear-marked time for central office, school leaders, and teachers to engage in conversation about professional growth and growth plans;
4. Require the growth plan to be viewed and frequently reviewed by school leaders;
5. Balance the individual and system priorities as part of professional growth;
6. Provide exemplars of the Teaching Quality Standard to guide growth planning; and
7. Use professional growth plans as a tool to implement the Teaching Quality Standard.

Teacher Supervision in Tamarack School District

Participants in all three focus groups consistently defined supervision as principals' presence in classrooms. In this district, supervision was characterized by "pop ins," walkthroughs, hallway visibility, informal "come and go," visits with children and conversations about what was being taught, conversations with teachers and groups of teachers, gleaning information about growth plan progress, being available to teachers when needed, co-teaching with teachers. In short, participants described supervision as spending lots of time in classrooms to ascertain the quality of instruction and student learning.

However, experiences of supervision varied between central office leaders, school leaders, and teachers. Central office leaders indicated:

Supervision is just making it a priority to get in and have those pre-conversations, visit the classroom, and then post conversations, and be willing to help provide support. And

having teachers feel safe enough and comfortable enough that they can actually ask for the support. So, I think once again, it's building those positive relationships.

School leaders generally accepted supervision to be "*just being in rooms when I can… and it's not formal… it's conversations that we're having while I'm in there.*" Another school leader concurred that, "*And just to kind of create a culture where I'm there because I want to see what's going on in the class and I'm interested. I still want to see the cool things that the teacher is doing with kids, or I'm there because the teacher needs some help and I would love to support in any way I can.*"

A point of divergence occurred in the extent to which teachers reported the presence of school leaders in the classrooms. While a number of teachers indicated that school leaders were frequently present in their rooms, this was not a consistent experience. For example, one teacher stated:

For the most part, I am left alone. I just do my thing, aside from when we have our staff meetings and PD days where we're kind of directed on what's going to happen, or any committees I'm a part of. But as far as my day-to-day teaching, I'm often just doing it on my own. I'm comfortable doing it on my own at this stage of the game, but it's infrequent that I have anyone coming by to look or observe or make comment.

Another noted, "*I have a little bit of different understanding of support. We have a very hands-off administration. We were told several times, you are professionals. You know your kids best.*"

The following suggestions were made in focus groups for the teacher supervision portion for the TGSE policy:

1. Define teacher supervision;
2. Identify best supervisory practice;
3. Make time available for purposeful and focused presence in classrooms followed by feedback;
4. Encourage the explicit link between growth plans, professional growth, and supervision;
5. Provide differentiation of supervision based on teacher context;
6. Ensure all principals are actively participating in teacher supervision, don't leave it to chance that is being done; and
7. Encourage professional conversations to be at the heart of supervision.

Teacher Evaluation in Tamarack School District

Participants in all three focus groups agreed that the term *evaluation* was synonymous with judgment. Agreement was also noted about the idea of data being collected to support

judgments made about teaching practice. Uniformity of thought coalesced around support for current language in the TGSE policy as written. All three groups emphasized the importance of building and maintaining positive relationships throughout the evaluation process.

It was noted, particularly by school leaders, that a more robust process of supervision would limit the need to conduct evaluations for continuing contract teachers. One stated that:

If there was more on-going supervision, we would never get to that spot. I do believe that if we had a better process before, there would be far fewer people we would think that need to undergo evaluation.

Participants strongly supported the intent and meaning of the existing policy. Teachers and principals emphasized the fairness in the language associated with the evaluation portion of the TGSE. They particularly supported the option for a teacher to self-initiate an evaluation. One teacher captured the shared sentiment when noting,

One of the strengths is sometimes it's self-initiated by the teacher. And it's sort of telling the administrator, I'd love for you to give me feedback. And sometimes it's because a teacher is thinking of making a move, and the evaluation is used for showing the next school 'these are my proficiencies. This is what my principal thinks of me'. And then there's a strength that it has to have explicit reasons for the purpose, and then afterwards it gives a timeline.

Teachers felt that the purpose of evaluation would be best accomplished through a process that took into consideration multiple contextual variables, such as: (a) length of service of the teacher, (b) subject area expertise of evaluator, (c) size of school, and (d) changing instructional responsibilities.

For example, one teacher stated "*If you're in a job that is unfamiliar to you, it's not fair to have that first year as an evaluation.*" Another noted:

There could be some turbulence with bringing someone in that doesn't know our kids and doesn't know the way that we interact with them on a daily basis. It could come off as not having a proper understanding of how it is.

As with supervision, one of the challenges with the evaluation portion of the policy was viewed to be its inconsistent application throughout the district. Principals held varying understandings about when, how, and why they might initiate evaluative procedures. Some felt it was onerous, lengthy, and disruptive to school culture. A central office leader observed:

I don't think the issue is anything to do with policy, the issue is administrators were former teachers. Teachers go into the profession because they want to help people, they don't want to come down hard on people when they need to. And so that's where we all

struggle is having administrators being willing to go the extra mile to go through a difficult evaluation.

This challenge was echoed by a principal who recognized "*you are putting someone's career at risk. You don't want to be doing that willy nilly.*" It appeared, then, that all participants recognized the tensions in enacting the policy, while also acknowledging its clarity and its necessary role in supporting the professionalism of teachers and ensuring the highest quality of teaching and learning.

The following suggestions were made in focus groups for the teacher evaluation portion for the TGSE policy:

1. Make a transparent and explicit link between the processes of growth, supervision, and evaluation;
2. Base evaluations on the Teaching Quality Standard; and
3. Consider evaluating teachers based on graduated levels of expertise within the Teaching Quality Standard.

Leadership Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation in Tamarack School District

When teachers were asked whether principals should be held accountable to the standards comprise their positions in a manner similar to that which is expected of teachers through the TGSE, they hesitated. Generally speaking, teachers were not sure there was much to be gained by evaluating principals in the same manner as teachers.

Principals were not hesitant about indicating that a TGSE policy for themselves and for other people in central office positions would be a good thing. One principal captured the general sentiment by stating:

I think we'd all welcome that and I think in every level, whether you're principal or an associate or superintendent, I think it's good to have that. We appreciate the accountability… and would welcome that process in our own growth.

Central office leaders echoed the views of the principals and were very open to a TGSE-type policy being adopted for principals and central office leaders. This central office leader explained that:

Yes, I'd be fine with both groups having policies similar to the teacher ones. I don't distinguish a lot between my principals and my teachers in the way I operate anyways. I know the challenge with the senior admin would just be our role descriptions. So, we are not like a group of teachers that, kind of, all do a similar role. I would say what the district's technology leader does on a weekly basis, is night and day from what I do in my role.

Emerging Themes from the Tamarack School District Case Study

The *Teacher, Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy 2.1.5* (TGSE) (Government of Alberta, 1998) served as the basis of the conceptual framework applied to the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We asked participants about what they thought growth, supervision, and evaluation meant, and about their knowledge of approaches, processes, and experiences.

Regarding these concepts, the following themes were evident:

1. Growth and supervision were closely connected in this school district.
2. Teachers appreciated the ongoing conversations they had with their principals about their professional growth plans. However, having the conversations was not uniform across the district – some principals made it priority, others did not.
3. Growth and supervision were perceived as kindred processes. They were characterized as formative assessment. Evaluation was clearly understood as a contractual requirement for new teachers seeking certification and continuous employment. Leaders tended to view evaluation as an administrative and labour requirement.
4. Principals had access to ongoing conversations with their central office leaders. They appreciated the regular visits to their schools by central office leaders and being able to enter into Generative Dialogue about their own professional growth and the ways in which they were fulfilling their professional obligations.
5. Quality supervision and evaluation was impeded by lack of time, resources, and metrics to guide interpretation of the *Teaching Quality Standard* (TQS) (Government of Alberta, 1997).

Themes Emerging from Cross-Case Analysis

Though the insights provided in each of the cases described above are important and will be of interest to both practitioners and policy makers, the primary purpose of this investigation was to enhance understanding of *teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation* as practiced by educators in randomly selected Alberta school authorities. Individual cases were studied to gain understanding of the complex ways this policy was experienced in a number of contexts (Stake, 2006, p. 41). Each case summary illuminates one contextualized set of experiences of teachers, principals, and central office leaders in their specific geographic, social, economic, and educational setting. Building on the findings and emerging themes from these individual illustrations, our cross-case analysis identified fourteen themes listed below.

Cross-case theme development was ongoing over the course of the study. Early in our investigation, we identified and discussed commonalities among the cases and generated a list of emergent themes. Five team members met for two days in August 2017 and agreed upon 12 draft themes. The members then wrote a second draft of these themes along with a short description of each at a meeting in September of 2017. Additional changes and refinements were made over the

interpretive phase of the study at and following full team meetings in October and November of 2017. The 13 themes are listed below.

Chapter Summary

This collective case study portion of our study illustrates the ways that teachers, principals, and superintendents in nine school authorities understand and enact teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation. While each case summary stands as one contextualized set of approaches situated in its specific geographic, social, economic, and educational setting, the fourteen cross-case themes highlight strengths, challenges, and promising possibilities for future practice across the areas of teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation.

Theme One The vision of the central office team strongly influenced how the TGSE policy was enacted. In particular, when the central office team shared their vision of teacher growth, and strongly supported the growth planning process, robust implementation practices were evident throughout the authority.

Theme Two: The intended outcomes of the TGSE policy were achieved when support for growth was intentional and sustained. This proactive focus on growth was seen as a possible way to circumvent many of the challenges associated with formal evaluation

Theme Three: Teachers appreciated, yet wanted more opportunities to engage in collaborative discussions with administrators and colleagues about growth plans. Conversations that facilitated reflection on practice were viewed as an integral part of their professional learning.

Theme Four: There was inconsistent application of the Teaching Quality Standard informing Professional Growth Plans. While some authorities accepted goals that originated from a variety of sources, many expected an explicit link to the Teaching Quality Standard.

Theme Five: Views varied on the degree to which professional growth plans should be developed in connection with school and/or authority goals. Many teachers, principals, and superintendents supported the integration of system, school, and individual goals; others expressed their desire for increased professional autonomy.

Theme Six: Limited attention was given to gathering evidence of the impact of professional growth plans on the expressed TGSE policy goal of optimizing student learning. Clarity was required to explicitly link the professional growth plan to measures of student learning.

Theme Seven: The development of criteria and exemplars was seen to be of value in guiding teachers in preparing their growth plans. Additionally, such exemplars were viewed to play a supportive role in the process of teacher supervision.

Theme Eight: Teachers, principals, and central office team members developed annual TPGPs in compliance with school authority policy.

Theme Nine: Many experienced teachers perceived that professional growth plans served a managerial and accountability function to which they complied. They noted that sustained conversations about professional growth would be more helpful in improving their instructional practices and enhancing student learning than filling out standardized growth plans.

Theme Ten: Supervision processes were unclear, inconsistently applied, and not well understood. Supervision was often conflated with evaluation.

Theme Eleven: Finding time to effectively engage in the processes of growth, supervision, and evaluation was a concern for principals. The time required to repeatedly evaluate teachers transitioning from temporary to probationary to continuing contracts was particularly concerning and understood to primarily serve bureaucratic purposes.

Theme Twelve: Evaluation was seen to be useful if implemented in keeping with the intent of the TGSE policy.

Theme Thirteen: Teachers, principals, and superintendents supported the idea that a policy similar to the TGSE should be developed to provide for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and school authority leaders.

CHAPTER FIVE: SURVEY RESULTS: PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND SUPERINTENDENTS

This chapter reports the results of online surveys of 710 teachers, 131 principals, and 33 superintendents from across Alberta from May 15 to July 31, 2017. The quantitative component of this report aimed to answer three research questions within the larger study of TGSE policy.

1. To what extent do teachers, principals and superintendents perceive that teacher growth plans have a demonstrable relationship to the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)?
2. To what extent do teachers, principals and superintendents perceive that ongoing supervision by the principal provides teachers with the guidance and support they need to be successful?
3. To what degree does the implementation of the TGSE provide a foundation that could inform related policy development for the growth, supervision and evaluation of principals and superintendents?

Accordingly, this phase of data collection aimed to survey participants for their perceptions about various facets of teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation.

Method

Participants were chosen from a random stratified sample of Alberta teachers and principals. Online teacher survey links were distributed by the Alberta Teachers' Association in May, June, and July of 2017. Superintendent survey links were sent to each of the 75 Alberta school superintendents by the College of Alberta School Superintendents. Online teacher and principal survey links were also forwarded to the practicing teachers and principals who were graduate students over the summer.

Three variations of an online survey were designed and developed to collect meaningful quantitative data that augments the qualitative focus-group interview data. The three instruments were the TGSE Online Survey for Teachers, the TGSE Online Survey for Principals, and the TGSE Online Survey for Superintendents. After careful review of the relevant literature on teacher professional learning and growth, teacher supervision, teacher evaluation, and teacher professional development, an initial pool of items was written for each of the surveys. The items were then reviewed, selected, and revised by the research team. To ensure content representativeness in the surveys, a panel of teachers conducted an item review of the teacher surveys. Three retired school principals who served as sessional instructors at the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary helped us revise the principal and superintendent survey items.

Both item review panels rated the relevance of the items to the domains of teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation using a 4-point rating scale (1 = not relevant, 2= somewhat relevant, 3 = quite relevant, 4 = highly relevant). Feedback and inputs obtained from both item review panels resulted in revisions all three surveys.

Officials at the Alberta Teachers' Association then reviewed draft versions of the survey instruments. Their commentary was used to refine the surveys. Once this process was completed, electronic versions of the three surveys were created using Qualtrics online survey software. Please refer to Appendices B, C, and D for the three survey instruments. The content for each online survey was as follows:

1. The **teacher survey** contained 29 items. Ten items collected the demographic characteristics of participants. The remaining items measured participants' perceptions in the domains of the teacher growth planning process, the relationship of the teacher professional growth plan to TQS, resources and support, the impact of professional learning activities on teacher growth, ongoing supervision, evaluation; and development of similar policies for principals and superintendents.

2. The perception items employed a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree. A 'Not Applicable' category was used in Q3 and Q4. The impact items were on a 4-point rating scale, ranging from 1 = No impact to 4 = A large impact, as well as a 'Not Applicable' option. One of the items was open-ended, which asked teachers the number of times they had written a TPGP. Q6a and Q16 were dichotomous with a 'Yes' or 'No' response format. Specifically, they tapped teachers' discussion of TPGP with their colleagues and teachers' formal evaluation for employment or certification in the last two years, respectively. If a teacher answered 'Yes' to Q6a, s/he would proceed with the rating of the impact. Likewise, if a teacher answered 'Yes' to Q16, s/he would answer Q17 to Q19, which looked at principal's evaluation practice. If the answer was 'No', the teacher would proceed to the demographic items at the end of the survey.

3. The **principal survey** contained 33 items. Eight items captured the participants' demographic data while twenty-five items measured school administrators' perceptions in similar domains to those in the teacher survey, but from the principals' vantage point. The perception items employed a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree. The impact items were on a 4-point rating scale, ranging from 1 = No impact to 4 = A large impact, as well as a 'Not Applicable' option.

4. The **superintendent survey** contained 30 items. Seven items gathered participants' demographic data while twenty-three items measured their perceptions for domains and in formats similar to those in the teacher and principal surveys.

A total of 874 surveys were collected using Qualtrics, an online software system. The response rates were respectively: 23 percent of teachers and principals and 44 percent of

superintendents. The response rates for each category of participant were deemed as acceptable to good.

Demographic Description of Participants

Table 5.1 presents a detailed description of backgrounds for participating teachers, school administrators, and superintendents.

Table 5.1: Demographic Background of Survey Participants, Alberta, 2017*

Background/Participant	Teacher N = 710		School Administrator N=131		Superintendent N=33	
School Level						
Elementary	47.6		55.0			
Middle/Junior High	23.7		18.3			
High	24.9		26.7			
Type of School Authority						
Public	60.6		71.8		69.7	
Separate/Catholic**	28.7		19.8		15.2	
Francophone**	2.3		3.1		-	
Private/Independent	7.0		5.3		6.1	
Public Charter**	0.3		-		6.1	
School Location						
Metro	1.4		2.3			
Urban	21.4		27.5			
Suburban	14.4		16.0			
Rural	59.0		54.2			
Student Population						
100 or less	6.5		4.6			
101−200	15.1		14.5			
201−400	38.0		42.0			
401−800	29.7		32.1			
800 and above	6.9		6.9			
Employment Status						
	Full-time, permanent certificate	78.9	Principal	70.2	Superintendent	69.7
	Full-time, interim certificate	6.8	Assistant Principal	7.6	Deputy Superintendent	3.0
	Part-time, permanent certificate	6.3	Associate Principal	2.3	Associate Superintendent	18.2
	Part-time, interim certificate	0.6	Vice Principal	17.6	Director	3.0
	Substitute teacher	1.1				
	Other (e.g., Counsellor, Learning Coordinator)	2.5	Other (e.g., Coordinator, Manager)	2.3	Other (Designated Signing Authority for First Nation Schools)	3.0

Subject Specialization			
Language Arts	21.0		
Mathematics	9.4		
Science	10.7		
Social Studies	8.2		
Physical Education	4.5		
Fine Arts	2.3		
Music	3.2		
Career and Technology	4.1		
French	3.9		
Other (All elementary subjects, Catholicism, Early Childhood)	28.6		
Years in Position in Alberta			
This is my first year	2.3	13.0	6.1
1 to 2 years	3.5	9.2	12.1
3 to 5 years	11.5	31.3	42.4
6 to 10 years	19.6	29.0	21.2
11 to 15 years	16.6	9.9	15.2
16 to 20 years	14.6	3.8	-
More than 20 years	27.7	3.8	-
Years of Teaching at this School			
This is my first year	8.3		
1 to 2 years	8.6		
3 to 5 years	22.0		
6 to 10 years	22.3		
11 to 15 years	14.1		
16 to 20 years	10.1		
More than 20 years	10.6		
Highest Credential Level			
Bachelor's	76.5	18.3	
Master's	19.2	80.9	81.8
Doctoral	0.3	0.8	15.2

*All figures are percentages of *N* by participant and background categories. Percentages may not total 100 within these categories because of rounding or missing data.

** Separate/Catholic, Francophone, and Public Charter school authorities all belong to Alberta's publicly-funded school system

As Table 5.1 indicates, nearly half of the responding teachers were from Alberta elementary schools, and the remainder taught at either middle/junior high or high schools. A majority of participating teachers taught in public schools. About 29 percent of the teachers taught in separate schools; the remainder were from private/independent, Francophone, and charter schools.

In terms of the school location of participants, more than half of the teachers taught in rural school authorities, while 46 percent of the teachers taught in urban, suburban, and metro areas. Most teachers taught in schools with a student population ranging from 201 to 800.

A majority of teachers held a full-time permanent certificate. Only 5.8 percent of the teachers were new to the job (i.e., first two years of teaching) and more than half of teacher respondents were experienced teachers with more than ten years' experience. A majority of participating teachers had a Bachelor's degree, 19.2 percent had a master's degree, and 0.3 percent had a doctoral degree. The sample represents teachers from all subject specializations ranging from language arts to science and mathematics to social studies, physical education, and others. About 29 percent of the teachers reported they taught all elementary subjects.

Table 5.1 further illustrates that half of the responding school administrators were from elementary schools; the other half were from middle/junior high and high schools, similar to the teacher profile. Seventy percent of the administrative participants were principals, while others were assistant (vice) (associate) principals or managers.

Similar to teacher participants, a majority of the school administrators were from Alberta public schools, followed by separate/Catholic, private/independent, and Francophone schools. Half of the administrators were from the rural area and the other half were from urban, suburban, or metro schools. Sixteen percent of administrators were from the suburban schools and less than 3 percent were from the metro area. Approximately 74 percent of the administrators served at medium-sized schools with a student population that ranged from 201 to 800. Twenty two percent had only two years of experience and 78 percent had more than three years of experience. A majority of the administrators had a master's degree.

A large majority (70 percent) of the superintendent participants were employed by public school authorities. The remaining 30 percent were from separate/Catholic, private/independent, and charter authorities. Most superintendents had more than 3 years of experience in Alberta's education system and held a master's degree. A higher percentage of superintendents held doctoral degrees than the teacher and principal participants.

Quality of Instrumentation

According to the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014), validity, reliability, and fairness evidence is important for instrument design and development. Validity refers to "the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretation of test scores for proposed uses of tests [or surveys]" (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014, p.11). Validation is an ongoing process, which occurs at the beginning of assessment design and continues throughout development and implementation (Messick, 1995). Two of the major sources for invalidity are construct underrepresentation and construct irrelevant variance. These two sources were controlled in our study by inviting four independent panels of experts to

review the items and response formats in the TGSE teacher, principal, and superintendent surveys.

Construct Representation

The first panel of experts consisted of the research team members who are well-versed in research, policy, and practice in the areas of teacher professional learning and development, teacher supervision and evaluation, as well as educational leadership and governance. Prior to joining academia, almost all of them served in different capacities (i.e., teacher, principal, superintendent) in K−12 school settings in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The second panel of content expert reviewers comprised two teachers from Alberta school jurisdictions (i.e., Lodgepole Pine School District and a charter school), whereas the third panel included three retired principals who have extensive experience supervising teachers to complete annual TPGPs at their respective schools. They were also familiar with both the district and system policies in Alberta. For both panels, their ratings of item relevancy of the surveys items fell within the range of 0.75 and 1.00, indicating good to excellent content representativeness of the three survey instruments.

The final quality assurance of the survey items came from two advisory committee members, both senior officials at the Alberta Teachers' Association, one of whom is an adjunct professor at the University of Alberta.

To gather evidence of construct validity, we performed Exploratory Factor Analysis as provided in SPSS Version 24. Reliability refers to the degree of consistency of scores and the magnitude of measurement error in data derived from an instrument. A key indicator of reliability in survey methods is internal consistency. A respondent's scores should be internally consistent across the items on the instrument (Creswell, 2012). Indices of internal consistency at both the scale and sub-scale levels were computed using Cronbach's alpha.

Evidence of fairness in a survey instrument may also be considered by checking for item bias across different sub-groups of respondents (e.g., gender, language or geographic location. Item bias or item impact may be examined by conducting differential item functioning analysis (DIF) in a future phase of this project.

Teacher Surveys
Construct Relevance

Preliminary review of data enables an understanding of how attitudes and/or behaviours are interrelated in order to identify redundancy, trends, and synopses. A factor analysis or principal components analysis enables a focus on specific elements in a survey. These factors are not levers or buttons that enable policy-makers or administrators to simply reach out and change

attitudes. Rather, they suggest underlying variations or domains of ideas where respondents appear to categorize elements in particular ways.

To examine the factor structure of the teacher data, a Principal Component Analysis with the Varimax rotation was undertaken. A scree plot (eigenvalues greater than 1) was used to identify and extract three factors that explained a total of 56.4 percent of the variance in teacher responses. In general, these factors revolved around 1) teachers' perceptions relating to Teacher Growth Plans (30.5 percent of variance), 2) to teachers' perceptions relating to the Teaching Quality Standard (15.5 percent of variance), and 3) to teachers' perceptions about professional autonomy in relation to school and district goals (10.4 percent of variance). The corresponding Cronbach's alphas internally for each of these factors separately were 0.83, 0.65, and -0.28 for the 7 survey questions, 3 survey questions, and 2 survey questions respectively extracted.

Cronbach's alpha for the impact items was examined separately given a different scale for these items. The coefficient alpha of the 7 survey questions relating to impact was 0.68. The value of Cronbach's alpha at the scale level was 0.87 for these impact items, indicating very good internal consistency.

Principal Surveys

Parallel to the teacher survey analyses using Principal Component Analysis with the Varimax rotation method, seven factors were extracted that explained 66.5 percent of the variance in the school administrators' data.

Those seven factors related, in general, to administrators' perceptions about 1) their own knowledge and skills for evaluating teachers' instruction and competence (16 percent of variance), 2) the availability of time and support to supervise and evaluate teachers (11.6 percent of variance), 3) the use of information and resources such as time to support professional plans and growth for their teachers (11.3 percent of variance), 4)availability of school time, financial resources, clear procedures and opportunities to support and guide professional development and autonomy with teacher growth plans (8.2 percent of variance), 5) a provincial policy for school leaders' based on their previous experience (7.1 percent of variance), 6) the uses and usefulness of the Teacher Quality Standard (6.9 percent of variance), and 7) goal alignment of teachers' growth plans with school and district goals (5.5 percent of variance). Together, these 7 factors explained exactly two-thirds of the variance in principals' perceptions. Internal Cronbach's alpha coefficients are difficult to interpret given the small numbers of survey questions involved in such factors, but they generally ranged from 0.54 to 0.85 for each of these factors.

Like the teacher survey, those survey questions giving principals' appraisals of impact were analyzed separately. Cronbach's alpha for the 11 impact items was 0.78. Cronbach's alpha at the scale level was 0.87, indicating very good internal consistency.

Superintendent Surveys

Using the same Principal Components procedure with the Varimax rotation, seven factors were extracted that explained nearly four-fifths of the variance in superintendent data after examining the scree plot.

Overall, the survey questions identified within each factor related to superintendents' perceptions about 1) principals' relevant knowledge and skill and use of information to evaluate teachers' instructional practices for career-long professional learning and growth (19.4 percent of variance), 2) principals' practices relating to teacher growth plans (14.5 percent of variance), 3) availability of principals' time and support for supervision and evaluation (12.4 percent of variance), 4) the need for provincial policies on school leadership growth and evaluation , or principals' experience in informing those policies or those on teachers' growth planning (10.3 percent of variance) 5) the pertinence of the Teacher Quality Standard (10.1 percent of variance), 6) teacher autonomy and choice within (un) clearly-defined administrative procedures (7.6 percent of variance), and 7) teacher reference to the Teacher Quality Standard when preparing their growth plans (5.1 percent of variance). Together these 7 factors accounted for about four-fifths of the total variance. It remains difficult to make blanket statements about the internal consistency of such questions within the factors, given the small number of questions in for some factors, and the relatively restricted number of superintendent respondents. However, the Cronbach's alphas generally ranged from 0.65 to 0.89 which suggests a reliable instrument.

Similar to the teacher and principal surveys, all survey questions which invited superintendents' appraisal of impact were analyzed separately from other questions in the survey, since they adopted a different scale. Cronbach's alpha for these ten impact items was 0.74. Cronbach's alpha at the scale level was 0.89, indicating excellent internal consistency as one measure of reliability.

Those survey questions identified above from the principal components analysis may be considered as having sound construct and criterion validity and as especially relevant for this study of policy-personnel interactions in Alberta. Therefore, only these questions are featured and further detailed systematically in the *Results* section that follows.

Results

Teacher Perceptions

All teachers reported that they had completed TPGP at least once a year. The means, standard deviations, and percentages of their responses to each of the items (except Q6a, Q6b, and Q16) are presented in Tables 5.2 through 5.6 clustered by factor or domain. A total of 710 teachers completed the online survey. Missing data were random and minimal, that is, less than 3%, thus having no impact on teacher results.

Table 5.2 Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher Professional Growth Plans (TPGP)

Item #	Perception*	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
7	My school/school authority clearly articulates administrative procedures to guide me in the development of my professional growth plan.	5.1	16.6	60.1	17.2	2.90	0.73
9	In my school/school authority, there are resources available to fulfill my individual growth planning needs.	5.4	20.1	61.7	11.8	2.81	0.71
8	My school/school authority provides opportunities to help me understand the purpose, nature, and usage of teacher professional growth plans.	5.9	23.9	57.3	11.8	2.76	0.74
12	I feel that I have the time and experiences I need to meet my professional growth needs.	8.0	28.0	51.0	10.8	2.66	0.78
14	My teaching practice has improved as a result of ongoing supervision.	9.4	32.1	47.6	7.9	2.56	0.78
10	My principal has used teacher professional growth plans to allocate time for teachers to meet their growth planning needs.	11.4	33.2	41.7	11.5	2.55	0.85
15	My principal has used the information from teachers' professional growth plans to develop professional development activities.	15.2	40.0	36.3	5.5	2.33	0.81

Note. * Percentage proportion responding 1=Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

The mean scores in Table 5.2 indicate that over three-quarters of teachers perceive that their school or school authority has clear administrative procedures for guiding preparation of their annual growth plan. In addition, nearly three-quarters felt that they were provided with adequate resources and opportunities to understand the purpose, nature, and usage of their TPGPs.

However, the mean scores were relatively low for how their principals use the information from the plans to develop professional development activities. About 55% percent of the participating teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "*My principal has*

used the information from teachers' professional growth plans to develop professional development activities."

Taken together, these results suggest that principals are not frequently using growth plans for formative purposes. The low mean score for the statement, "*My teaching practice has improved as a result of ongoing supervision*" reiterates the importance for principals to use TPGPs to guide and support teacher professional learning. In other words, many teachers seem to perceive that ongoing supervision is disconnected from the content of their growth plan**.**

Table 5.3 Teachers' Perceptions about the Teaching Quality Standard

Item #	Perception*	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	I am knowledgeable about Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation.	4.5	9.0	64.5	22.0	3.04	0.70
3	The Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) is one of the documents I refer to while preparing my annual professional growth plan.	6.6	23.4	42.7	26.1	2.86	0.92
4	I believe the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) is useful in helping me to enhance my professional practice in teaching.	4.5	20.4	55.9	14.8	2.72	0.92

Note. * Percentage proportion responding 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

Table 5.3 shows that most responding teachers (87 percent) believed they were knowledgeable about teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation. The mean score for this question was the highest in this domain. Lower mean scores were noted for the two questions that assessed teachers' perceptions about the use of TQS. Twenty-five to 30 percent of teachers reported that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the two statements in these questions, indicating that at least one quarter of the teachers neither referred to the Teacher Quality Standard while preparing their annual growth plans, nor believed the Teacher Quality Standard was useful in enhancing their teaching practice.

Table 5.4 Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Autonomy

Item #	Perception*	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
13	I feel compelled to align the goals in my professional growth plan to the goals of school and district.	3.5	13.8	47.2	33.4	3.13	0.78
11	I feel that I have been given professional autonomy and choice to develop and implement my professional growth plan.	6.3	13.8	50.4	27.3	3.01	0.83

Note. * Percentage proportion responding 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

With regard to teachers' autonomy in preparing their TPGPs, the mean scores were high for both questions. Table 5.4 suggests a cognitive dissonance in many teachers. On one hand,

they felt compelled to align the goals in their TPGPs to the goals of the school and school authority. On the other hand, they reported having been given the professional autonomy and choice to develop and implement their TPGPs. These results may indicate a tension in these areas among Alberta teachers.

Figure 5.1 Teachers' Perceptions of Growth Planning, Supervision, and Evaluation
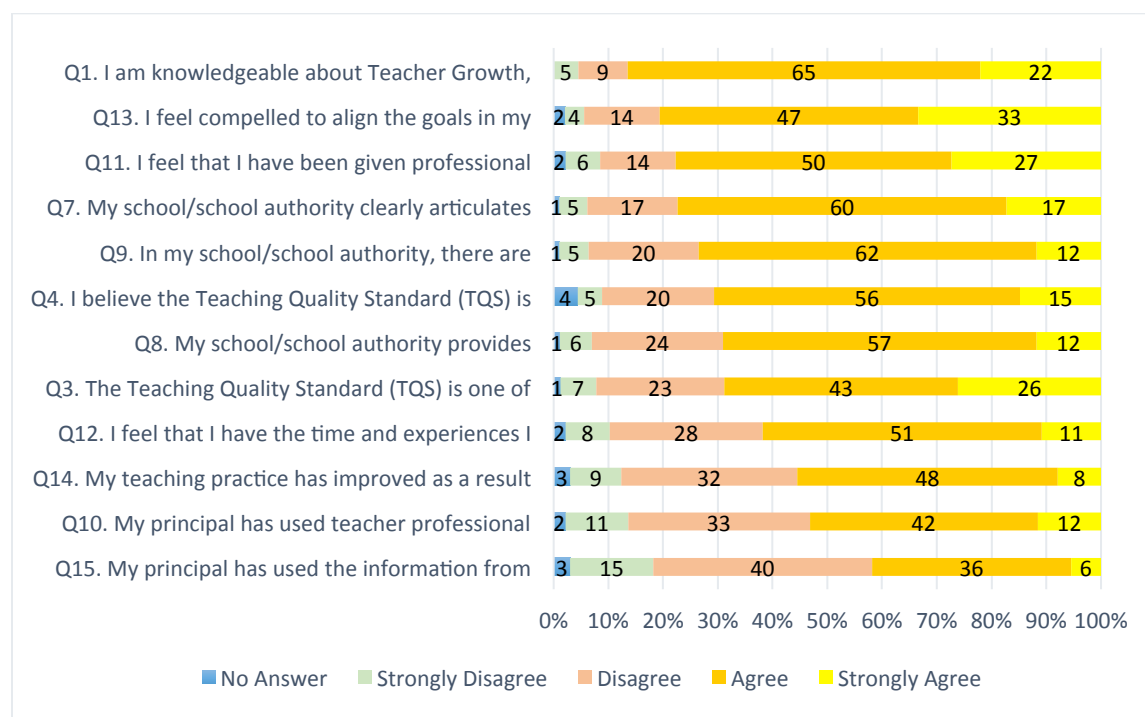
Figure 5.1 focuses on patterns from the foregoing Tables 5.2 to 5.5 to compare the relative weights in teachers' responses to questions about growth planning, supervision, and evaluation. It clearly shows that 86.5 percent of teacher participants believed they were knowledgeable about the policy. Only 41.8 percent of the teachers reported that their principals had used the information from teachers' professional growth plans to develop professional development activities. Overall, teachers self-report high levels of knowledge the provincial policy, and understanding of how the school or school authority has translated that policy locally. However they report that school administrators have not translated their growth plans into professional growth activities that would enable continuous improvement of their teaching practice.

Table 5.5 Teachers' Perceptions of Impact of Professional Activities on Teacher Growth, Alberta, 2017

Item #	Perception*	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
5g	My reflections on professional practices.	1.5	5.4	25.1	66.1	3.52	0.83
5b	Participation in professional development activities that aim to improve teaching and student learning.	0.6	8.3	28.3	61.7	3.49	0.77
5c	Participation in professional learning communities that aim to improve teaching and student learning.	2.8	11.0	30.6	53.9	3.32	0.90
5f	Participation in conferences that help improve teaching and student learning.	1.8	12.0	35.8	47.7	3.24	0.92
5a	Ongoing conversations between myself, and my principal, to improve teaching and student learning.	6.3	18.9	31.4	41.1	3.03	1.03
5d	Implementation of my annual professional growth plan.	4.4	21.0	40.3	33.5	3.01	0.89
5e	Participation in action research that helps improve teaching and student learning.	9.7	24.9	32.3	19.7	2.35	1.27

Note. * Percentage proportion responding 1 = No Impact, 2 = A Small Impact, 3 = A Moderate Impact, 4 = A Large Impact, 5 = Not applicable.

Figure 5.2 Teachers' Perceptions of Impact of Professional Activities on Teacher Growth
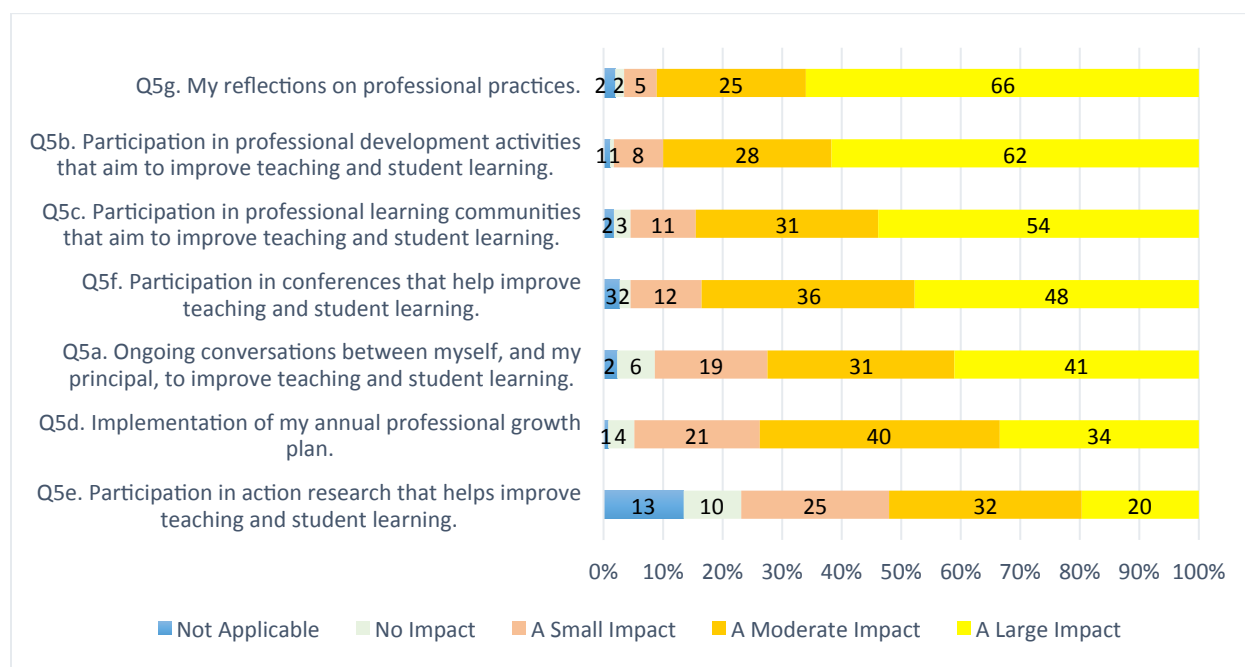
When comparing the impact of various types of activity on their professional practice, patterns in teacher responses demonstrate a clear gradient from introspection toward more externally-directed forms of professional growth activity. Locus of control–whether self-driven or other-driven– appears important. Moreover, we can distinguish between individual autonomy and various forms of collective self-control. These patterns, summarized in both Table 5.5 and

illustrated in Figure 5.2, indicate that reflection and professional development are perceived as having greater impact than action research on teachers' professional growth. Two-thirds of teachers reported that reflections on professional practices had a large impact on their professional growth. Only one-in-five teachers found that participation in action research helped improve teaching and student learning.

Collegial activities were highly valued. Participation in professional learning communities and in conferences that aim to improve teaching and learning were rated highly by teachers for their impact. Among those teachers (52.4%) who reported that they had collective discussions about their professional growth plan with their colleagues, their rating of the impact of such a collegial activity was moderate.

Table 5.6 Teacher Perceptions of Teacher Evaluation, Alberta, 2017 (N = 177)

Item #	Perception *	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
18	My principal communicated the purposes of the evaluation in a respectful and transparent manner.	5.1	5.1	31.6	58.2	3.43	0.81
19	The documents used by my principal in my evaluation referred to the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS).	4.0	10.2	37.9	48.0	3.30	0.81
17	My principal used multiple sources of data during the evaluation process.	6.2	12.4	51.4	29.9	3.05	0.82

Note. * Percentage proportions responding 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

Figure 5.3 Teacher Perceptions of Teacher Evaluation (N = 177)
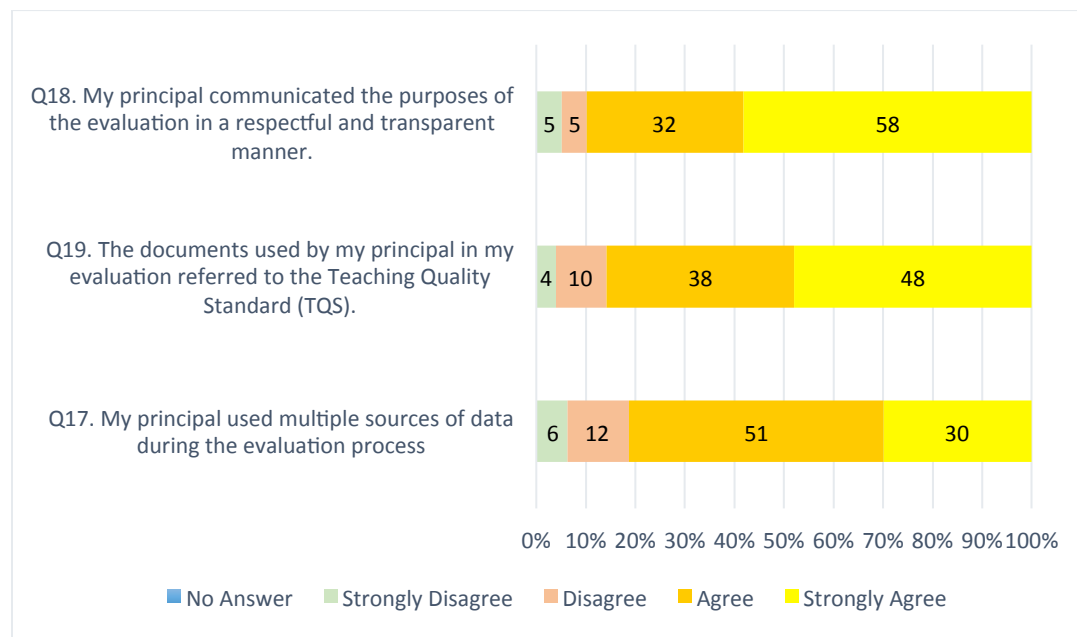
Approximately 25 percent of the teachers who completed the online survey reported they had been formally evaluated for employment or certification in the last two years. About seven percent of these teachers held an interim professional certificate and the other six percent were part-time teachers. These two groups of teachers were engaged in a formal evaluation by their principals in order to obtain a permanent certificate and to stay in the teaching profession, respectively. Table 5.6 and Figure 5.3 summarize teacher perspectives on evaluation in Alberta. A majority of the teachers (89.8 percent) agreed that their principal communicated the purposes of the evaluation in a respectful and transparent manner and their principal referred to the Teacher Quality Standard during the evaluation (85.9 percent). Four-fifths of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their principals had used multiple sources of data in the evaluation.

Principal Perceptions

The means, standard deviations, and percentages of responses to each of the items are presented below as clustered by factor or domain. A total of 131 principals completed the online survey.

Table 5.7 Principals' Perceptions of Teacher Evaluation and Supervision Practices

Item #	Perception*	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
21	I communicate the purposes of teacher evaluation to my teaching staff in a respectful and transparent manner.	0.8	0.0	40.5	58.8	3.57	0.54
22	I refer to the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) while evaluating teachers.	1.5	3.1	34.4	61.1	3.55	0.64
15	I am dedicated to my teaching staff's career-long professional learning and growth.	0.0	2.3	42.7	55.0	3.53	0.55
19	I have relevant knowledge and skills to evaluate teachers' instructional practices at my school.	1.5	1.5	54.2	42.7	3.38	0.60
18	I have relevant knowledge and skills to evaluate teacher competence as stipulated in the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS).	1.5	3.1	52.7	42.7	3.37	0.62
20	I use multiple sources of data when evaluating teachers at my school.	0.8	2.3	56.5	40.5	3.37	0.57
13	Teachers' instructional practices in my school have improved as a result of ongoing supervision.	0.8	7.6	72.5	19.1	3.10	0.54
14	Most teachers in my school are satisfied with my supervisory practice.	0.8	5.3	79.4	14.5	3.08	0.47

Note. * Percentage proportion responding 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

Figure 5.4 Principals' Perceptions of Supervision and Evaluation Practices, Alberta, 2017
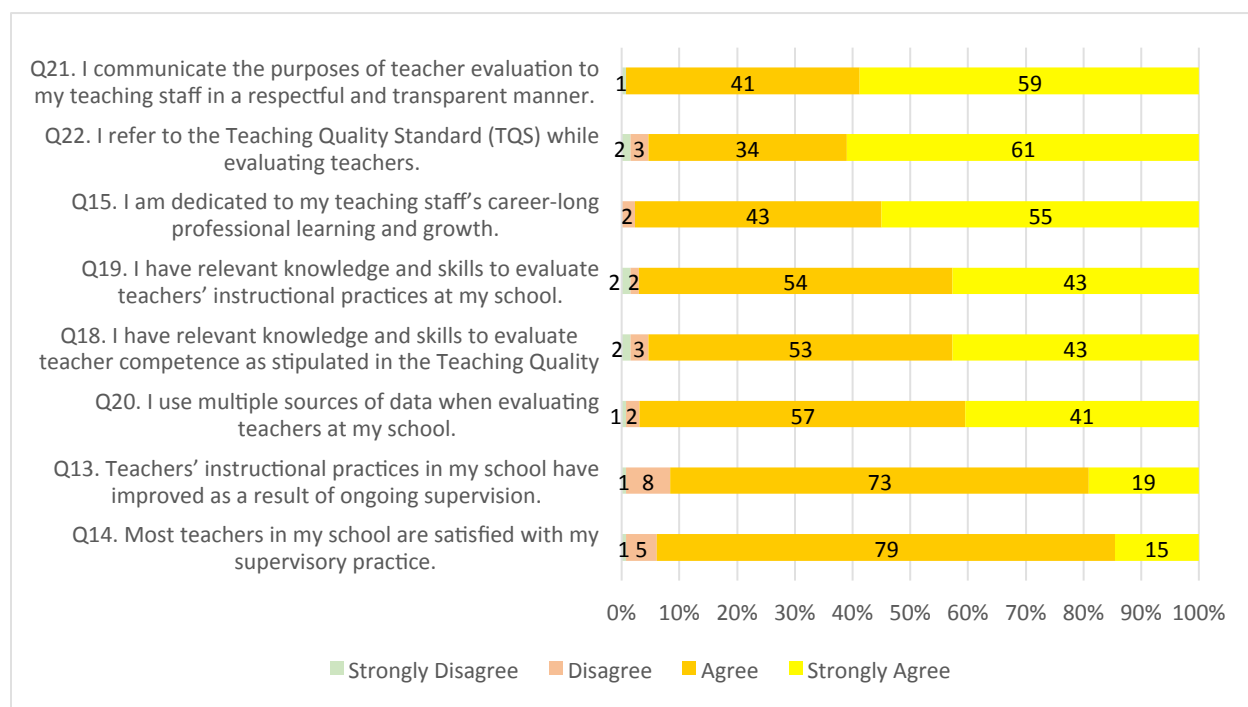
As shown in Table 5.7 and Figure 5.4, principals' responses follow a purpose-through-to product gradient. The more principals responded to questions relating to purposes, objectives, and intentions, the more so they agreed with the statement. Conversely, the more so principals responded to questions that dealt with activities relating to uses of data, resultant changes in teachers' instructional practices, or teacher satisfaction with supervisory practices, the less often they reported strong levels of agreement.

Overall, principals tended to favourably endorse questions that measured principals' practices for teacher evaluation and supervision. The results are not surprising given that this was a self-reported measure. Moreover, principals' responses tended to mirror superintendents' patterns. A majority of principals (99.3 percent) agreed that they communicated the purposes of teacher evaluation to their teaching staff in a respectful and transparent manner. This finding was consistent with teachers' perceptions. Most principals agreed that they referred to the TQS while evaluating teachers and were dedicated to their teaching staff's career-long professional learning and growth. They perceived they had the relevant knowledge and skills to evaluate teachers' instructional practices and teachers' competence as stipulated in the TQS document.

Compared to the teacher results, a higher percentage of principals stated they use multiple sources of data in the evaluation of teachers. Most principals also agreed that teachers' instructional practices at their schools had improved as a result of ongoing supervision, but the proportion that strongly agreed was marked lower. So too did most principals report that teachers

were satisfied with the principals' supervisory practice but the percentage proportion that strongly agreed with the statement was distinctly lower (14.5 percent). Moreover, when compared with teacher results, the mean scores and percentages from teachers and principals on perceptions about supervision toward instructional improvement were notably different. Ninety-two percent of principals perceived their ongoing supervision had improved teachers' instructional practices; the corresponding proportion of teachers perceiving instructional improvement through supervision was 56 percent**.**

Table 5.8 Principals' Perceptions of Time and Support, Alberta, TPGP, Supervision and Evaluation

Item #	Perception*	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
9	I have the time and support I need in discharging my responsibilities related to teachers' professional growth plans.	11.5	26.7	55.0	6.9	2.57	0.79
23	I have the time and support I need to evaluate teachers.	10.7	29.8	52.7	6.9	2.56	0.78
17	I have the time and support I need to supervise teachers.	15.3	32.1	45.8	6.9	2.44	0.83

Note. * Percentage proportion responding 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

Figure 5.5 Principals' Perceptions of Time and Support for TPGP, Supervision and Evaluation
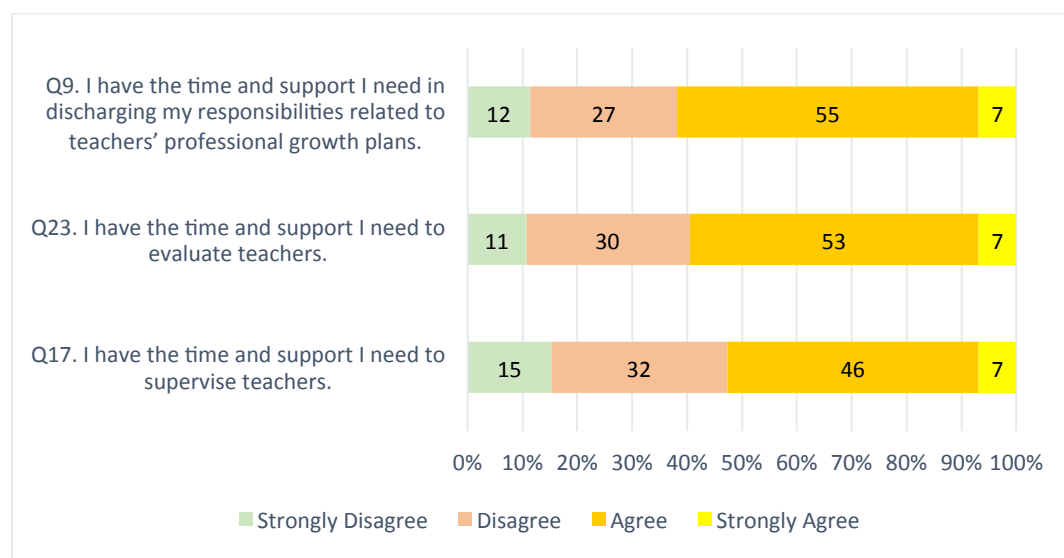
Time is scarce; it's the commodity they cannot seem to create, either for supporting teachers or receiving support themselves when supervising teachers. Table 5.8 and Figure 5.5 above reveal that nearly 38 to 47 percent of principals reported that time and support were

constraints that hindered them from discharging their responsibilities related to TPGPS, evaluation, and supervision.

Table 5.9 Principals' Uses for Teacher Professional Growth Plans

Item #	Perception*	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
12	I provide teachers in my school with guidance and support in developing and implementing their professional growth plans.	1.5	6.1	72.5	19.8	3.11	0.56
16	I use the information from my teaching staff's professional growth plans to develop professional development activities.	3.1	18.3	57.3	21.4	2.97	0.72
7	I use teacher professional growth plans to allocate time for teachers to meet their needs.	2.3	16.8	63.4	17.6	2.96	0.66
6	I use teacher professional growth plans to inform the allocation of professional development resources to meet specific teacher-defined needs.	2.3	16.0	66.4	15.3	2.95	0.64

Note. * Percentage proportions responding 1=Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

**Figure 5.6 Principals' Uses for Teacher Growth Plans**
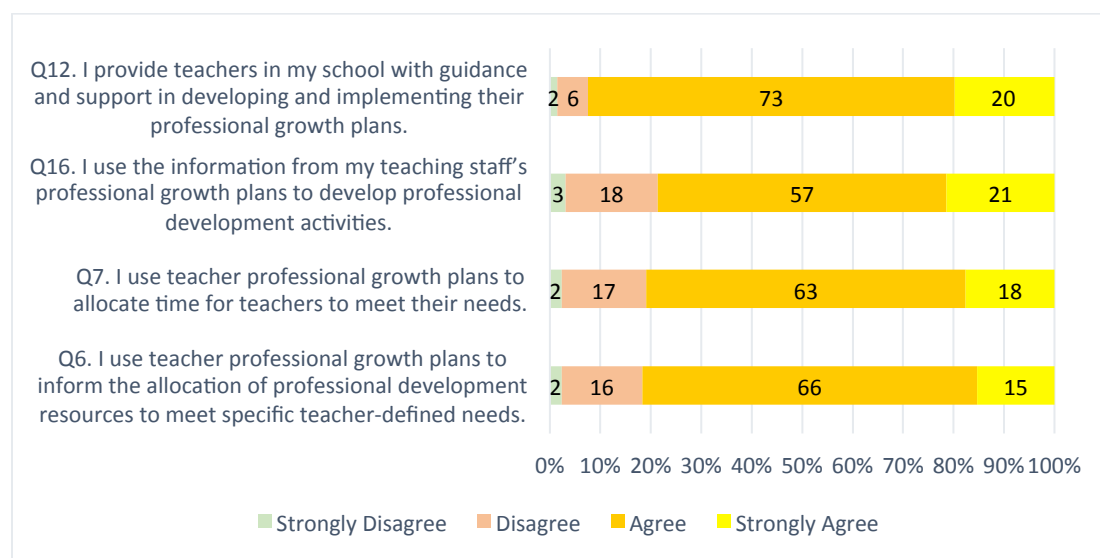
Principals' perceptions of the TPGP process were more positive than teachers' perceptions. Table 5.9 above (in comparison with Table 5.2 previously) illustrates that principals responded more favourably on items that measured their use of TPGPs toward professional

development activities and to allocate time for teachers to meet their professional learning needs than did teachers. As displayed in Figure 5.6, about 92 percent of the principals indicated that they provided guidance and support for their teaching staff to prepare and implement growth plans.

Table 5.10 Principals' Perceptions of Support for Teachers

Item #	Perception *	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
10	Teachers in my school are given professional autonomy and choice to develop and implement their professional growth plans.	3.8	6.1	49.6	40.5	3.27	0.74
8	My school provides both financial resources and time for teachers in support of their professional growth planning needs.	3.1	10.7	58.8	27.5	3.11	0.70
4	My school/school authority has clearly articulated administrative procedures to guide teachers in the development of their professional growth plans.	3.8	11.5	61.8	22.9	3.04	0.71
5	My school/school authority provides opportunities to help teachers understand the purpose, nature, and usage of teacher professional growth plans.	3.8	16.0	64.1	16.0	2.92	0.69
11**	The teachers in my school are expected to align the goals in their professional growth plans to the goals of school district.	3.8	18.3	55.7	22.1	2.96	0.75

Note. * Percentage proportions responding 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree; ** For the convenience of reporting, Question 11 was grouped with other questions in Table 5.10. In our factor analysis, it was a stand-alone question.

Figure 5.7 Principals' Perceptions of Support for Teachers
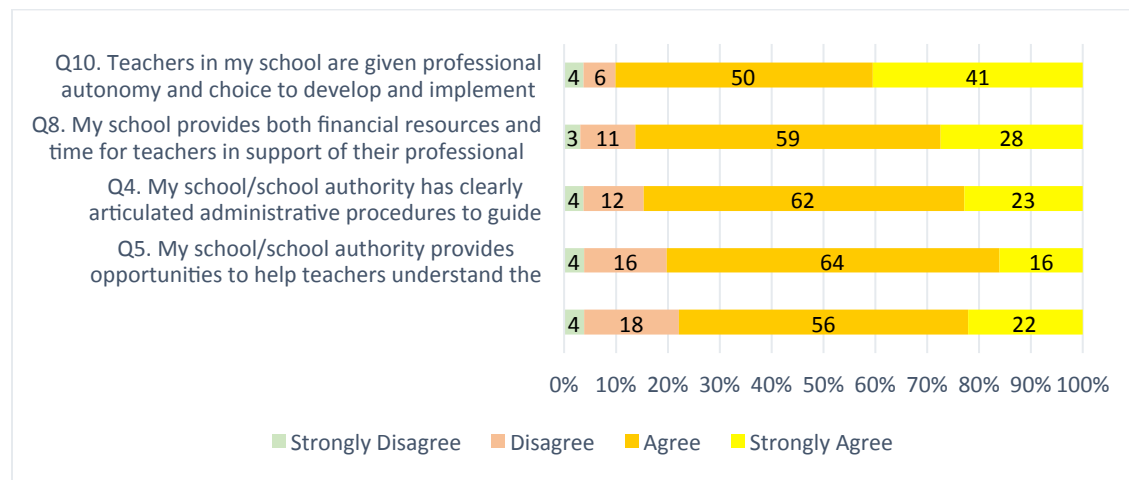
Table 5.10 and Figure 5.7 provide more detail about the kinds of support given to teachers, as perceived by principals. Again, the mean scores and percentages of principals were higher than those of teachers on questions that measured the same content. The majority of principals (>80 to 90 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that teachers at their schools were given autonomous choice, administrative support, time and financial resources were allocated in relation to growth plans. Overarching district goals for professional plans may be seen as type of support, but were not perceived as such within the factor structure of principals' responses.

Table 5.11 Principals' Perceptions about Development of Parallel Principals' and Superintendents' Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy

Item #	Perception *	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
25	Provincial policies for the growth, supervision and evaluation of principals and school authorities are needed.	3.1	16.0	58.0	22.9	3.01	0.72
24	Our past experiences with Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation can inform the development of parallel provincial policy for principals and superintendents.	1.5	7.6	81.7	9.2	2.98	0.48

Note. * Percentage proportions responding 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

Figure 5.8 Principals' Perceptions of Development of Parallel Principals' and Superintendents' Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policies
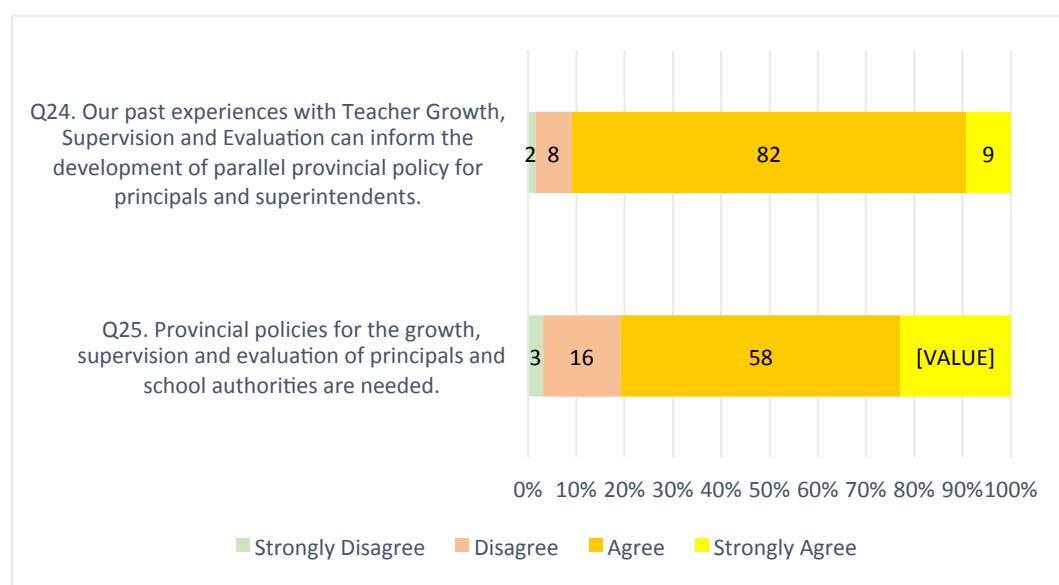
Table 5.11 and Figure 5.8 illustrate that most principals (91 percent) believe that past experiences with the teacher policy can inform the development of parallel policies for school and district administrators.in Alberta. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the percentage of principals (81 percent) who supported or strongly the development of a similar policy for principals was lower than that expressed by the superintendents in the superintendents' survey. Four-in-five principals agreed that provincial policies are needed. The survey did not ask why they were needed.

Table 5.12 Principals' Perceptions of Teacher Support for Teaching Quality Standard

Item #	Perception *	1	2	4	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	The teachers in my school refer to the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) while preparing their annual professional growth plans.	5.3	27.5	55.7	11.5	2.73	0.73
2	The Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) is useful in helping most teachers to enhance professional practice.	4.6	14.5	61.1	19.8	2.96	0.73

Note. * Percentage proportion responding 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

Figure 5.9 Principals' Perceptions of Teacher Support for Teaching Quality Standard
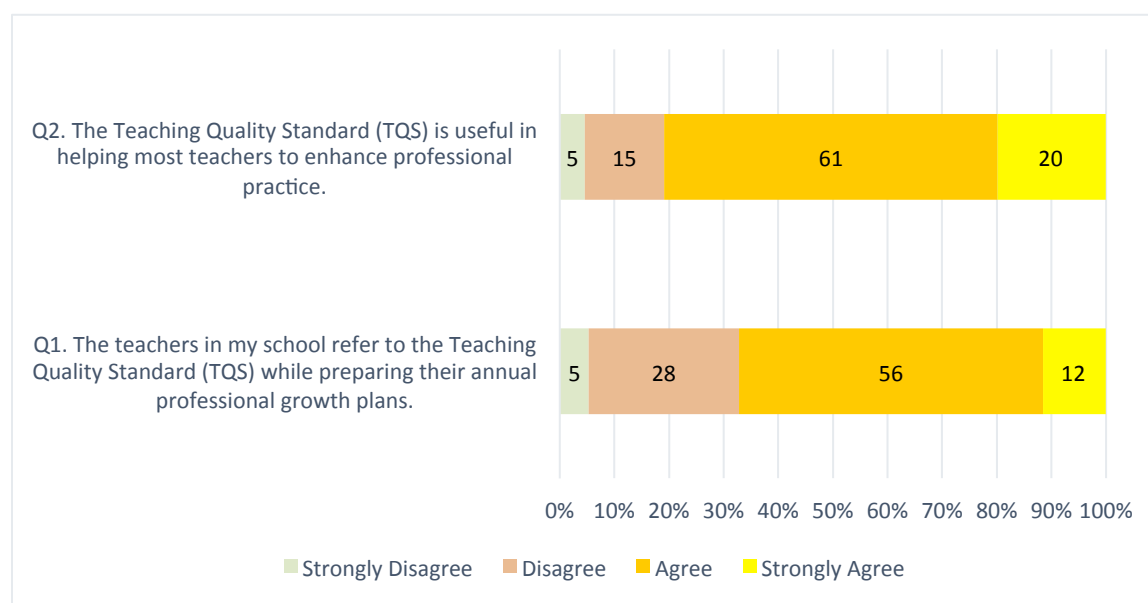
When looking at school administrators' perceptions of teacher use of the TQS in practice and growth planning, the mean scores and percentages were lower than those on other domains of the online survey data. School administrators' responses were close to those of the teachers. For one similar survey question that measured expectations for teachers having to align their TPGP goals to the school and district goals question (as reported in Table 5.10 above), principals' mean scores and percentages were actually lower than those of teachers.

Table 5.13 Principals' Perceptions of Impact of Professional Activities on Teacher Growth

Item #	Perception*	1	2	3	4	Mean*	Standard Deviation
3d	Ongoing conversations between my teaching staff and me for improving teaching and student learning.	0.8	3.8	29.0	65.6	3.58	0.68
3e	Teachers' participation in professional development activities that aim to improve their teaching and student learning.	0.0	4.6	29.8	64.9	3.58	0.66
3i	Teachers' reflections on their professional practices.	0.0	6.1	21.4	69.5	3.54	0.86
3f	Teachers' participation in professional learning communities that aim to improve their teaching and student learning.	0.0	5.3	29.8	61.8	3.47	0.85
3k	Identification of teaching behaviours or practices that need further improvement.	0.0	11.5	30.5	56.5	3.40	0.81
3j	Principal's/Supervisor's ongoing supervision of teachers to ensure their teaching is meeting the standard and enhancing professional practice.	0.8	7.6	37.4	52.7	3.39	0.79
3c	Teachers' implementation of annual professional growth plans.	0.0	19.8	47.3	31.3	3.08	0.76
3h	Teachers' participation in conferences that help improve their teaching and student learning.	0.0	25.2	41.2	32.8	3.05	0.81
3a	Teachers' development of annual professional growth plans.	2.3	24.4	52.7	20.6	2.92	0.73
3b	Teachers' collective discussions of their professional growth plans with their colleagues.	8.4	15.3	41.2	31.3	2.88	1.07
3g	Teachers' participation in action research that helps improve their teaching and student learning.	1.5	19.1	42.0	26.0	2.69	1.21

Note. * Percentage proportion responding 1 = No Impact, 2 = A Small Impact, 3 = A Moderate Impact, 4 = A Large Impact, 5 = Not applicable.

Figure 5.10 Principals' Perceptions of Impact of Professional Activities on Teacher Growth
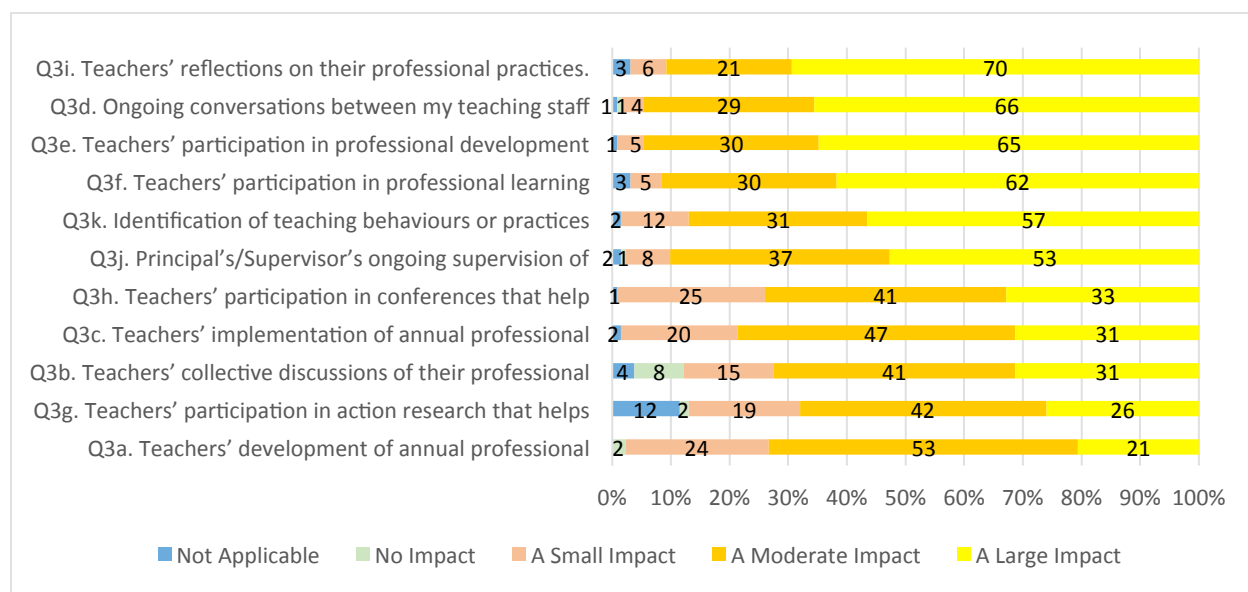
Interestingly principals' perceptions of impact followed a similar gradient of internal and introspective versus externally structured professional development activities to teachers' views of impact. Standard deviations also tend to increase along that gradient, suggesting greater variation in principals' opinion the more externally driven the professional activity. As shown in Table 5.13 and Figure 5.10, principals rated ongoing conversations with their teaching staff for improving teaching and student learning as having the largest impact on teachers' professional growth. The mean score was higher in the principal data, albeit with a large standard deviation, than with similar questions in the teacher survey Principals also deemed that teachers' collective discussions with their colleagues about TPGPs did not have as great an impact on teachers' professional growth. Likewise, principals rated teachers' participation in conferences as having lesser impact on their professional growth.

However, similar to responding teachers, principals rated teachers' participation in professional development activities and professional learning communities, along with teacher reflection on their professional practices, as having a large impact on teachers' growth. Similar to teacher responses, action research was rated by the principals as having the least impact on teachers' professional growth when compared with other types of professional activity.

Lastly Figure 5.10 also indicates that half of the principals perceived identifying teaching behaviours or practices that need further improvement (56.5 percent), and supervising teachers in an ongoing way to meet the professional standards (52.7 percent), have a large impact on teachers' professional growth. The mean scores for those questions were higher than those for the impact of annual teacher preparation and implementation of growth plans (see Table 5.13).

Superintendent Perceptions

The means, standard deviations, and percentages of superintendent responses to each of the items are presented below clustered by factor or domain. A total of 33 superintendents completed the online survey.

Table 5.14 Superintendents' Perceptions of Principals' Supervision and Evaluation

Item #	Perception*	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
21	Most principals in my school authority can communicate the purposes of teacher evaluation to their teaching staff in a respectful and transparent manner.	0.0	3.0	63.6	30.3	3.28	0.52
20	Most principals in my school authority use multiple sources of data when evaluating teachers.	0.0	9.1	54.5	33.3	3.25	0.62
19	Most principals in my school authority have relevant knowledge and skills to evaluate teachers' instructional practices.	0.0	9.1	57.6	30.3	3.22	0.61
15	Most principals in my school authority demonstrate dedication to teachers' career-long professional learning and growth.	0.0	12.1	57.6	30.3	3.18	0.64
18	Most principals in my school authority have relevant knowledge and skills to evaluate teacher competence as stipulated in the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS).	0.0	9.1	60.6	27.3	3.19	0.59
13	Teachers' instructional practices in my school authority have improved as a result of principals' ongoing supervision.	0.0	15.2	54.5	30.3	3.15	0.67
14	Most teachers within my school authority are satisfied with their principals' supervisory practices.	0.0	21.2	69.7	9.1	2.88	0.55

Note. * Percentage proportions responding 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

Figure 5.11 Superintendents' Perceptions of Principals' Supervision and Evaluation
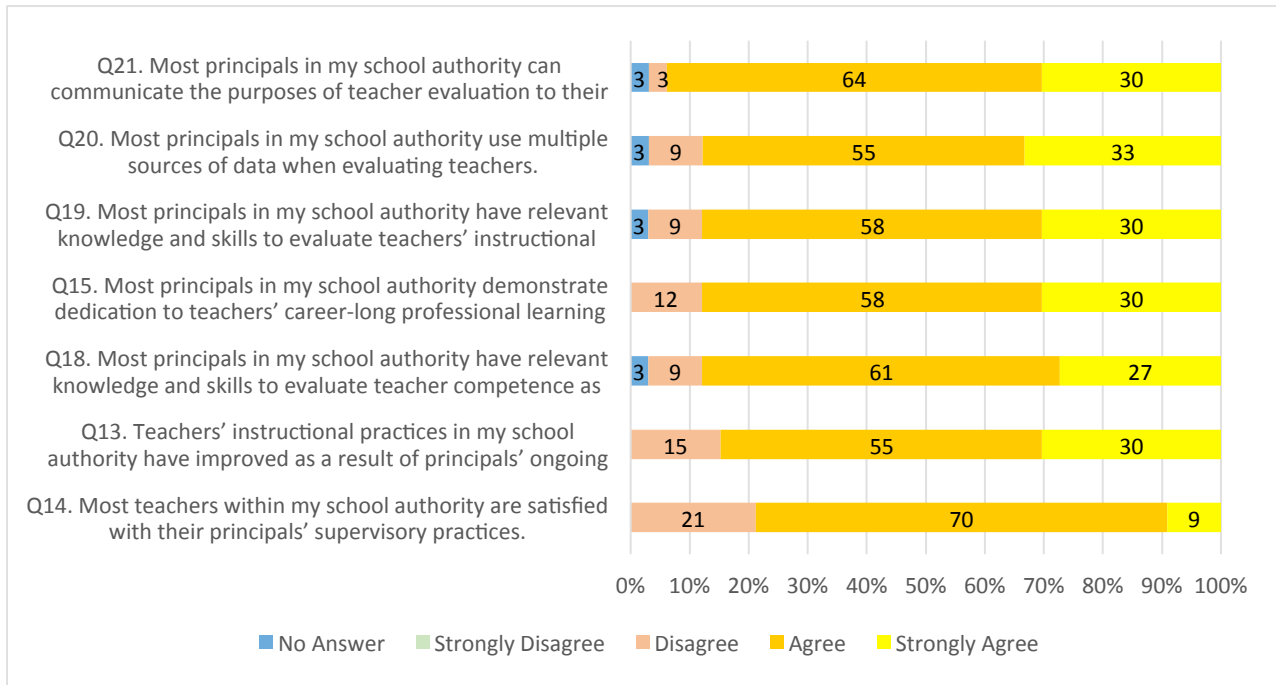
Very strong superintendent support for their principals in supervision and evaluation is expressed, for their communication, knowledge, and dedication. Table 5.14 and Figure 5.11 indicate a majority of superintendents (93.9 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that most principals in their school authority communicate the purposes of teacher evaluation to their staff in a respectful and transparent manner. Nearly as high a proportion also agreed that principals used multiple sources of data in teacher evaluation and had the relevant knowledge and skills to evaluate teachers' instructional practices and teachers' competence as stipulated in the TQS. Many superintendents affirmed that most principals in their school authority demonstrated dedication to teachers' career-long professional learning and growth. However one in five superintendents disagreed with the statement that most teachers within their school authorities were satisfied with principals' supervisory practices. In contrast, only 6 percent of principals disagreed that their teaching staff were satisfied with their supervisory practices.

Table 5.15 Superintendents' Perceptions of Teacher Professional Growth Planning,

Item #	Perception *	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
5	Most principals in my school authority provide opportunities to help teachers understand the purpose, nature and usage of teacher professional growth plans.	0.0	9.1	72.7	18.2	3.09	0.52
8	Most principals in my school authority provide both financial resources and time for teachers in support of their professional growth planning needs.	0.0	18.2	63.6	18.2	3.00	0.61
11	The teachers in my school authority are expected to align the goals in their professional growth plans to the goals of school and district.	0.0	21.2	57.6	21.2	3.00	0.66
12	Most principals in my school authority provide teachers with guidance and support needed in developing and implementing teacher professional growth plans.	3.0	27.3	48.5	21.2	2.88	0.78
16	Most principals in my school authority use the information from their teaching staff's professional growth plans to develop professional development activities.	0.0	36.4	54.5	9.1	2.73	0.63
6	Most principals in my school authority use teacher professional growth plans to inform the allocation of professional development resources to meet specific teacher-defined needs.	3.0	39.4	42.4	15.2	2.70	0.77
7	Most principals in my school authority use teacher professional growth plans to allocate time for teachers to meet their needs.	3.0	60.6	33.3	3.0	2.36	0.60

Note. * Percentage proportions responding 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

Table 5.16 Superintendents' Perceptions of Teachers' Professional Autonomy

Item #	Perception*	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
10	The teachers in my school authority are given professional autonomy and choice to develop and implement their professional growth plans.	0.0	6.1	72.7	21.2	3.15	0.51
4	My school authority has clearly articulated administrative procedures to guide teachers in the development of their professional growth plans.	3.0	15.2	66.7	15.2	2.94	0.66

*Note.* * Percentage proportion responding 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

The percentages of the superintendents' responses in Tables 5.15 and 5.16 are also graphed in Figure 5.12.

Table 5.15 and Figure 5.12 reveal that a majority of superintendent respondents (90.9 percent) affirmed that principals in their school authorities provide opportunities to help teachers understand the purpose, nature and usage of growth plans. However, a higher percentage of the superintendents disagreed that most principals used growth plans to provide financial resources, guidance, and support for teachers when developing and implementing TPGPs. About one-third of superintendents reported that most principals in their school authorities did not use the TPGPs to develop professional development activities to support teachers' professional learning and growth. Similarly, 39 percent of superintendents found that most principals had not used TPGPs to allocate professional development resources to meet specific teacher-defined needs. Well more than half (61 percent) of superintendents also disagreed that most principals used TPGPs to allocate time for teachers so as to meet their professional learning needs.

Figure 5.12 Superintendents' Perceptions of Teacher Professional Growth Planning
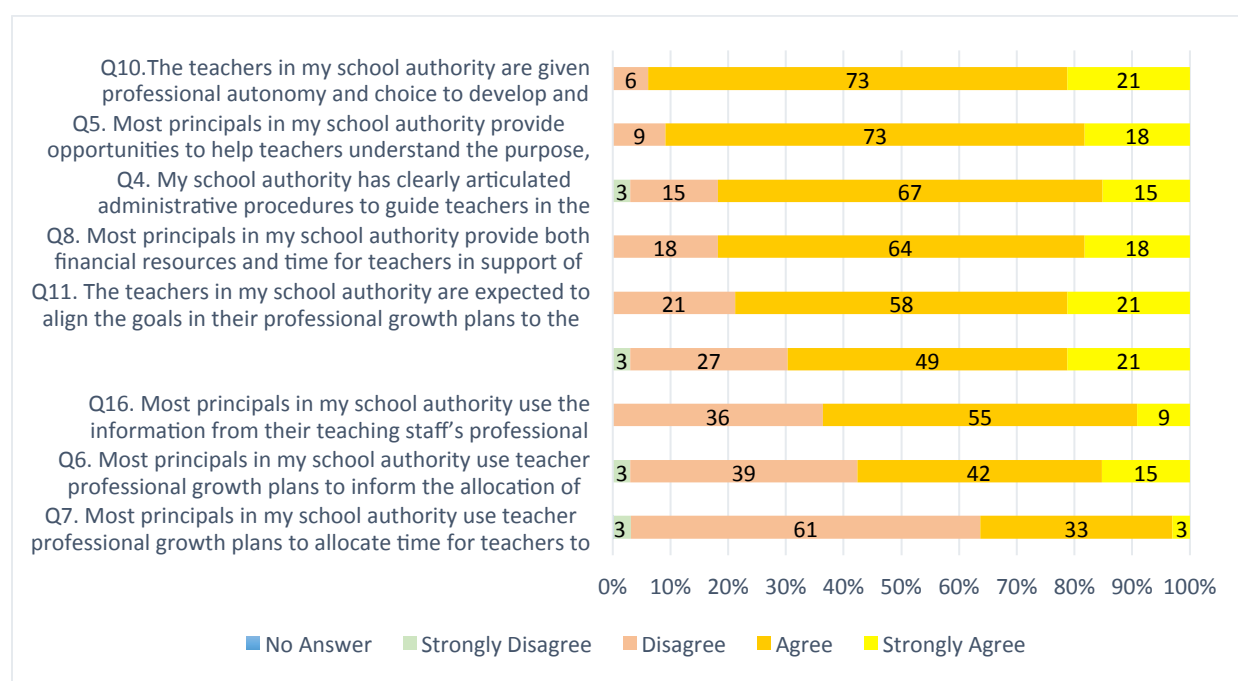
As detailed in Table 5.16 and displayed in Figure 5.12, the vast majority of superintendents (93.9 percent) reported that the teachers in their school authorities were given professional autonomy and choice to develop and implement their TPGPs. Many also agreed that their school authorities had clearly articulated administrative procedures to guide teachers in the development of growth plans.

Table 5.17 Superintendents' Perceptions of Principals' Time and Support for TPGP, Supervision and Evaluation

Item #	Perceptions *	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
23	Most principals in my school authority have the time and support they need to evaluate teachers.	12.1	15.2	48.5	21.2	2.81	0.93
9	Most principals in my school authority have the time and support they need in discharging their responsibilities related to teachers' professional growth plans.	3.0	30.3	51.5	15.2	2.79	0.74
17	Most principals in my school authority have the time and support they need to supervise teachers.	12.1	27.3	51.5	9.1	2.58	0.83

Note. * 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

Figure 5.13 Superintendents' Perceptions of Principals' Time and Support for TPGP, Supervision and Evaluation, Alberta, 2017
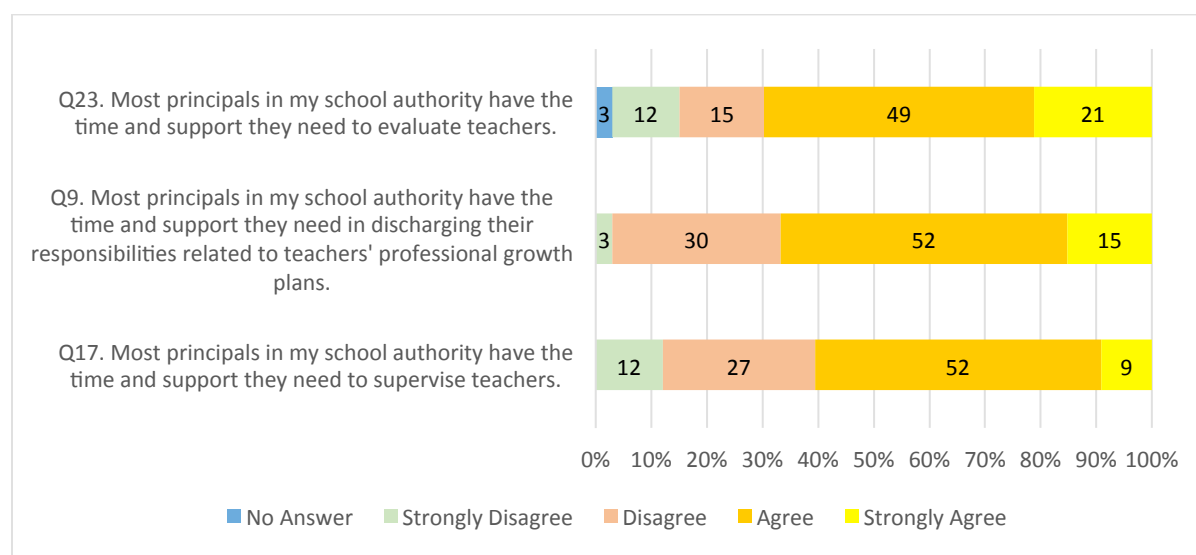
In terms of time and support available to principals for teacher growth planning, Table 5.17 illustrates that superintendents' responses were similar to those of the principals. Time and support seemed to have restricted principals from discharging their responsibilities in helping teachers with their TPGPs, as well as in teachers' ongoing supervision, and evaluation. Well over one-third of superintendents strongly disagreed that most principals in their school authorities had sufficient time and support when supervising teachers.

Table 5.18 Superintendents' Perceptions of Development of Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policies for Principals and Superintendents

Item #	Perception *	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
25	Provincial policies for the growth, supervision and evaluation of principals and school authorities are needed.	6.1	12.1	48.5	30.3	3.06	0.84
24	Our past experiences with Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation can inform the development of parallel provincial policy for principals and superintendents.	12.1	9.1	63.6	12.1	2.78	0.83

Note. * Percentage proportions responding 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

Figure 5.14 Superintendents' Perceptions of Development of Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policies for Principals and Superintendents
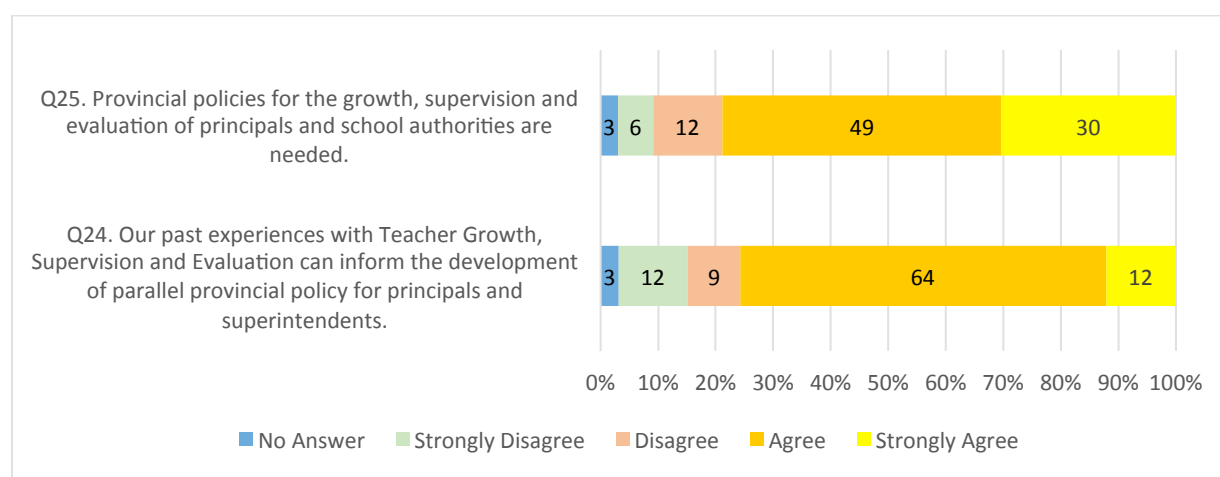
In general, a majority of superintendents support the development of parallel policies for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and superintendents at the provincial level, indicating that their previous experiences can inform such policy formulation.

Table 5.19 Superintendents' Perceptions of the Teaching Quality Standard

Item #	Perception*	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
22	Most principals in my school authority refer to the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) while evaluating teachers.	0.0	3.0	33.3	60.6	3.59	0.56
2	The Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) is useful in helping most teachers to enhance professional practice.	6.1	21.2	54.5	18.2	2.85	0.80

Note. * Percentage Proportion responding 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

Superintendents (94 percent) agreed that most principals referred to the Teacher Quality Standard while evaluating teachers. However, fewer than three quarters perceived that the TQS was useful in helping teachers to enhance their professional practices, as contrasted in Table 5.19 and Figure 5.15.

Table 5.20 Superintendents' Perceptions of Teacher Quality Standard in Teachers' TPGP

Item #	Perception *	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	The teachers in my school authority refer to the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) while preparing their annual professional growth plans.	9.1	30.3	54.5	6.1	2.58	0.75

Note. *Percentage proportions responding 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

Figure 5.15 Superintendents' Perceptions of TQS
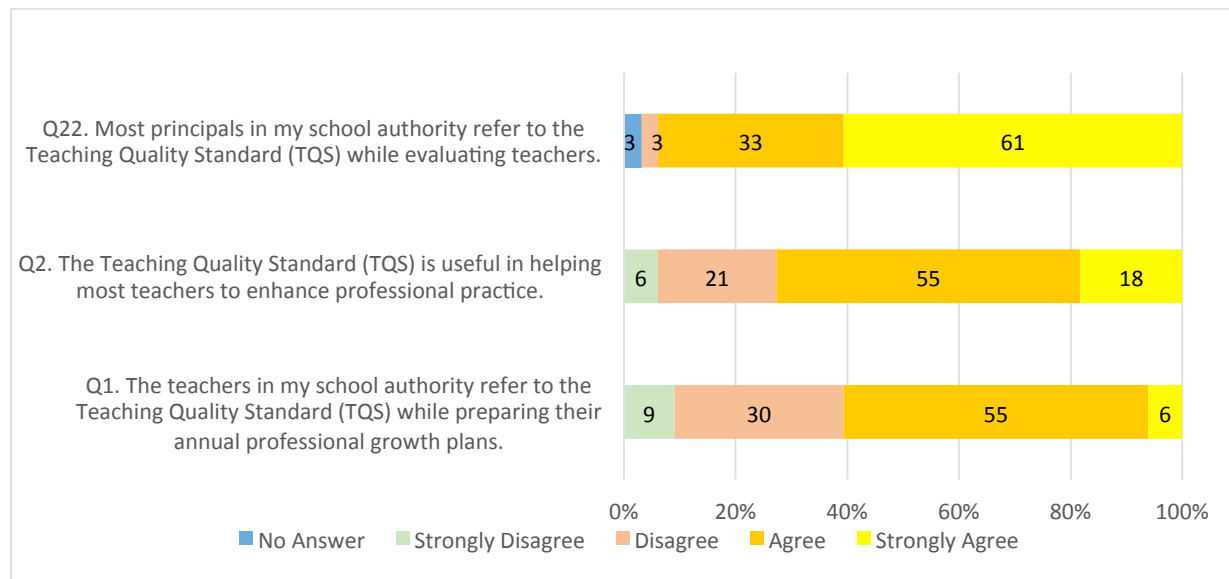
Superintendents' mean scores about teachers' reference to the Teaching Quality Standard when preparing their annual growth plans were noticeably lower than those for principals and teachers. Approximately 40 percent of superintendents disagreed with the statement that teachers draw on the Teacher Quality Standard when planning (see Figure 5.15).

Table 5.21 Superintendents' Perceptions of Professional Activities' Impact on Teachers' Growth

Item #	Perception*	1	2	3	4	Mean	Standard Deviation
3d	Teachers' participation in professional development activities that aim to improve their teaching and student learning.	0.0	3.0	42.4	54.5	3.52	0.57
3i	Principal's/Supervisor's ongoing supervision of teachers to ensure their teaching is meeting the standard and enhancing professional practice.	0.0	15.2	18.2	66.7	3.52	0.76
3e	Teachers' participation in professional learning communities that aim to improve their teaching and student learning.	3.0	3.0	24.2	66.7	3.48	0.94
3j	Identification of teaching behaviours or practices that need further improvement.	0.0	12.1	33.3	54.5	3.42	0.71
3h	Teachers' reflections on their professional practices.	3.0	3.0	39.4	51.5	3.33	0.92
3f	Teachers' participation in action research that helps improve their teaching and student learning.	9.1	21.2	18.2	45.5	2.88	1.27
3c	Teachers' implementation of annual professional growth plans.	3.0	36.4	42.4	18.2	2.76	0.79
3b	Teachers' collective discussions of their professional growth plans with their colleagues.	0.0	45.5	30.3	21.2	2.67	0.92
3a	Teachers' development of annual professional growth plans.	3.0	45.5	33.3	18.2	2.67	0.82
3g	Teachers' participation in conferences that help improve their teaching and student learning.	3.0	39.4	48.5	9.1	2.64	0.70

Note. * Percentage proportion responding 1 = No Impact, 2 = A Small Impact, 3 = A Moderate Impact, 4 = A Large Impact, 5 = Not applicable.

Figure 5.16 Superintendents' Perceptions of Professional Activities' Impact on Teachers' Growth
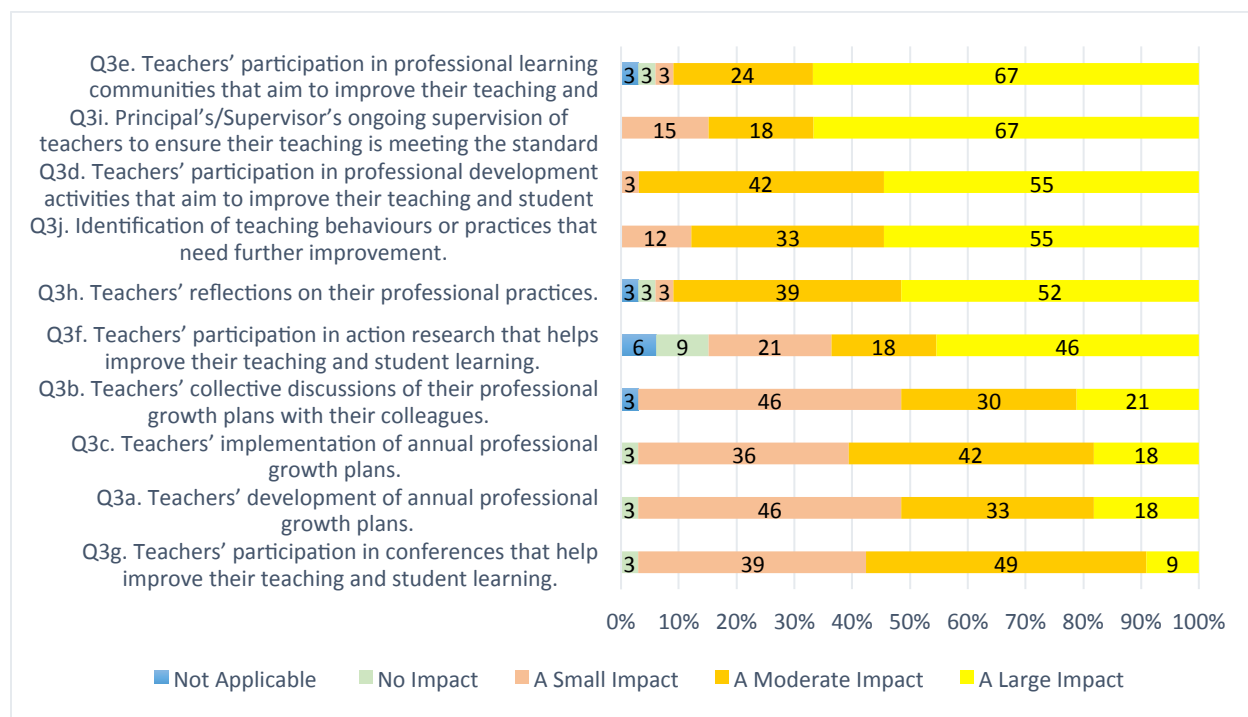
Both Table 5.21 and Figure 5.16 reveal that more than half of the superintendents rated teachers' participation in professional learning communities (66.7 percent), ongoing supervision of teachers to meet professional standards (66.7 percent), and teachers' participation in professional development activities (54.5 percent) as having a large impact on teachers' growth. The superintendents' responses were quite similar to those of the principals about ongoing supervision of teachers to meet professional standards, teachers' reflections on their professional practices, and identification of teaching behaviours or practices that needs further improvement. To promote teachers' growth, these activities were found to be more important than teachers' development and implementation of their annual TPGPs. The superintendents rated action research as having more relative impact teachers' on professional growth, in contrast with teacher and principal perceptions. Moreover, these central office officials indicated that teachers' participation in conferences that help improve their teaching and student learning as having the least impact on teachers' professional growth among the survey options provided.

Comparison of the Perceptions of Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents

Figures 5.17−5.23 below present a suite of comparisons for teachers', principals', and superintendents' perceptions. The percentages in each bar chart were based on their endorsements of the "agree" and "strongly agree" categories on the 4-point Likert scale.

Figure 5.17 Comparison of the Perceptions of Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents toward TPGP
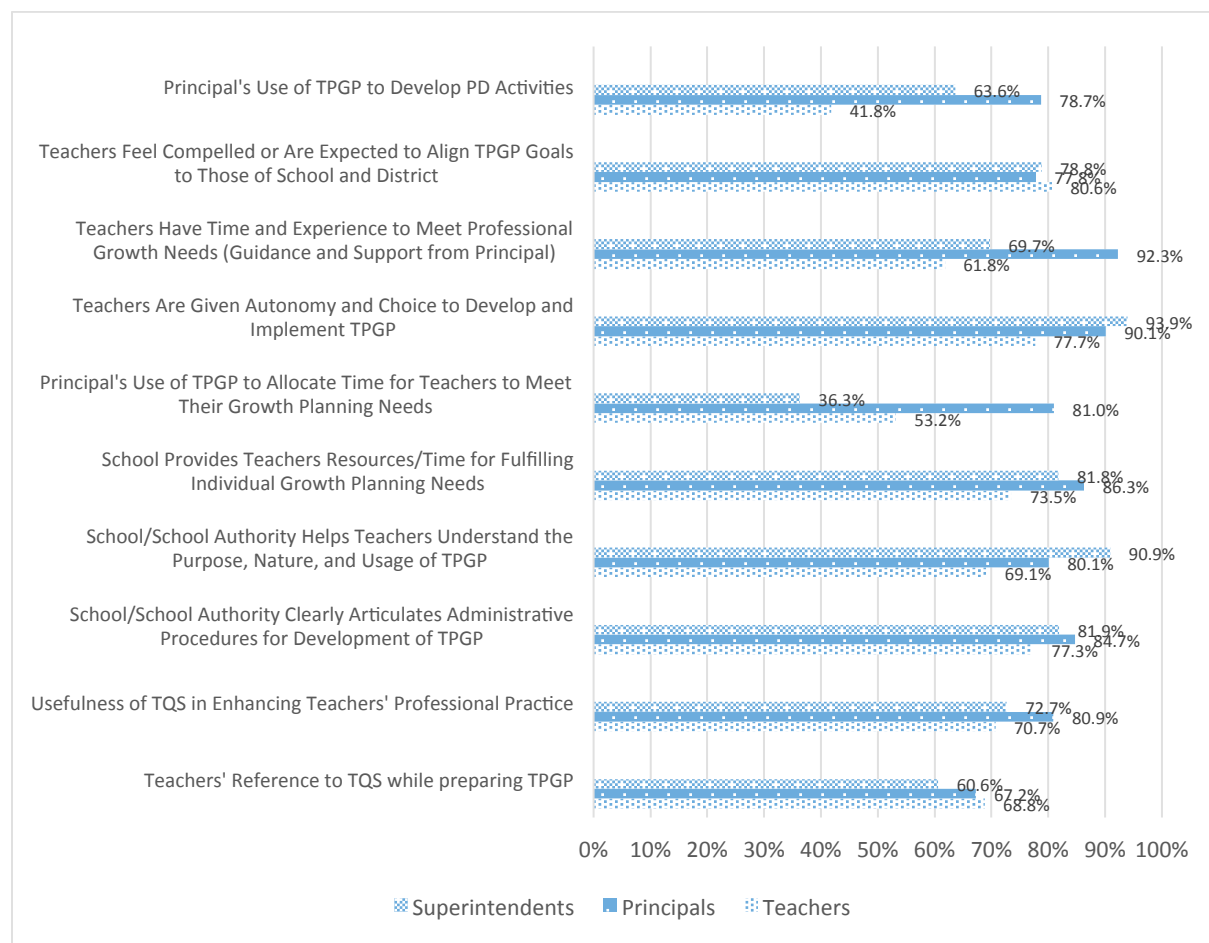
As can be seen in Figure 5.17, teachers' percentages were higher than those of the principals and superintendents for the following questions: making reference to TQS while preparing for TPGP, collective discussion of TPGP with colleagues, and feeling compelled to align the goals of TPGP with those of the school and district. In contrast, teachers' percentages were lower than those of the principals and superintendents on: professional autonomy and choice to develop and implement TPGP; usefulness of TQS in enhancing professional practice; school's provision of clearly articulated administrative guidelines for developing TPGP; school/school authority's help for teachers to understand the purpose, nature, and usage of TPGP; school's provision of resources for fulfilling individual teachers' growth planning needs; teachers' having time and experience for meeting professional growth needs; and principals' use of TPGP to develop PD activities.

Principals' percentages were higher than those of the teachers and superintendents for the following questions: usefulness of TQS in enhancing professional practice, school/school

authority's provision of clearly articulated administrative procedures to guide TPGP, resources for fulfilling individual growth planning needs, use of TPGP to allocate time for teachers to meet their growth planning needs, teachers have time and experience to meet professional growth needs, and use of TPGP information to develop PD activities.

Superintendents' percentages were closer to the principals' than the teachers'. Their percentages were higher than that of the teachers and principals for only two questions: school/school authority helps teachers to understand the purpose, nature, and usage of TPGP; and teachers are given autonomy and choice to develop and implement TPGP. Surprisingly, their percentages were lower than those of the teachers and principals on two questions: teachers' reference to TQS while preparing for TPGP and principals' use of TPGP to allocate time for teachers to meet their growth planning needs.

Figure 5.18. Comparison of the Perceptions of Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents toward Principals' Evaluation and Supervision Practices
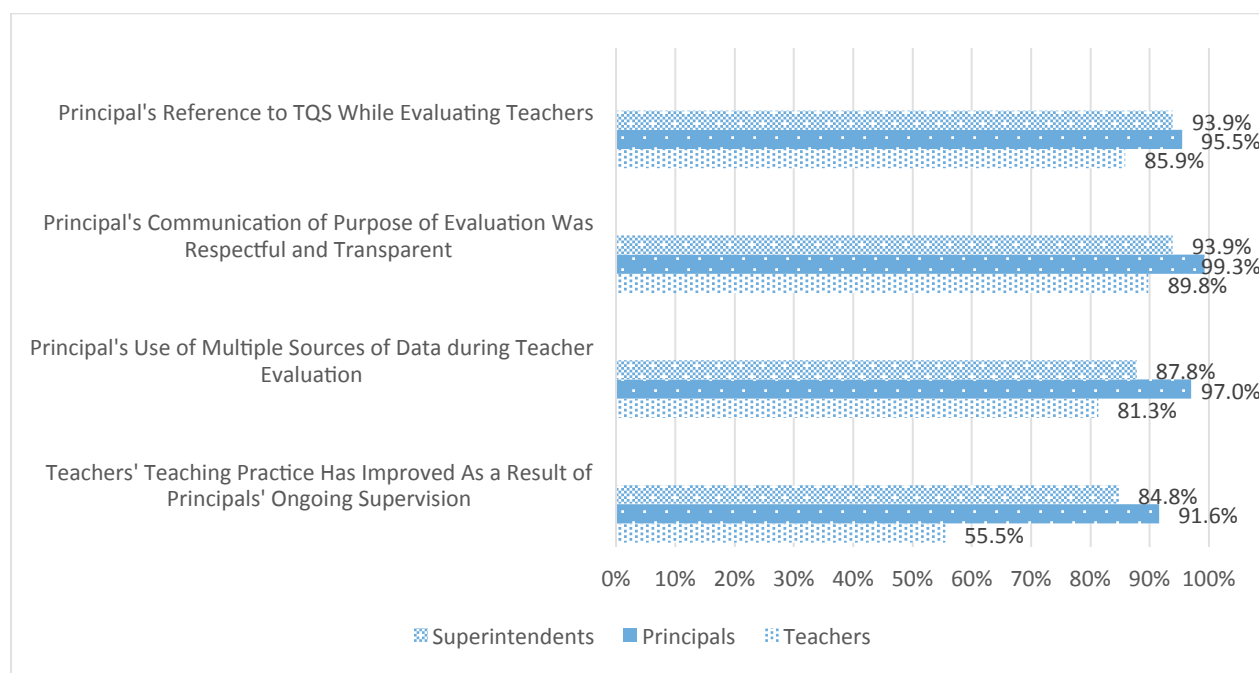
Figure 5.18 shows that the percentages of teachers' perceptions were lower than those of the principals and superintendents for the following questions: teachers' teaching practice has improved as a result of ongoing supervision, principals' use of multiple sources of data during teacher evaluation, principals' reference to TQS while evaluating teachers; and principals' communication of evaluation in a respectful and transparent manner. In contrast, the percentages of principals who either agreed or strongly agreed with the four statements that tapped their evaluation and supervision practices were higher than the percentages of teachers and superintendents. The principals' response patterns were closer to those of the superintendents.

One notable result was that slightly more than half of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their teaching practices' had improved as a result of principal's ongoing supervision.

Figure 5.19 Comparison of the Perceptions of Principals and Superintendents toward Principal's Use of TPGP, Ongoing Supervision, and Evaluation
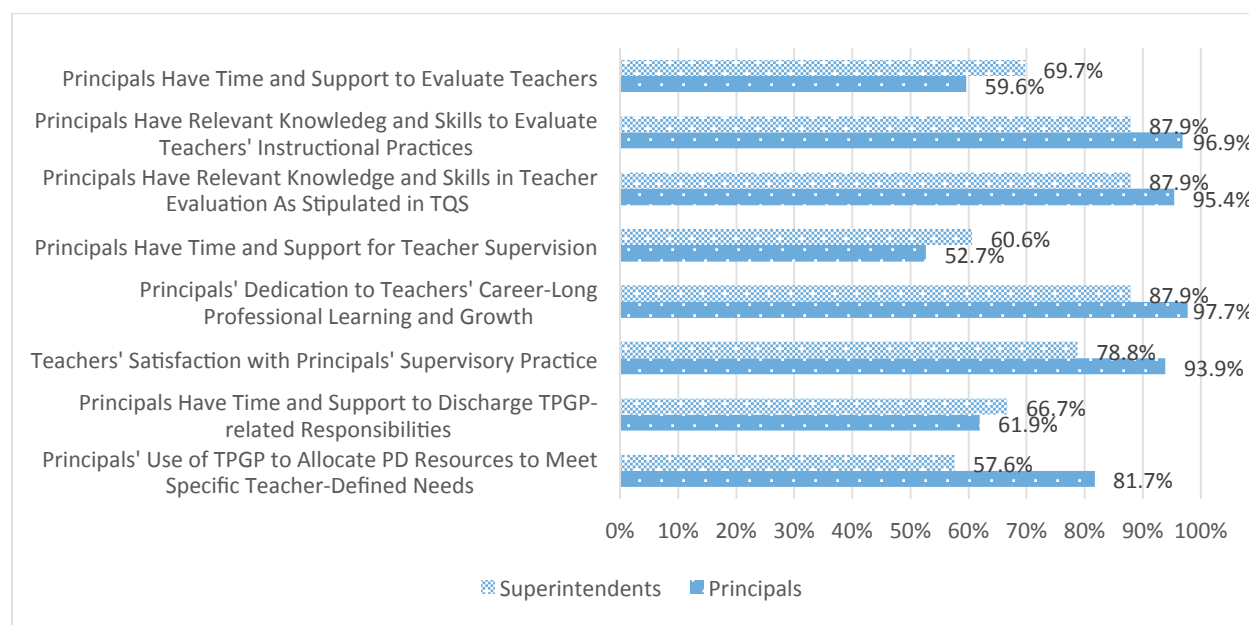
As displayed in Figure 5.19, the percentages of principals who agreed or strongly agreed were higher than superintendents' percentages for the following questions: principal's dedication to teachers' career-long professional learning and growth, use of TPGP to allocate PD resources to meet specific teacher-defined needs, teachers' satisfaction with principals' supervisory practice, having relevant knowledge and skills in teacher evaluation as stipulated in TQS, and having relevant knowledge and skills to evaluate teachers' instructional practices. In contrast, their percentages were lower than those of the superintendents on: principals have time and support needed to discharge TPGP-related responsibilities, principals have time and support for teacher supervision, and principals have time and support for teacher evaluation.

Figure 5.20 Comparison of the Perceptions of Principals and Superintendents toward the Development of Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policies for Principals, Superintendents, and School Authorities
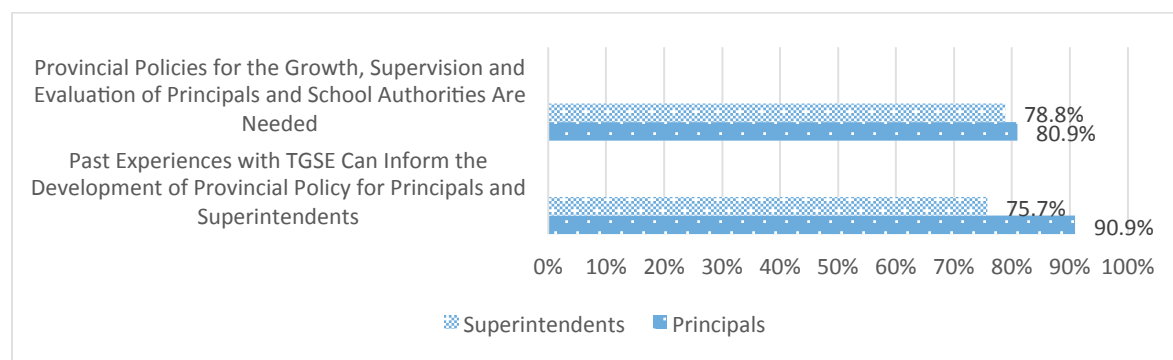
Figure 5.20 above shows that more principals than superintendents (15.2 percent difference) either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that asked about whether past experiences with TGSE can inform the development of provincial policy for principals and superintendents.

Figure 5. 21 Comparison of the Perceptions of Impact of Professional Activities on Teachers' Growth across Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents
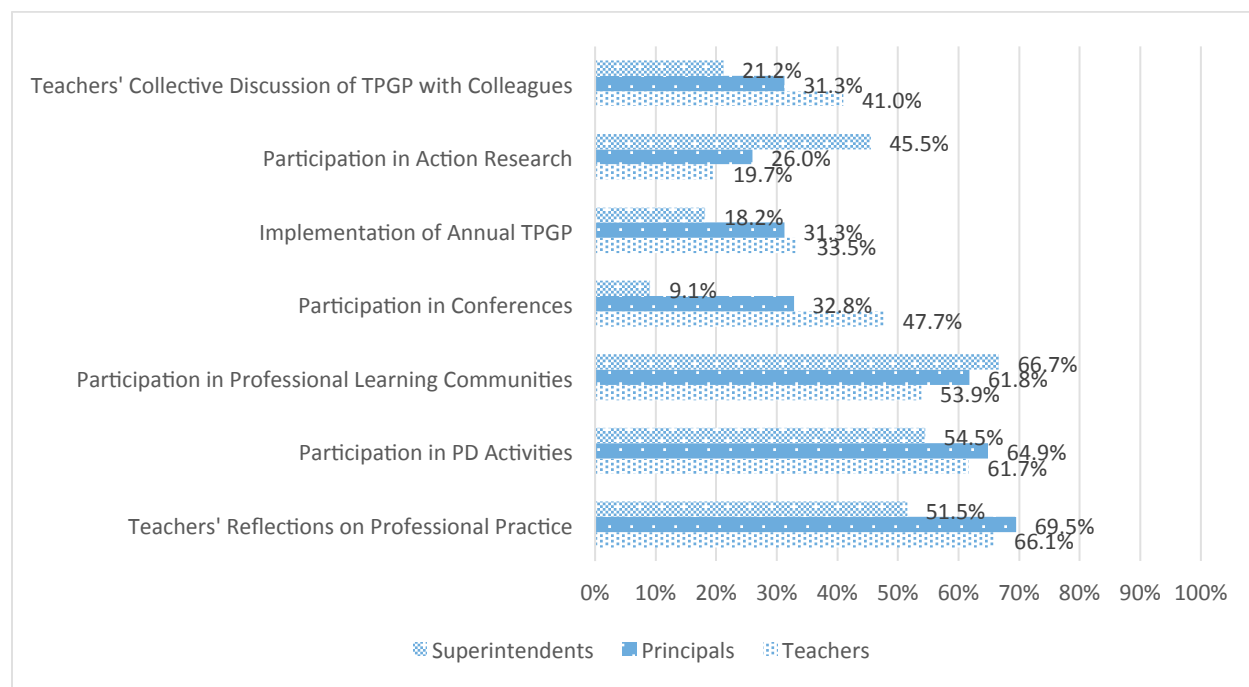
As shown in Figure 5.21, the percentages of teachers, principals, and superintendents who either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements that measured their perceptions of the impact of professional activities on teachers' growth were quite similar for the following questions: teachers' reflections on professional practice, teachers' participation in PD activities,

and teachers' participation in professional learning communities. These activities were rated as having a large impact on teachers' growth. Significant differences were noted on the following questions: teachers' collective discussion of TPGP with colleagues, teachers' participation in conferences, teachers' implementation of annual TPGP, and teachers' participation in action research. These activities were rated as having lower impact on teachers' growth.

Figure 5.22 Comparison of the Principals' and Superintendents' Perceptions of Impact of Teachers' Development of TPGP, Identification of Teaching Behaviors/Practices, and Principal's/Supervisor's Ongoing Supervision of Teachers
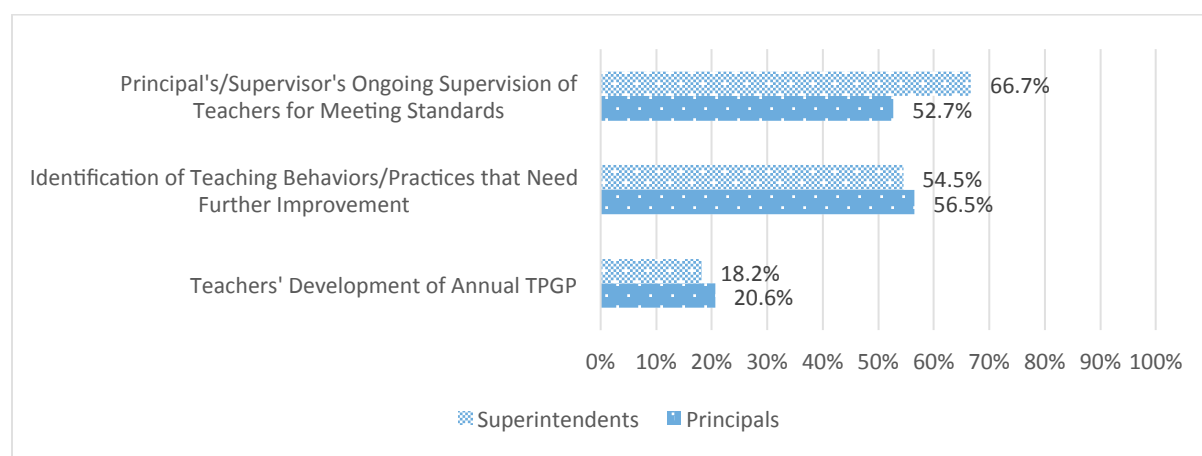
As displayed in Figure 5.22, the percentages for principals and superintendents were quite similar on the following: identification of teaching behaviors/practices that need further improvement and principal's/supervisor's ongoing supervision of teachers for meeting professional standards. These activities were rated as having a higher impact than teachers' development of annual TPGP on teachers' professional growth. The percentage of superintendents on teachers' development of annual TPGP was slightly lower than the principals' percentage. As the percentages were consistently higher on items that tapped teacher professional learning and reflections, this finding indicates that perhaps TPGP should serve as a mechanism for promoting teachers' reflective practice and continuing professional learning, rather than as a 'one-shot', routine administrative procedure.

Figure 5.23 Comparison of Teachers' and Principals' Perceptions of the Impact of Ongoing Conversations between Teachers and Principals
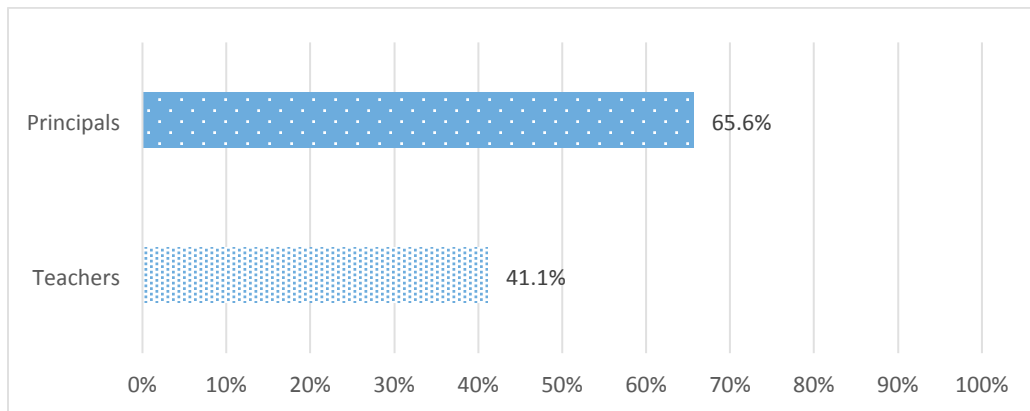
As demonstrated in Figure 5.23, the percentage of principals who agreed or strongly agreed with the impact of ongoing conversations between teachers and principals on teachers' growth was higher than the percentage of teachers who responded to a similar item.

Analyses for Significant Differences

The search for significant differences in educators' perceptions by their background characteristics can become important when considering program and policy implementation. Significant differences may lead to customized approaches for particular audiences, to meet specific needs better than uniform, 'unroll the carpet' approaches.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics may be used to analyze the different sets of data for a broad overview of perceptions of Alberta teachers, school administrators, and superintendents toward teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation matters. The demographic characteristics enabled us to examine differences according to respective individual, school, and jurisdiction profiles. Descriptive statistics include means and standard deviations while the inferential statistics involve ANOVA (looking for significant statistical differences between groups based on an analysis of the variances in the response patterns), t-test (looking to see whether different groups have statistically different average values), and post-hoc analysis (looking after the data are collected to see whether there are sufficient numbers of questions and respondents in particular sub groups to determine whether any differences have practical significance in light of effect sizes). However, we found no significant differences in domain scores by each of the demographic variables.

No tests for significant differences in perceptions were undertaken among teacher, principal and superintendent groups. This is because the wording of some of the survey questions were not exactly identical, and because immediate survey conditions were not controlled to be identical among these groups of respondents, to permit such analyses. Therefore, comparisons

among these groups are for descriptive purposes alone, leaving it up to the reader to determine the practical significance of different perceptions.

Conclusions from Survey Results

Surveys conducted in Spring-Summer 2017 provide a reasonably accurate and reliable picture of educator-professionals' perceptions about the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy as now operationalized in Alberta schools. That macroscopic picture was drawn from a sample but can be generalized to all Alberta Public, Catholic, Independent, and Charter schools as a group. Results cannot be interpolated to individual types of school authorities, nor to individual school districts, nor to particular schools. Nor can results be extrapolated to First Nations schools in Alberta.

Although there are variations in the perspectives of teachers, principals and superintendents– deriving largely from their different positions in classrooms, the school office and school board office, and not from their gender, location or university preparation – overall differences by domain in the TGSE policy are not practically or statistically significant. For the purposes of policy-making, policy implementation or gauging policy impact, survey results do not indicate sufficient differentiation to warrant customized or targeted approaches within the three audiences surveyed.

Returning to our three research questions, we can conclude that:

1. Alberta teachers, principals, and superintendents perceive that teacher growth plans have a demonstrable relationship to the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS). However, within teachers' mindset, the Teacher Quality Standard sits at a mid-way point among a group of factors, where knowledge of the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation policy is more salient, and principals' feedback on growth plans is less influential than the TQS. For principals, the Teacher Quality Standard becomes pertinent within principals' supervision and evaluation practices: the TQS has nearly equal weight to communicating purposes, and is more influential than outcomes such as instructional improvement or teacher satisfaction. Superintendents very strongly agree that most principals referred to the Teacher Quality Standard while evaluating teachers. Nevertheless, less than three-quarters of superintendents perceived that the TQS was useful in helping teachers to enhance their professional practice.

2. Teachers, principals, and superintendents all affirmed that ongoing supervision by the principal provides teachers with the guidance and support they need to be successful. However, teachers' mean scores were lower than those of the principals and superintendents about actual improvement in teaching practices as a result of ongoing supervision.

3. Teachers, principals, and superintendents all strongly concur that the TGSE provides a basis of practical experience that could inform development of provincial policy for the growth, supervision and evaluation of principals and superintendents.

CHAPTER SIX: POLICY CONTENT ANALYSIS
FIDELITY, ACCESSIBILITY, CURRENCY, AND IMPLEMENTABILITY

The provincial *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* (TGSE) policy is implemented in part through local personnel policy statements, as adopted by Alberta school boards. When policies are highly congruent, this affirms that Ministerial goals are being pursued, whereas local policies that diverge from the TGSE may reflect the primacy of local interests over provincial goals.

A review of the contents and procedures in a local school board policy can provide clues as to why many policy efforts have mixed results. The checkerboard pattern so often found in many large-scale policy and program implementation efforts may arise from differing interpretations by local authorities of the provincial policies or differing school authority administrative processes and priorities, and not solely from indifference or resistance. Any policy statement must be interpreted before, or as it is being, executed. School trustees and school authority officials are pivotal translators of ministerial aspirations and intentions.

Purpose

This portion of the study aimed to discover where, how, and how well the *Teacher, Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation Policy 2.1.5* (TGSE) (Government of Alberta, 1998) has been, and is being, interpreted by local school authorities.

Our objectives were two-fold: (a) to understand officially-endorsed interpretations of provincial policies by locally-elected school boards and their officials in Alberta, and (b) to create a picture of local adoption for a province-wide policy. At the same time, we sought to create several practical tools that could be useful for provincial and local policy makers, toward successful implementation of forthcoming principal and district office standards.

Specifically, the portion of our study that follows was animated by two research questions:

1. To what extent do Alberta school boards' local policies for professional growth, supervision and evaluation match provincial expectations?

2. To what extent do Alberta school boards' policy statements on their books match the characteristics of sound policy writing described in the current literature?

In pursuing these questions, we assume that policies are never fully implemented, nor complete failures, but instead sit typically in a grey zone somewhere between these two extremes (McConnell, 2010, 2015). We presume that under the Canadian constitution, there are two levels

of elected authority in public education, and that local boards are subservient to provincial Ministries (Young, Levin & Wallin, 2007) in policy matters.

More sophistication and nuance can be brought to studies of implementation, than simply identifying conveyor-belt breakdowns when transferring policies from the provincial authorities to local school authorities for mimicry. Instead, we assume that local authorities must transparently communicate policies to local audiences so they can be operationalized in disparate settings and in different situations as they unfold. Personnel policies are crafted for the user, not for the bystander.

A central premise of this study is that intrinsic characteristics of written statements are as important as exogenous factors like dedicated time, leadership commitment, professional learning and recipient (un)enthusiasm for explaining why a policy initiative may falter or flourish.

Asking about Implementability Rather than Implementation

Policy implementation is complex. Controversy has surrounded definitions for policy, the meaning of implementation, and how both should best be conceived. The conventional notion that most policy ideas can be implemented, eventually, is difficult to demonstrate in action.

Policy makers, city planners, international development specialists, and educators who encounter deficiencies in translating an authority's thought into action have generated a range of explanations for this recurrent problem. Generic solutions, from throwing more money at an implementation problem, to more detailed and comprehensive planning, to using incentives or coercion, have not unlocked the puzzle as to why policies are not always implemented as their authors expect.

The logic or rationale for most policy-making and enforcement is the never-ending quest for "one-stop shop" solutions to recurrent problems in governance. Early and well-known cases in the academic literature include diagnoses by Pressman & Wildavsky (1984) for a failed state policy to reduce unemployment in Oakland. Another oft-cited study by Martha Derthick (1972) sought to explain federal lapses in bringing about changes to social security in Massachusetts. A common feature of both studies was their attempt to generate broad theories from microscopic and singular studies, for generalization across more macroscopic and more convoluted issues across governments. In both instances, the scholars' recommendations were criticized for procedural deficiencies and evidential insufficiency.

Scholars such as Sabatier and Mazmanian (1983), Hjern and Hull (1982), deLeon and deLeon (2002) have argued for a fundamental re-conceptualization of implementation models, to better reflect policy makers' increased concern for organizational efficiency. These authors have

developed alternate models from diverse standpoints and often depict particular scenarios to support their propositions.

Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980) emphasized that implementation is invariably bound up in complex socio-economic structures, and that any policy implementation effort must attend to requisite pre-conditions in the machinery of government, which are legal framing, structured processes for ensuring consistency in objectives, attending to and reducing the number of veto points, the disposition of implementing agencies, access of actors to the decision-making process, and of course financial resources to provide stability while a program or policy is "rolling out."

Similar stances have been adopted more recently by deLeon and deLeon (2002) about the prevailing conditions, which can enhance, catalyze, or obstruct effective implementation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, these authors have been criticized for overemphasizing centralized governance through structural efficiencies demanded by top bureaucratic echelons, instead of looking at the issues from the perspectives of the "recipients" of new policies. In fact, some scholars have retreated from their earlier stances (see Sabatier, 1986). They are now advocating for recognition of multidimensional relationships, networks, the diffusion of values (Moon & DeLeon, 2001) and, most recently, "knowledge mobilization" (Malik, 2016).

Notwithstanding these propositions and suppositions, we do not seem to have made enormous strides in closing theory-practice gaps. Nor have we shortened the distance between the concerns of practitioners (that is, teachers and principals) and policy makers' prescriptions (that is, the Ministry of Education, and, to some extent, the superintendents of each school board). According to Hill and Hupe (2008), addressing implementation gaps has recurrently been among the most daunting of tasks for policy-makers and practitioners alike.

All-purpose models for accelerating implementation have proven elusive, since there cannot be a singular approach to analyzing the processes of policy implementation. Hence, Hill and Hupe (2008) consider implementation as primarily a "cognitive act" that requires particular types of knowledge and the application of practical tools to smooth the translation of policy ideas into practice. This explains why we have chosen to sample 30, or half, of the available provincial policies. We expected to see vast differences, and we have done.

It is against this backdrop that we advocate for reviews of policy implementability (in the ways that those policies are written), before labelling and addressing so-called implementation deficiencies. A study of policy implementability examines how the intrinsic characteristics of a policy can enhance or impede its implementation. Implementability therefore focuses on identifiable and explicit features of the policy text, and the timing for its emergence, that may facilitate the translation of such statements into action. Implementability = policy interpretation.

It is a concept derived from studies in public welfare economics for clarifying principal-agent relationships (Guesnerie & Laffont, 1984).

Fundamentally, implementability can be considered as a subset of implementation since each set of constituents (and constituencies) may determine the success, or otherwise, of implementation efforts. Our conjecture is that once the implementability of policy texts is improved through improving the readability and usability of the language, and the mechanics of the content, we can more effectively translate ideas into action.

Analytic Methods

This review involved a content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004) of policy documents for selected Alberta school authorities from their websites. We chose this method because the procedural elements in a policy statement (implementability) appear central to how available the documents are through current technologies (accessibility), and to understanding how up-to date-local policy is (currency) in conformity with the school board (fidelity).

We chose half the school authorities in the province on a random basis. Federally-funded and independent school authorities were not part of the pool for selection. In determining the implementability of policy documents generated by the various school boards, we proceeded in five steps to ensure sound, reliable and objective analyses. These steps included:

Step 1:
We created a four-level categorization rubric for each of four different criterion dimensions (Appendix A). These reflected our definitions for the observable qualities in implementable policies, as derived and distilled from the current literature (Boise State, n.d.; Brostoff et al., 2005; Dunn, 2015; Eddy 1990; Gagliardi et al., 2011; Linder & Peters, 1987). The chosen criteria for analyses included four inherent characteristics:
- *fidelity*: determined by recognizable compliance with the broader provincial policy;
- *accessibility:* reflects the ease of accessing local policy documents online;
- *implementability:* consisting of identifiable intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics of the policy documents; and
- *currency:* defined by dates of revision, modification or adoption, as date stamped. Each criterion consisted of 4-level rating, with 4 being highest, and 1 lowest.

Step 2:
Policy documents were located and downloaded using search engines provided on the authority's website, or extracted from online administrative-procedure manuals. These policy documents were downloaded and kept in 30 different folders, one for each school authority. Meeting minutes of board meetings and website descriptions of staffing responsibilities were not sought, nor were they entered into these file folders. Only the policy documents were used.

Step 3:

   This step involved an independent review of the policy documents based on the outlined criteria developed by the researchers. In reviewing the documents, we focused on the salient intrinsic elements of each individual document, including

1. the statement of purpose;
2. definitions of standards and objectives;
3. clearly-defined administrative procedures;
4. contextualization and modifications in terminology;
5. actor involvement; and
6. established lines of communication as expressed in the policy documents.

Step 4:

   We assigned ratings to the sampled school authorities based on a comparative assessment of how well these policy documents exhibited traits of the above-mentioned elements, and entered them into Excel worksheets. We exchanged worksheets for cross-validation, cross-checking and determining where our ratings were not adjacent or exact.

   We modified the currency rubric to reflect equal-year intervals and to ensure scale polarity with the other rubrics (4 = high and 1 = low). A four-year interval was chosen because it generally matches electoral cycles at the provincial and local levels, and because Andex charts display similar market and business rhythms in the economy (Parnaby, 2017).

   We then re-rated the 30 school authority policies, in consideration of the dates of local board reviews, board amendments, or a school authority's official date of approval.

Step 5:

   Finally, we prepared a matrix to consolidate our ratings. The matrix presents the scores of the 30 school authorities based on the four different sets of criteria on a 4-point rating scale. Pseudonyms were used to preserve the confidentiality of school board members and their officials. We then calculated a provincial average, using the geometric mean rather than the arithmetic mean. The United Nations Development Program recommends this mean as theoretically more appropriate for longitudinal studies of growth where composite indices are created from multiple criteria.

   All analyses were undertaken during May to July 2017. Notwithstanding the end-of-school year analyses, our aim is not to create a media-inspired report card on school authority performance. Rather, our intent is to present a scholarly, informed snapshot or overview of characteristics for local educational policy relating to teacher growth, supervision and evaluation in Alberta.

The rating criteria are derived from policy writers' handbooks and from North America-wide and Europe-wide research into policy implementation efforts. Analytic criteria show overall traits or attributes, thus signaling local officials toward desirable directions in their policy-making efforts. We have included normative averages (geometric means), thus suggesting that many school authorities' efforts are 'above average' and worthy of emulation.

In effect, we are benchmarking local policy-writing efforts. Moreover, to facilitate comparisons between policy content and participants' attitudes in components of the project, averages are also included in survey results for teachers, principals and superintendents.

The four dimensions of policy features (fidelity, accessibility, implementability, and currency) work together to magnify and promote adoption, but can readily nullify or countervail each other. We caution that no one criterion is more important than another. Variations might include the following:

- A school board may have a highly implementable policy with crystal-clear delineation of roles and procedures, but which is stale-dated or residual because personnel have changed and the surrounding politico-economic context has changed.

- Conversely, school boards may have a fresh policy manual–endorsed and approved by local authorities within the last week–but which is difficult to implement because goals, objectives, purposes and procedures remain opaque in the documents.

- The same holds for fidelity and accessibility: a policy which carries the impress of the Ministry–given its high goal-overlap with those in the provincial capital— will have diminished impact if the statement is inaccessible and no one can find it when needed in a filing cabinet or cluttered website.

- A readily-accessible policy also may not have much medium- or long-term clout when it is disconnected and does not cohere with the goals for the larger education system.

Attributes of Alberta Jurisdiction Policies

Overall, our thirty school authorities were generally ranked well for two of the dimensions of local policy that we analyzed—*fidelity* (alignment with or congruence with provincial goals) and *accessibility* for the interested outsider.

On average, the provincial mean rating for fidelity was 3.45 on the 4 point scale; twenty-one of thirty school districts rated at the top end of the scale for content alignment.

These high levels of policy congruence are remarkable, given the size and dispersion of Alberta's adult and student population. Some scholars suggest the policy reach of any government is directly proportional to the distance between the capital city center and the location of those on the periphery. Others counter-argue that those local authority officials in closest proximity to head offices are often prone to seeing themselves as independent from senior government in their policy approaches. Proximity breeds more discontent because policy makers often work and reside close by, so the argument goes.

That principle, however, does not appear to apply in this study of Alberta's policies— different patterns are not evident among metro, urban, and rural authorities. Viewed in terms of fidelity or congruence in goals, purposes and aims with the Ministry's policy, the overwhelming majority of local policy statements in this random sample conformed well, with a rating of 3 or 4, to the Province's policy direction, regardless of location in the province.

This demonstrates that most local school boards' policies are well-attuned and congruent with the Ministry's direction and approach on professional personnel matters. As legal scholars note, school districts must obey the dictates of provincial governments, and are not autonomous creators of educational policy.

The GPS may not be destiny, but geography may be influential in other ways. Alberta has approximately 700,000 students, 40,000 teachers and 3000 schools (2017) dispersed across a geographic area larger than France or Germany, which each have more than ten million students. One explanation posited for Albertan school boards having poorly-defined policies that seem to have a low fidelity with the provincial TGSE policy, is that they are attempting to adapt the TGSE policy to unique local circumstances.

Several northern jurisdictions are geographically large authorities with isolated schools dispersed across vast tracts of northern boreal forest. One such district has a personnel handbook to specifically clarify the roles and responsibilities of those working at the central office. However, it has not extended local policy attention to matters relating to the professional growth of its staff. Overall, however, school boards and their senior officials appear to uphold Ministry goals, ideals, and aims in the development, supervision, and evaluation of professional performance.

A clue that is perhaps more notable than local *fidelity* with provincial policy, is the level of consistency among school authorities themselves for their local policy statements: these statements often share identical formatting, font, sentence-writing, and especially terminology. In other words, the policy is photocopied, not templated, and certainly not translated for local circumstances.

This suggests that local policy statements are widely circulated among senior district officials, with little attempt to re-interpret policy content for particular, specific local priorities. This may reflect a low level of engagement among local policy makers with such statements, their being generally comfortable with the Ministry's over-all leadership on this matter. Or it may mean that provincial documents, such as a collective agreement, an Alberta Teachers' Association or CASS document, labour relations law, or the *School Act* govern local personnel matters to a greater extent than local policy does.

At the same time, the overall level of *accessibility* for local policy statements was high. On average, the provincial mean rating for accessibility was 3.63 on the 4 point scale. Only one school district did not make its policies available online. We had relatively little difficulty finding the relevant policy via authority websites. Any difficulties we did have were often due to esoteric software demands on the user, or website server problems, rather than what appeared to be negligence or a deliberate attempt to bury policy in the midst of a profusion of other website information. The major distinctions between a Level 3 and a Level 4 rating related to website maintenance issues, whether there was a comprehensive index for policy, or whether the policy appeared to be integrated within, and indexed with, other board policies in a coherent manner.

This accessibility augurs well for public accountability, especially on a policy topic which might be seen as exclusively a professional or employer-employee prerogative, in which the public might seem to have only a passing interest. Relatively accessible local policy both enables district officials and staff to understand their respective roles and responsibilities in a clear fashion, and communicates system goals for its personnel to parents and the larger public.

Though *fidelity* and *accessibility* were consistently strong in Spring 2017 across this sample of Alberta school authorities, the *implementability* of such local policy statements remains a question mark in many cases.

The provincial mean rating for *implementability* was 2.55 out of 4. Only 19 of 30 authorities have spelled out their local policies in a serviceable, easily interpretable, and implementable way at Level 3 or 4. In contrast, 11 of the thirty authorities, falling at Levels 1 and 2, can anticipate substantial barriers to implementation arising from the way that local policy is itself presented.

The major characteristics of implementable policy statements are: operability of principles; clear delineation of who is responsible, when, for what; precise language; coherent regulations or procedures that follow logically and translate from principles.

Those Alberta policy documents that were rated lower than others had a few common characteristics. They (a) overemphasized procedural language rather than principles, (b) focused

on the "who" as units rather than the "what" of policy substance, (c) often positioned the professional policy as a stand-alone effort, separate and apart from other policy initiatives.

In fact, few jurisdictions demonstrated that their personnel polices aligned with higher strategic objectives or with an overarching plan, with an integrating purpose behind multiple personnel policies, or with an overarching policy goal across various domains. Moreover, they often did not specify who had responsibility for particular tasks to be accomplished at particular points in a school year or in a career path.

It is difficult to ascribe reasons to this trend. We can only speculate within the bounds of this study. Some may relate to internal tensions over roles and responsibilities that the school board would rather address in ways other than through policy. Paradoxically, local policy might be seen as a legacy from another era, or not updated because there are no conflicts, which require resolution.

Central office leaders who wrote policies that are not easy to implement may simply lack knowledge and training about human resource strategies. Perhaps school board or senior authority officials deem educational finance as more influential than policy pronouncements in shaping human resource practices, and leave the manual to lapse. In that sense, local policy sometimes becomes a victim, rather than an expression, of current priorities.

A stronger index for board priorities is the currency of policy. On average, the provincial mean rating was 2.98 for "up-to-datedness" on the 4 point scale. Nearly half of the thirty school boards had not amended, updated, or publicly affirmed their local policies about teacher growth, supervision, or evaluation within the past eight years. Five school divisions had not reviewed their professional policies within the past twelve years, in light of changing political or economic contexts.

On the other hand, half of Alberta school boards had reviewed and formally altered or affirmed their local policy statements within the past four years, suggesting that their senior decision makers are attuned to current policy trends. No clear pattern in currency is discernable, based on school authority size, location or (non)denominational character.

Aspects for Further Consideration

Policy statements can serve multiple functions: a referee's manual to resolve periodic conflicts, a form of bureaucratic support for leadership intentions, a checklist task to demonstrate that a legal obligation has been fulfilled, an aspirational or inspirational statement to express a larger vision for education, a lever to instrumentally assist with enacting a longer-term or broader set of goals, or a document which translates current or past priorities into action.

The ratings and criteria embedded in the implementability rubric suggest that for many local Alberta authorities, personnel policy is often used for occasional conflict resolution or as a managerial checklist obligation, rather than as a vehicle for moving personnel forward in an integrated way for professional growth or to achieve a larger strategic vision.

A highly implementable policy is one which clarifies and supports the decision-making of local officials and guides the conditions for teaching and the professional behaviour of teachers and principals over a period of at least four or five years. That policy, whether provincial or local, should be internally and externally consistent in its purposes (that is, have *fidelity*), be readily available for communication (*accessible*), specify intentions and roles (*implementable*), and fit in some way with the current politico-economic context (*current*).

Personnel policies in schools work with administrative law, contract law, collective agreement provisions, and professional codes to set school conditions, guide behaviours, and avoid and resolve conflict.

In light of these characteristics and according to our review, Alberta school boards' official policy statements appear well-aligned with the Alberta Ministry of Education's 1998 TGSE Policy. School boards' goals and objectives are, for the most part, complementary to the policy. School authorities in their officially-written documents have similar and often identical song sheets to that of the choirmaster, although a few may be singing slightly off key. The local policy statements are readily accessible to an outsider. Hence, we can presume that both professionals and the public will find the pertinent policy with relatively little online effort.

Many district policies are stale, and missing features that would assist school boards to implement provincial policy in an ongoing way within schools. Nearly half of the policies have not been scrutinized for at least four years. They do not reflect current market realities, present political circumstances, or evolving social structures in Alberta. Employees have changed and local priorities sometimes change. Hence the salient features of an outdated human resources policy may not be readily implementable in present circumstances.

To be effective, local educational policy writing should be in plain language and easily useable in schools. Policy writers should begin with an understanding of the practitioner and the heavy workloads of school administrators, and not from theory. Sound policy writing must have clear objectives, point out who has responsibilities and procedural tasks, and clearly set out values within a broader strategy.

Table 6.1: Levels of Policy Fidelity

Level 1: *Highly inconsistent*	Level 2: *Inconsistent but with subtle evidence*	Level 3: *Consistent*	Level 4: *Highly consistent*
No evidence of compliance and reveals strong conflicts with the original policy document in its entirety. There may be significant conflicts in multiple components (content, strategies, principles) of the policies and strong tendencies toward implementation failure due to substantive differences.	Partially adherent to original policy but with noticeable inconsistencies in core principles. Content of local policy is not entirely different from the TGSE policy document, with subtle evidence of conformity in language, but there may be departures in several key elements. Such inconsistencies can impede effective implementation of policy.	Exhibits sufficient traits of adherence but marginal differences in aspects of the original policy document. Marginal differences can be attributed to modification and re-interpretation to suit local context. However, such differences cannot affect implementation outcomes.	Demonstrates strong adherence to the original policy documents in terms of content, strategies and principles, with no evidence of conflicts. Exhibits strong resemblance and similarity to the TGSE policy document and demonstrates strong tendencies toward implementation success.

Table 6.2: Levels of Personnel Policy Accessibility/Transparency

Level 1: *Not accessible*	Level 2: *Inaccessible without assistance*	Level 3: *Publicly accessible for most components*	Level 4 *Fully transparent and accessible*
The school district's personnel policies are not accessible on-line through either a master directory or through a concerted website search. Phone numbers or email addresses are not immediately locatable, nor are the names of individuals who have policy responsibility for personnel matters readily identified.	The school district's current or historic personnel policies do not appear accessible on-line but may be buried and found only with phone assistance from someone knowledgeable about specific location. Phone numbers or email addresses are locatable with some effort, but the names and roles of individuals who have policy responsibility for personnel matters may not be immediately apparent.	Most major elements of the school district's current personnel policies are retrievable on-line but some pieces appear to be out of date or stored in separate locations on line. One or two links and navigational elements may not be present or may be out of date.	Both current and some archived personnel policies are located in a single on-line location, with indexing that allows for ready downloading and use with minimal effort. All links and navigational elements are present and contextually appropriate via the keyboard.

Table 6.3: Levels of Implementability

	Level 1 *Non-implementable*	Level 2 *Vague*	Level 3 *Serviceable*	Level 4 *Implementable*
Intrinsic characteristics of policy statement	Features abstract, poetic, aspirational language Goals, objectives, values and principles are disjointed or internally incoherent No description or identification of those who are responsible for carrying out the policy No standards of performance articulated No provision for those who are impacted by policy to express dissent or disagreement Policy statement is vague, ambiguous and longer than 5 pages long Policy statement is found only as a blurb or fragmented piece in website Policy statement seems to exist in a void with no supporting tools to translate it into action	Features procedural language or steps rather than principles or criteria that may be applied Goals may be too specific and concrete operational General references to groups of people who are involved in policy adoption References to measurement and indicators but not criterion standards General references to different units or departments in the organization who are responsible for policy statements Policy statement is long and rambling Policy statement has clear title and formatting which is consistent in larger policy manual No accompanying regulations, procedures but may be program handbooks or manuals	Features concrete language that will apply in many circumstances Articulated goals and intentions and objectives, but may be paradoxical statements Well-articulated identification of individuals and those in positions of responsibility Articulated standards of performance References to individuals or holders of the policy Policy statement is repetitive Policy statement may be numbered but more in way as bibliographic device for ease of access in emergency Regulations or procedures which may not cohere but dominate the policy ideas	Features operational principles that can apply in most circumstances Clarity, precision alignment within goals, purposes, intentions, objectives, and statements of values Well-articulated descriptions of roles and responsibilities for enactment Articulated standards of performance that are aligned with policy goals Provision for appeal or conflict resolution processes Policy is clearly written crisp, and no longer than 2 pages long Coding scheme, archiving or shelf life review dates indicate that policy is linked and operational within an organizational "system" Coherent regulations or procedures which follow logically and translate from policy
Extrinsic characteristics of policy statement	No attempt to link policy goals with others No evidence that stakeholders have been involved in developing and promulgating the policy	Little or no attempt to align policy goals with others except through especially vague vision and mission statements Some indication that stakeholders were consulted when programs or policy ideas were formulated	Some attempt to align policy goals with other policies which have parallel intentions Some indication that stakeholders were consulted when policy was created	High congruence with goals in other policy statements with strategic language in a comprehensive manner High evidence of stakeholders' engagement in developing and promulgating policy

Table 6.4: Levels of Currency

Level 1 *Residual*	Level 2 *Stale*	Level 3 *Noncurrent*	Level 4 *Current*
The policy document is residual if the last revised date is before September 2005. The policy may be considered irrelevant and out of date because significant socio-economic changes or structural political shifts have changed the context for implementation. Here, the policy document was last updated before August 2005.	The policy document is labelled as stale if it was last updated or formally reviewed during the September 1, 2005-August 2009.	The policy document is noncurrent if the last year of revision spans September 2009 – August, 2013. It is considered as non-current, but the surrounding structural and economic context has not changed and therefore this label is not considered to significantly influence outcomes.	The policy is defined as current if its approval spans the period of September 1, 2013 to August 31, 2017 .

Table 6.5 Ratings of school authorities

School Authority**	Type of Authority*	Fidelity Rating	Accessibility Rating	Implementability Rating	Currency Rating
Trembling Aspen School District	urban	4	4	3	4
Balsam Regional Division	rural	4	4	4	4
Black Poplar School District	urban	4	4	2	3
Blue Spruce School Division	rural	4	4	3	3
Tamarack School Division	rural	2	4	2	3
Green Alder RCSSD	urban	4	4	3	4
Pin Cherry School Division	rural	3	4	2	3
Swamp Birch School Division	rural	4	3	3	4
Jack Pine School District	metro	4	4	3	4
High Bush Cranberry Regional Division	rural	4	3	4	3
Dogwood Public School District	urban	4	4	3	2
Red Willow School Division	rural	4	3	4	3
Black Cottonwood Catholic Separate	rural	4	4	4	4
White Spruce Catholic Regional Division	rural		1		
Wolf Berry School Division	urban	4	4	2	4
Silver Buffalo-Berry Catholic Separate School District	metro	3	4	1	4
Chokecherry RCS Regional Division	rural	3	4	4	2
Sub Alpine Larch School Division	rural	4	4	4	4
Black Twinberry School Division	rural	4	4	2	4
Canoe Birch Roman Catholic Separate Regional Division	rural	4	4	2	4
River Alder School District	urban	4	4	1	3
Wolf Willow School Division	rural	3	4	3	4
Goose Berry Catholic Separate Regional Division	urban	3	4	4	3
Wild Blueberry Regional Division	rural	4	3	4	1
Beaked Hazelnut School Division	rural	4	3	2	4
White Birch Regional Division	rural	4	3	2	4
Golden Ash Regional Division	rural	4	4	4	4
Western Snowberry Public Schools	rural	2	4	1	1
Lodgepole Pine School District	metro	4	4	4	2
Provincial Mean ***		3.45	3.63	2.55	2.98

*Metro = 2016 census population >1 million; Urban = 2016 census population > 60,000; rural = 2016 census population < 60,000

** Pseudonym to preserve confidentiality of board and officials

*** Geometric mean rather than arithmetic mean to enable longitudinal comparison of composite criteria in implementation as growth, as per United Nations Human Development Index.

CHAPTER SEVEN: MERGED RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: BUILDING, SUPPORTING, AND ASSURING QUALITY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

In this final chapter we present the merged results and recommendations from our investigation into the state of teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation in Alberta. In keeping with the principles of concurrent mixed methods research (Creswell, 2011, 2012; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), the 14 merged findings and 10 recommendations were determined through careful integration of the 13 cross-case themes from Chapter Four with the 4 major policy analysis findings from Chapter Six, and the key quantitative findings from Chapter Five. These merged findings and recommendations provide insights and set direction for *building, supporting, and assuring quality professional practice that results in optimum learning for all students.*

Qualitative and quantitative methods were given equal value, gathered independently at the same time, and were combined in this interpretive phase to provide a better understanding of the research questions than either method alone (Creswell, 2011, 2012; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). Our rationale for using concurrent mixed methods was to gain insights from both quantitative and qualitative data within a limited time frame.

One form of data collection supplied strengths to offset the weaknesses of the other form, and a more complete understanding of a research problem resulted from collecting both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, 2012, p. 540). Three provincial online surveys (one for teachers, one for principals, and one for superintendents) generated quantitative data from a stratified random sample of the larger population of Alberta educators, which, in combination with qualitative data collected through interviews with provincial ATA and CASS leaders and the policy content analysis in Chapter 6, provided important insights into how the policy was being broadly experienced across the province. In addition, a robust review of the literature on teacher growth, teacher supervision, and teacher evaluation along with policy perspectives from other provincial, state and national jurisdictions contextualized the research data.

Finally, a deeper, richer, and more complex understanding of how teachers, principals, and school authority leaders were experiencing teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation was gathered through individual and focus group interviews, documents, and field notes from nine illustrative settings. These data provided thick descriptions and nuanced interpretations of how the TGSE policy is being enacted. Parallel data collection questions were used in each of the data strands. The intent was to "obtain an in-depth qualitative exploration and a rigorous quantitative examination of the topic (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 2011).

The study's merged findings and recommendations are presented in three domains, as itemized in Table 7.1. The first domain examines the interplay of policy and practice in relation to Research Questions 1 and 5. This domain focuses on the content of the 1998 TGSE policy in

light of current research literature in the areas of teacher growth, instructional supervision, teacher evaluation, and policy analysis.

The results and recommendations in the second domain address Research Questions 2, 3, and 4. They focus on a central tenet of this study—*the importance and benefits of supporting professional growth through the interplay of teacher learning and instructional supervision.*

The third domain returns to Research Questions 2 and 4 with a focus on assuring quality professional practice through the interplay of instructional supervision and teacher evaluation.

Table 7.1 Domains with Corresponding Research Questions

Domain	Research Questions
1. The Interplay of Policy and Practice: Updating Policy Content and Implementability	RQ#1. How does the current state of the Alberta TGSE policy compare with the research literature and current best practices on educator growth, supervision, and evaluation?
	RQ#5. To what degree, and in what ways, does the implementation of the TGSE policy provide a foundation that could inform related policy development for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and superintendents?
2. Building and Supporting Quality Professional Practice: The Interplay of Teacher Learning and Instructional Supervision	RQ#3. To what extent, and in what ways, do teachers, principals, and superintendents perceive that teacher growth plans have a demonstrable relationship to the TQS?
	RQ#4. To what extent, and in what ways, do teachers, principals, and superintendents perceive that ongoing supervision by the principal provides teachers with the guidance and support they need to be successful?
	RQ#2. What aspects of the current policy are perceived to be working well? Which aspects of the policy, if any, are not working well?
3. Assuring Quality Professional Practice: The Interplay of Instructional Supervision and Teacher Evaluation	RQ#4. To what extent, and in what ways, do teachers, principals, and superintendents perceive that ongoing supervision by the principal provides teachers with the guidance and support they need to be successful?
	RQ#2. What aspects of the current policy are perceived to be working well? Which aspects of the policy, if any, are not working well?

The Interplay of Policy and Practice: Updating TGSE Policy Content and Shifting From Fidelity to Implementability

In this first interpretive domain, we conducted a two-pronged policy analysis in relation to Research Questions 1 and 5. First, we examined the 20-year old content of the TGSE policy in light of the synthesis of the research literature on teacher growth, instructional supervision, and teacher evaluation presented in Chapter Two. Second, 30 randomly selected jurisdiction policies were assessed to determine policy fidelity, accessibility, currency, and implementability. Relevant survey and case study data were also considered. These analyses generated 5 merged findings and 2 recommendations, which are presented and discussed in this section.

Research Question 1: *How does the current state of the Alberta TGSE policy compare with the research literature and current best practices on educator growth, supervision, and evaluation?*

Merged Finding 1

After 20 years the provincial TGSE policy document stands up well in relation the literature in the areas of teacher growth and evaluation. The supervision portion of the policy does not compare as favourably with the literature on instructional supervision.

This finding was warranted by our comparison of Alberta's current policy with that discussed in current national and international research literature

The Alberta policy is similar to other education system policies on supervision and evaluation, with the addition of a required ongoing professional growth component and assumed competence once the teacher has passed through the summative evaluation screen.

Merged Finding 2

The teacher growth portion of the provincial TGSE policy stands up well in relation to the literature in the area of teacher growth.

Our finding was supported by a synthesis of national and international research on teacher growth:

1. Student learning should be clearly identified as the focal point of teacher professional growth and of all associated policy documents and plans.
2. The foundation for professional growth should arise from agreed upon teacher standards that are embedded and enacted in practice.
3. A hallmark of the shift from the paradigm of professional development to professional growth is the extent to which teachers engage in reflection on, during, and for practice.
4. A second hallmark is the extent to which teachers are provided opportunities to engage in

frequent iterative cycles of inquiry.

5. Teacher growth should be viewed through the lens of daily practice. This implies that opportunities for learning and growth should be embedded at the school site during regular school hours.

6. Exemplars and rubrics should be used to provide clarity of expectations and consistent understanding of key vocabulary and terms that can support and enhance teacher professional growth.

Merged Finding 3
The supervision portion of the provincial TGSE policy does not compare favourably with the literature on instructional supervision.

This finding was based on a synthesis of national and international research on instructional supervision:

1. The primary focus of supervisory practice should be on instructional support that seeks to improve learning, teaching and shared instructional leadership.

2. Supervisory practice should be differentiated in accordance with such contextual factors as pedagogical approaches, developmental stages, and learning needs and aspirations evident in the school's community of professional practice.

3. A number of supervisory approaches should be utilized, including: clinical supervision, collegial supervision, peer supervision, professional learning community, coaching, and independent teacher learning.

4. Supervisory practice should be informed by evidence gathered from multiple sources, such as, classroom observations, action research, collaborative inquiry, pedagogical reflection and dialogue, and learning artifacts.

Merged Finding 4
The teacher evaluation portion of the provincial TGSE policy stands up well in relation to the literature on teacher evaluation.

Our synthesis of current research buttressed this finding on teacher evaluation:

1. Effective evaluation emphasizes teacher growth and improvement in relation to student learning outcomes.

2. Effective evaluation models reference clearly articulated standards to ensure teaching excellence.

3. A culture of continuous learning and improvement is nurtured when evaluation is associated with a process of growth for teachers at all career stages. The sole use of

summative evaluations for high stakes purposes such as job security or reward incentives demotivate teachers and jeopardize teacher learning as an integral aspect of evaluation processes.

4. Multiple artifacts of evidence for teaching performance, differentiation of evaluation based on career stage, and incorporating collegial evaluation processes (e.g. involvement of subject experts, not only the principal) address contextual variances in the teaching environment (e.g. teaching experience, subject, grade level, class composition) and make it meaningful for teachers.

5. Where multiple sources of data indicate that teacher performance may no longer meet the standard, then clear and fair procedures for summative evaluation need to be enacted.

Research Question 5: *To what degree, and in what ways, does the implementation of the TGSE policy provide a foundation that could inform related policy development for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and superintendents?*

Merged Finding 5

With updated policy content and an increased emphasis on currency and implementability, the TGSE policy can provide a foundation to inform related policy development for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and superintendents.

The finding above was based on Cross-Case Theme 13

> Teachers, principals, and superintendents supported the idea that a policy similar to the TGSE should be developed to provide for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and school authority leaders.

It was also based on the following survey findings:

- 81% of principals agreed or strongly agreed that parallel provincial policies are needed.
- 91% of principals agreed that the TGSE could inform the development of parallel provincial policies.
- 82% of superintendents agreed or strongly agreed that parallel provincial policies are needed.

In complementary fashion, our policy review demonstrated that school jurisdiction policies on Teacher Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation were very high on policy fidelity and accessibility. Currency and implementability ratings were not as strong.

Table 7.2: Policy Ratings for Alberta School Jurisdictions

Policy Component	Mean Rating on 4 Point Scale	School Jurisdictions At Levels 3 & 4
Fidelity	3.45	29 / 30
Accessibility	3.63	29 / 30
Currency	2. 98	15 / 30
Implementability	2.55	19 / 30

Recommendations with Rationale

Table 7.3 The Interplay of Policy and Practice: Updating Policy Content and Implementability

Recommendation 1 *For Alberta Education*	The TGSE policy content should be updated to better reflect this study's syntheses of the research literature on teacher growth, instructional supervision, and teacher evaluation.
Recommendation 2 *For Alberta Education*	With updated policy content and increased emphasis on currency and implementability, the TGSE policy should serve as an experiential foundation to inform related policy development for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and superintendents.

Recommendation 1 is designed to update the policy content of the TGSE to better reflect the research literature on building, supporting, and assuring quality professional practice. Though the teacher growth and teacher evaluation portions of the 20-year old policy still stand up quite well in relation to the research literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The research syntheses summarized in this chapter offer opportunities to enhance and refresh the policy's content.

The literature reinforces and extends the notion that teacher growth should be based on, and embedded in, practice standards such as the Alberta's Teaching Quality Standard (Day & Qing, 2007; Gilles, Wilson, & Elias, 2010; Parise & Spillane, 2010). Similar policy approaches from California, Hong Kong, and Texas, may be instructive. Australia, Hong Kong, and California can provide insights into the use of exemplars and practice rubrics. For a fuller understanding of ways through which teacher growth can be more explicitly linked to student learning, it would be wise to consider policies and practices from Scotland, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Recent studies add depth to our understanding of teacher growth in two areas: (a) the shift to professional learning (Campbell, 2017; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Owen, 2014; Smardon, &

Charteris, 2017; Smith, 2017; Stewart, 2014, Timperley, 2011) and (b) inquiry-based and reflective practice (Bruce, et al., 2010; Camburn, 2010; Earl & Ussher, 2016; Kiss, 2016).

Similarly, guidance from our synthesis of the teacher evaluation literature can reinforce, deepen, and clarify evaluation policy content and practice in five key areas: (a) differentiation according to career stage; (b) alignment with clearly articulated standards; (c) using multiple "artifacts of evidence" to emphasize professional learning; (d) embedding evaluation within a culture of continuous improvement and learning; and (e) focusing on growth as a major contributor to assuring quality teaching (Burns & Darling- Hammond, 2014; Fan, 2012; Frontier & Mielke, 2016; Marzano & Toth, 2013; OECD, 2014; Smith, 2017; TALIS, 2013).

The supervision component of the TGSE is the area that will require the most significant investment in the policy revision and updating process. To be well grounded in the instructional supervision literature, the policy will need to take a more complex view of instructional supervisory practices in the following three areas:

1. The purpose of instructional supervision should be clarified and emphasized as supporting professionals to build and improve their instructional practice (Blase, & Blase, 1998, 2000; Brandon, 2006, 2008; Brandon et al., 2018; Brandon, et al., 2016; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2017; Ozyildirim, & Bilgin Aksu, 2017; Mette, et al., 2017; Robinson, 2011; Sullivan & Glanz, 2013; Timperley, 2011; Wiliam, 2016; Zepeda, 2017).

2. Supervision should be varied and differentiated so that all teachers are engaged in a range of individual, small group, peer, and collective instructional supervision approaches clearly focused on building and supporting quality professional practice on an ongoing basis (Brandon et al., 2018; Brandon, et al., 2016; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2017; Glatthorn, 1984, 1997; Le Fevre & Robinson, 2015; Marshall, 2013; Ozyildirim, & Bilgin Aksu, 2017, Pajak, 2003; Robinson, 2011; Timperley, 2011; Zepeda, 2017).

3. Supervision practices should be informed by evidence gathered from multiple sources – classroom observations, pedagogic dialogue, artifacts of student work – to support professional practice, while at the same time deepening instructional leadership practice (Brandon et al., 2018; Brandon, et al., 2016; Glatthorn, 1984, 1997; Marshall, 2013; Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011; Pajak, 2003, Robinson, 2011; Timperley, 2011).

Recommendation 2 makes the case that the TGSE policy, with updated policy content and increased emphasis on currency and implementability, should serve as an experiential foundation to inform related policy development for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and superintendents. This view is well supported by the case study and survey data as

well as the policy analysis. Moreover, interviewed executive members from both the Alberta Teachers Association and the College of Alberta Superintendents enthusiastically endorsed this course of action.

With the February 7, 2018 Ministerial approval of three professional practice standards, the timing could not be better to move in these policy directions. The three draft standard documents conceptualize professional practice in consistent ways.

Quality **teaching** occurs when the teacher's ongoing analysis of the context, and the teacher's decisions about what pedagogical knowledge and abilities to apply result in optimum learning for all students. (Alberta Education, 2018a)

Quality **leadership** occurs when the leader's ongoing analysis of the context, and the leader's decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality teaching and optimum learning for all students in the school. (Alberta Education, 2018b)

Quality **superintendent leadership** occurs when the superintendent's ongoing analysis of the context, and the superintendent's decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality school leadership, quality teaching and optimum learning for all students in the school authority. (Alberta Education, 2018c)

In each standard statement professional practice is based on the professional's reading of the context and the application of the professional's judgement about the professional knowledge and skills that will most likely lead to optimum learning for *all* students. All three standard documents are structured in the same manner: one standard, six to nine required competencies, and several optional indicators.

For the first time in the history of Alberta, there is a strong throughline in the professional practice expectations for teachers, principals, and superintendents. It is an opportune time to provide similar policy and practice structures for parallel approaches to *building, supporting, and assuring quality professional practice that results in optimum learning for all students.*

Building and Supporting Quality Professional Practice: The Interplay of Teacher Learning and Instructional Supervision

Through its focus on research questions 2, 3, and 4, this second domain draws attention to important aspects of building and supporting quality professional practice in relation to the provincially mandated professional practice standard, the TQS. The 8 merged results and 6 recommendations presented and discussed below address the interplay of teacher learning and instructional supervision in the Alberta context. The domain's focus is on a central tenet of this study—*the importance and benefits of supporting professional growth through the interplay of teacher learning and instructional supervision.*

Research Question 3: *To what extent, and in what ways, do teachers, principals, and superintendents perceive that teacher growth plans have a demonstrable relationship to the TQS?*

Merged Finding 6
The Teaching Quality Standard is not being used as widely as might be expected to inform teacher growth planning.

Cross-Case Theme 4 warranted the above finding:

> There was inconsistent application of the Teaching Quality Standard informing Professional Growth Plans. While some authorities accepted goals that originated from a variety of sources, many expected an explicit link to the Teaching Quality Standard.

So, too, did data from our Alberta-wide surveys support this finding:

- 70% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they referred to the Teaching Quality Standard while preparing their Teacher Professional Growth Plans.
- 67% of principals agreed or strongly agreed that teachers in their schools referred to the Teaching Quality Standard while preparing their Teacher Professional Growth Plans.
- 60% of superintendents agreed or strongly agreed that teachers in their school authorities referred to the Teaching Quality Standard while preparing their Teacher Professional Growth Plans.

> **Merged Finding 7**
>
> In practice, growth plans have a demonstrable administrative link to the TQS, but the professional linkage is not as strongly in evidence.

Four cross-case themes derived from our analyses of the 9 case studies underpinned Finding 7:

> Cross-Case Theme 6: Limited attention was given to gathering evidence of the impact of professional growth plans on the expressed TGSE policy goal of optimizing student learning. Clarity was required to explicitly link the professional growth plan to measures of student learning.
>
> Cross-Case Theme 7: The development of criteria and exemplars was seen to be of value in guiding teachers in preparing their growth plans. Additionally, such exemplars were viewed to play a supportive role in the process of teacher supervision.
>
> Cross-Case Theme 8:Teachers, principals, and central office team members developed annual TPGPs in compliance with school authority policy.
>
> Cross-Case Theme 9: Many experienced teachers perceived that professional growth plans served a managerial and accountability function to which they complied. They noted that sustained conversations about professional growth would be more helpful in improving their instructional practices and enhancing student learning than filling out standardized growth plans.

Quantitative data from the surveys of teachers, principals, and superintendents reinforced this finding:

- 70% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they referred to the Teaching Quality Standard while preparing their Teacher Professional Growth Plans.
- 67% of principals agreed or strongly agreed that teachers in their schools referred to the Teaching Quality Standard while preparing their Teacher Professional Growth Plans.
- 60% of superintendents agreed or strongly agreed that teachers in their school authorities referred to the Teaching Quality Standard while preparing their Teacher Professional Growth Plans.
- 69% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their school authority provided opportunities to help them understand the purpose, nature, and usage of TPGPs

> **Merged Finding 8**
> Many teachers, principals see benefit in developing growth plans that connect with school and school authority goals.

Cross-Case Theme 5 supported this finding:

> Views varied on the degree to which professional growth plans should be developed in connection with school and/or authority goals. Many teachers, principals, and superintendents supported the integration of system, school, and individual goals; others expressed their desire for increased professional autonomy.

Likewise, data from the province-wide surveys reinforced this finding:

- 78% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed they had been given professional autonomy and choice to develop and implement their professional growth plan.
- 81% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed they felt compelled to align their growth plan to the goals of the school and district.
- 90% of principals agreed or strongly agreed that the teachers in their school are given professional autonomy and choice to develop and implement their professional growth plans.
- 78% of principals agreed or strongly agreed that teachers in their school are expected to align their goals in their professional growth plans to the goals of the school and district.

Research Question 4: *To what extent, and in what ways, do teachers, principals, and superintendents perceive that ongoing supervision by the principal provides teachers with the guidance and support they need to be successful?*

> **Merged Finding 9**
> Teachers' perceptions of the benefits of ongoing supervision on their teaching practice were markedly divergent from those of school and school authority leaders.

Cross-Case Theme 10 revealed that:

> Supervision processes were unclear, inconsistently applied, and not well understood. Supervision was often conflated with evaluation.

Survey findings on a provincial scale showed that:

- 54% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their practice had improved as a result of ongoing supervision by their principal.
- 92 % of principals agreed or strongly agreed that teaching practice had improved as a

result of ongoing supervision.

- 85% of superintendents agreed or strongly agreed that teaching practice had improved as a result of ongoing principal supervision.

Merged Finding 10

Teachers want more opportunities to engage in collaborative conversations about their teaching practice.

This finding was supported by individual and focus group interviews in all 9 cases:

> Cross-Case Theme 3: Teachers appreciated, yet wanted more opportunities to engage in collaborative discussions with administrators and colleagues about growth plans. Conversations that facilitated reflection on practice were viewed as an integral part of their professional learning.

In parallel fashion, our surveys revealed that:

- 73% of teachers reported that ongoing conversations with their principal had a moderate to large impact on their teaching and student learning.
- 95% of principals reported that that ongoing conversations between themselves and their teachers had a moderate to large impact on teaching and student learning.
- 85% of teachers reported that participation in professional learning communities had a moderate to large impact on their professional practice.
- 92% of principals reported that teacher participation in professional learning communities positively impacted their professional practice (3.47 out of 4 on an impact scale).

Research Question 2: *What aspects of the current policy are perceived to be working well? Which aspects of the policy, if any, are not working well?*

Merged Finding 11

School and school authority leadership was an important determinant in the degree to which teacher growth processes were perceived to be worthwhile and successful.

Finding 11 was supported by two cross-case themes:

> Cross-Case Theme 1: The vision of the central office team strongly influenced how the TGSE policy was enacted. In particular, when the central office team shared their vision of teacher growth, and strongly supported the growth planning process, robust implementation practices were evident throughout the authority.

Cross-Case Theme 2: The intended outcomes of the TGSE policy were achieved when support for growth was intentional and sustained. This proactive focus on growth was seen as a possible way to circumvent many of the challenges associated with formal evaluation.

Province-wide surveys underscored the same message:

- 77% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their school authority had clearly articulated administrative procedures to guide them in the development of their professional growth plans.
- 82% of superintendents and 85% of principals agreed or strongly agreed that their school authority had clearly articulated administrative procedures to guide teachers in the development of their professional growth plans.

Merged Finding 12

Teachers, principals, and superintendents reported a lack of time and support for implementing teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation.

This finding was consistently supported in the individual and focus group interviews, and expressed through the following theme from the cross-case analysis:

Cross-Case Theme 11: Finding time to effectively engage in the processes of growth, supervision, and evaluation was a concern for principals. The time required to repeatedly evaluate teachers transitioning from temporary to probationary to continuing contracts was particularly concerning and understood to primarily serve bureaucratic purposes.

Province wide surveys conveyed the same theme:

- 62% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they had time and experiences needed to meet their professional growth needs.

Principals who agreed or strongly agreed they had the time and support to:
- meet their responsibilities related to TPGPs - 62%
- supervise teachers – 53%
- evaluate teachers – 60%

Superintendents who agreed or strongly agreed principals had the time and support to:
- meet their responsibilities related to TPGPs - 67%
- supervise teachers – 61%
- evaluate teachers – 70%

> **Merged Finding 13**
>
> Teachers, principals, and superintendents agreed that their school authority had clearly articulated administrative procedures to guide teachers in the development of professional growth plans.

Finding 13 was derived from analyses of individual and focus group interview transcripts from all 9 cases:

> Cross-Case Theme 8: Teachers, principals, and central office team members developed annual Professional Growth Plans in compliance with school authority policy.

Our surveys offered confirmation for this finding:

- 77% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their school authority had clearly articulated administrative procedures to guide them in the development of their professional growth plans.
- 82% of superintendents and 85% of principals agreed or strongly agreed that their school authority had clearly articulated administrative procedures to guide teachers in the development of their professional growth plans.

Recommendations with Rationale

Table 7.4 Building and Supporting Quality Professional Practice: The Interplay of Teacher Learning and Instructional Supervision

Recommendation 3 *For Alberta Education*	The requirements for teacher growth plans should be demonstrably linked to the Teaching Quality Standard and their impact on student learning. These requirements should be made more explicit in a revised and updated TGSE policy that is clearly focused on building and supporting quality professional practice.
Recommendation 4 *For teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders*	Professional growth plans should be explicitly anchored in teachers' daily work and measured by student learning, the Teacher Quality Standard, and site-embedded collaborative, sustained professional learning experiences that are clearly focused on building and supporting quality professional practice.
Recommendation 5 *For teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders*	Criteria, rubrics, and exemplars designed to build and support professional practice should be developed with and for professionals who see benefit in using them.
Recommendation 6 *For teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders*	A range of ongoing individual and collective opportunities and supportive structures should be provided in every school for teachers to collaborate about their professional learning goals with other teachers and school leaders.
Recommendation 7 *For Alberta Education, teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders*	School leaders should collaboratively engage all teachers in a range of individual, small group, peer, and collective instructional supervision approaches that are clearly focused on building and supporting quality professional practice on an ongoing basis.
Recommendation 8 *For Alberta Education, teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders*	Ongoing professional learning opportunities should be provided to support teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders in their efforts to build and support quality professional practice under the revised and updated TGSE policy.

This domain focuses on a central tenet of this study—*the importance and benefits of supporting professional growth through the interplay of teacher learning and instructional supervision.* Our analysis of the 8 merged results related to building and supporting quality professional practice generated 6 recommendations that are discussed in three conceptual

groupings. All 6 recommendations are well supported in the literature and by the qualitative and quantitative data displayed in this domain and detailed in the preceding chapters.

The first grouping focuses on site-embedded, collaborative, sustained professional learning experiences that can build quality professional practice within the revised TQS, with a greater emphasis on optimal learning for all students. ***Recommendations 3, 4,*** and *5* capture important ideas from study participants and the research literature on relevant teacher learning that is explicitly anchored in teachers' daily work, rooted in the Teacher Quality Standard, and measured by student learning.

Through ***Recommendations 6*** and *7* we advocate for the articulation and application of a more comprehensive approach to instructional supervision within a broader range of ongoing individual and collective structures that support quality teaching for optimal student learning. In contrast to much of the instructional leadership and supervision literature that focuses on what Fullan (2014) described as *direct* instructional leadership – principal actions that directly impact instruction, these recommendations are aimed at what Fullan (2014) called *overall instructional leadership* – the wider range of purposefully employed individual and shared leadership practices designed to positively impact teaching and learning in schools (Brandon et al., 2018; Brandon et al., 2015; Robinson, 2011, Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008).

The data gathered from teachers in this study indicated that many are yearning for and appreciative of effective opportunities to collaborate about their professional learning goals with other teachers and school leaders. They long for timely, useful, and generative feedback within collective and supportive learning cultures.

Recommendations 7 and *8*, taken together, suggest that principals should collaboratively engage all teachers in a range of individual, small group, peer, and collective instructional supervision approaches clearly focused on building and supporting quality professional practice on an ongoing basis.

Louis and Wahlstrom (2012) found that "leadership practices targeted directly at improving instruction have significant effects on teachers' working relationships and indirectly on student achievement" and that "when principals and teachers share leadership, teachers' working relationships are stronger and student achievement is higher" (p. 25). This is "largely because effective leadership strengthens professional community, a special environment within which teachers work together to improve their practice and improve student learning" (p. 25).

Similarly, Timperly (2011) underlined the importance of professional learning community, which she described as a group of professionals committed to working together to learn about their practice for the purpose of improving student learning. Significantly, it is

important for educators in such social work envoriments to focus on student learning through respectful, trusting relationships and collaborative inquiry for deep learning based on evidence.

The need to better support school leaders in such instructional leadership work was voiced by a number of case study participants and also surfaced in the survey data displayed in this interpretive domain. The following OECD (2016) finding is instructive, "a vast majority of principals act as instructional leaders, but about one-third still rarely engage in instructional leadership actions" (p. 28). A number of recent studies have investigated and confronted the challenges associated with providing effective instructional leadership (Brandon et al., 2018; Brandon, Saar, and Friesen, 2016; Brandon, Saar, Friesen, Brown, & Yee, 2016; CAP, 2014; 2010; Schleicher, 2015).

Assuring Quality Professional Practice: The Interplay of Instructional Supervision and Teacher Evaluation

The third domain returns to Research Questions 2 and 4. The focus is on assuring quality professional practice through the interplay of instructional supervision and teacher evaluation. An interpretive discussion and 2 recommendations follow the presentation of the 3 merged findings that pertain to these research questions.

Research Question 4: *To what extent, and in what ways, do teachers, principals, and superintendents perceive that ongoing supervision by the principal provides teachers with the guidance and support they need to be successful?*

Merged Finding 9 (Repeated from the previous domain.)

Teachers' perceptions of the benefits of ongoing supervision on their teaching practice were markedly divergent from those of school and school authority leaders.

Cross-Case Theme 10 revealed that:

> Supervision processes were unclear, inconsistently applied, and not well understood. Supervision was often conflated with evaluation.

Survey findings on a provincial scale showed that:

- 54% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their practice had improved as a result of ongoing supervision by their principal.
- 92% of principals agreed or strongly agreed that teaching practice had improved as a result of ongoing supervision.
- 85% of superintendents agreed or strongly agreed that teaching practice had improved as a result of ongoing principal supervision.

> **Merged Finding 12** (Repeated from the previous domain)
>
> Teachers, principals, and superintendents reported a lack of time and support for implementing teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation.

This finding was consistently supported in the individual and focus group interviews:

> Cross-Case Theme 11: Finding time to effectively engage in the processes of growth, supervision, and evaluation was a concern for principals. The time required to repeatedly evaluate teachers transitioning from temporary to probationary to continuing contracts was particularly concerning and understood to primarily serve bureaucratic purposes.

Province wide surveys conveyed the same theme:

- 62% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they had sufficient time and were provided with adequate experiences to meet their professional growth needs.

Principals who agreed or strongly agreed they had the time and support to:
- meet their responsibilities related to TPGPs - 62%
- supervise teachers – 53%
- evaluate teachers – 60%

Superintendents who agreed or strongly agreed principals had the time and support to:
- meet their responsibilities related to TPGPs - 67%
- supervise teachers – 61%
- evaluate teachers – 70%

Research Question 2: *What aspects of the current policy are perceived to be working well? Which aspects of the policy, if any, are not working well?*

> **Merged Finding 14**
>
> Teacher evaluation procedures were perceived to be fair and in keeping with the requirements of the TGSE policy.

The finding above is based on interviews with educators, as reported in in Cross-Case Theme 12:

> Evaluation was seen to be useful if implemented in keeping with the intent of the TGSE policy.

In similar manner, our surveys revealed the following with respect to teacher evaluation:

Teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their principal
- respectfully communicated purposes – 90%
- referred to the TQS – 86%
- used multiple sources of data 81%

Principals agreed or strongly agreed that they
- respectfully communicated purposes – 99%
- referred to the TQS – 95.5%
- used multiple sources of data 97%

Survey responses from superintendents were similar to those of the teachers and principals.

Recommendations with Rationale

Table 7.5 Assuring Quality Professional Practice: The Interplay of Instructional Supervision and Teacher Evaluation

Recommendation 9 *For Alberta Education*	The clear distinction between the improvement-oriented process of teacher supervision and the quality assurance process of teacher evaluation in the present TGSE policy should be maintained and made even more explicit in the revised and updated policy.
Recommendation 10 *For Alberta Education, school leaders, and school authority leaders*	The current emphasis is on repeated evaluations of early-career teachers, but this should be refocused, with more attention to building and supporting quality professional practice through induction and supervision, with less frequent, but more impactful teacher evaluation for the untenured and those on interim professional certificates.

The intersection of instructional supervision and teacher evaluation is often troubling (Mette et al, 2017). Though the data gathered in our study suggest that teacher evaluation is generally well understood and fairly executed, the data also reveal considerable confusion about the distinction between supervision and evaluation. In several of the case studies, supervision processes were unclear, inconsistently applied, and not well understood. Supervision was often conflated with evaluation. For many teachers, the appearance of an administrator in their classrooms was perceived to constitute an evaluation. A number of interviewed teachers and administrators expressed the view that supervision and evaluation were very similar

administrative monitoring activities, which they did not view to be very helpful to improving their professional practice.

Recommendation 9 addresses the need to better distinguish what should be a clear distinction between the improvement-oriented process of teacher supervision and the quality assurance process of teacher evaluation. The distinction is quite clear in the content of the present TGSE policy, but should be made even more explicit during the policy revision process.

Recommendation 10 is focused on the current over emphasis on repeated evaluations of early-career teachers. Both the case study data and the literature indicate that this time and energy should be redeployed. More attention should be devoted to building and supporting the quality of the professional practices of beginning teachers through mentoring, induction and supportive instructional supervision, with less frequent, but more impactful teacher evaluation for the untenured and those who hold interim professional certificates.

Novice teachers can benefit from ongoing support toward high, achievable, and assessed expectations through both research informed induction and growth oriented supervision and evaluation (Brandon et al., 2018). School leaders need to navigate the dual and sometimes conflicting roles of providing support, while assuring quality through their evaluations of beginning teachers. The paradox is that evaluators need to ensure teaching quality while at the same time nurturing the growth of the new teachers with whom they are working so that these novice professionals are better able to demonstrate the quality of their pedagogy. In essence, this approach is very similar to the use of formative assessment by classroom teachers as a means of ensuring that their students will perform well on summative assessments (Brandon et al., 2018, p. 20). It is the beginning teacher's overall experience within a learning enriched school community that has the greatest impact. Efforts in this direction are supported by evidence from several recent studies (e.g., Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Couvier, Brandon, & Prasow, 2008; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Hollweck, 2016; Louis & Wahlstrom, 2012; Robinson, 2011; Timperley, 2011; Wahlstrom et al., 2010).

Concluding Thoughts

The 14 merged findings from this study and the 10 recommendations that flow from them have been presented in three domains in this final chapter. Together the merged findings and recommendations provide insights for *building, supporting, and assuring quality professional practice that results in optimum learning for all students.*

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Appendix A: Sample Interview Questions

Teacher Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation in Alberta
Principal Interview Questions

Research Purposes
The purposes of this review of Alberta's *Teacher Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation Policy* (TGSE) are to inform a policy update to the existing TGSE policy, to provide recommendations on how best to support implementation of any recommended changes to the TGSE policy, and to identify related policy requirements for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and superintendents.

Individual and Focus Group Interview Procedures
The following questions and discussion prompts have been designed to guide our scheduled one-hour audio-recorded conversation about *your thoughts about and experience with teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation*. You may ask for the recording to be stopped at any time or replayed for clarification and to ensure accuracy. We will also be taking notes during the interview; you may have a copy of these notes at the conclusion of the interview if you wish.

Please note that anonymity and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus groups. However, the researchers request that participants in the focus groups keep comments confidential.

1. Overall, what are your thoughts about the *Teacher Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation* policy? *

Teacher Professional Growth
2. Please tell us about your experiences with the *teacher professional growth planning* process.

3. In your school, what is your short-term and long-term role in the teacher growth plan process?

2. Please describe a few of the ways that *teacher professional growth plans* in your school have impacted teaching practice. What evidence are you using to ascertain these improvements in teaching practice?

4. Describe the processes you use to guide and support *teacher professional growth plans* in your school?

5. Please provide any suggestions you might have for improving the *teacher professional growth* planning process within the TGSE policy.

Teacher Supervision
6. What does *teacher supervision* mean to you?

7. Please describe a few of the strategies that you use for *ongoing supervision* to provide *support and guidance to teachers* in your school.

8. What *ongoing supervision* strategies do you use to keep informed *about the quality of teaching* in your school?

9. Please share some of the challenges that you have encountered in *ongoing supervision* and, where applicable, strategies you've found effective in overcoming these challenges.

10. Please provide any suggestions you might have for improving *teacher supervision* within the TGSE policy.

Teacher Evaluation

Within the TGSE policy, *the evaluation of teacher may be conducted* for four reasons: (a) *upon the written request of a teacher*, (b) to gather *information for a specific employment decision*, (c) to assess *the growth of the teacher in specific areas of practice*, (d*) when, on the basis of information received through supervision, the principal has reason to believe that the teaching of a teacher may not meet the teaching quality standard.*

The TGSE policy also requires that *on initiating an evaluation, the principal communicate explicitly to the teacher*: (a) evaluation *reasons* and *purposes*, (b) *process, criteria, and standards* to be used, (c) *timelines*, and (d) *possible outcomes of the evaluation*.

11. What do you see as the strengths of this TGSE approach to *teacher evaluation*?

12. What do you see as the weaknesses of this TGSE approach to *teacher evaluation*?

13. Please share some of the challenges that you have encountered in *teacher evaluation* and, where applicable, strategies you've found effective in overcoming these challenges.

14. Please provide any suggestions you might have for improving *teacher evaluation* within the TGSE policy.

Further Comments

15. What are your thoughts about the development of a policy similar to the TGSE for principals? For superintendents?

16. *Please feel free to share any additional thoughts about the teacher professional growth, supervision, and evaluation.*

Appendix B: TGSE Online Survey for Teachers

Q1. I am knowledgeable about Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q2. Please indicate how many times you have written a teacher professional growth plan? Please specify below:

Q3. The Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) is one of the documents I refer to while preparing my annual professional growth plan.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Not Applicable

Q4. I believe the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) is useful in helping me to enhance my professional practice in teaching.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Not Applicable

Impact on Teacher Growth Q5. Please rate the impact of each of the following activities on your professional growth at school. *Please mark one choice in each row.*	Impact				
	No impact	Small impact	Moderate impact	A large impact	Not applicable
a. Ongoing conversations between myself, and my principal, to improve teaching and student learning.					
b. Participation in professional development activities that aim to improve teaching and student learning.					
c. Participation in professional learning communities that aim to improve teaching and student learning.					
d. Implementation of my annual professional growth plan.					
e. Participation in action research that helps improve teaching and student learning.					
f. Participation in conferences that help improve teaching and student learning.					
g. My reflections on professional practices.					

Q6a. I have collective discussions about my professional growth plan with my teacher colleagues.

- Yes
- No - please go to Question 7

Skip To: End of Block If Q6a = No - please go to Question 7
Skip To: Q6b If Q6a = Yes

Q6b. If you answered "**Yes**" to the previous question (Q6a), please rate the impact.
- No impact
- A small impact
- A moderate impact
- A large impact
- Not applicable

Teacher Professional Growth Planning Process

Q7. My school/school authority clearly articulates administrative procedures to guide me in the development of my professional growth plan.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q8. My school/school authority provides opportunities to help me understand the purpose, nature, and usage of teacher professional growth plans.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q9. In my school/school authority, there are resources available to fulfill my individual growth planning needs.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q10. My principal has used teacher professional growth plans to allocate time for teachers to meet their growth planning needs.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q11. I feel that I have been given professional autonomy and choice to develop and implement my professional growth plan.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q12. I feel that I have the time and experiences I need to meet my professional growth needs.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q13. I feel compelled to align the goals in my professional growth plan to the goals of school and district.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Ongoing Supervision
Q14. My teaching practice has improved as a result of ongoing supervision.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q15. My principal has used the information from teachers' professional growth plans to develop professional development activities.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Evaluation
Q16. Have you been formally evaluated for employment or certification in the last two years?
- Yes
- No - please go to Question 20

Skip To: End of Block If Q16 = No - please go to Question 20
Skip To: Q17 If Q16 = Yes

Q17. My principal used multiple sources of data during the evaluation process.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q18. My principal communicated the purposes of the evaluation in a respectful and transparent manner.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q19. The documents used by my principal in my evaluation referred to the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS).
- Strongly Disagee
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Demographic Information
Q20. Which of the school levels are you currently employed?
- Elementary school
- Middle/Junior high school
- High school

Q21. What type of school authority does your school belong to? If more than one employ you, select all that apply.
- Public
- Separate/Catholic
- Francophone
- Private/Independent
- Charter

Q22. Which term best describes the location for your school?
- Metro
- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

Q23. Approximately, what is the student population of your school?
- 100 or less
- 101-200
- 201-400
- 401-800
- 800 and above

Q24. What is your employment status as a teacher at this school?
- Full-time teacher with a permanent professional certificate
- Full-time teacher with an interim professional certificate
- Part-time teacher with a permanent professional certificate
- Part-time teacher with an interim professional certificate
- Substitute teacher
- Other, please specify:

Q25. What is your subject specialization?
- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Physical Education
- Fine Arts
- Music
- Career and Technology Studies
- French
- Other, please specify:

Q26. How many years have you been a teacher in Alberta?
- This is my first year
- 1 to 2 years
- 3 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 15 years
- 16 to 20 years
- More than 20 years

Q27. How long have you been working as a teacher at this school?
- This is my first year
- 1 to 2 years
- 3 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 15 years
- 16 to 20 years
- More than 20 years

Q28. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?
- Bachelor degree
- Masters degree
- Doctoral degree

Q29 What is your gender?

Appendix C: TGSE Online Survey for Principals

Q1. The teachers in my school refer to the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) while preparing their annual professional growth plans.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q2. The Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) is useful in helping most teachers to enhance professional practice.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Impact on Teacher Growth Q3. Please rate the impact of each of the following activities on teacher growth within your school. Please mark one choice in each row.	Impact				
	No impact	A small impact	A moderate impact	A large impact	Not applicable
a. Teachers' development of annual professional growth plans.					
b. Teachers' collective discussions of their professional growth plans with their colleagues.					
c. Teachers' implementation of annual professional growth plans.					
d. Ongoing conversations between my teaching staff and					

me for improving teaching and student learning.

e. Teachers' participation in professional development activities that aim to improve their teaching and student learning.

f. Teachers' participation in professional learning communities that aim to improve their teaching and student learning.

g. Teachers' participation in action research that helps improve their teaching and student learning.

h. Teachers' participation in conferences that help improve their teaching and student learning.

i. Teachers' reflections on their professional practices.

j. Principal's/Supervisor's ongoing supervision of teachers to ensure their teaching is meeting the standard and enhancing professional practice.

k. Identification of teaching behaviors or practices that need further improvement.

Teacher Professional Growth Planning Process

Q4. My school/school authority has clearly articulated administrative procedures to guide teachers in the development of their professional growth plans.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q5. My school/school authority provides opportunities to help teachers understand the purpose, nature, and usage of teacher professional growth plans.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q6. I use teacher professional growth plans to inform the allocation of professional development resources to meet specific teacher-defined needs.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q7. I use teacher professional growth plans to allocate time for teachers to meet their needs.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q8. My school provides both financial resources and time for teachers in support of their professional growth planning needs.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q9. I have the time and support I need in discharging my responsibilities related to teachers' professional growth plans.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q10. Teachers in my school are given professional autonomy and choice to develop and implement their professional growth plans.
- •   Strongly Disagree
- •   Disagree
- •   Agree
- •   Strongly Agree

Q11. The teachers in my school are expected to align the goals in their professional growth plans to the goals of school and district.
- •   Strongly Disagree
- •   Disagree
- •   Agree
- •   Strongly Agree

Q12. I provide teachers in my school with guidance and support in developing and implementing their professional growth plans.
- •   Strongly Disagree
- •   Disagree
- •   Agree
- •   Strongly Agree

Ongoing Supervision

Q13. Teachers' instructional practices in my school have improved as a result of ongoing supervision.
- •   Strongly Disagree
- •   Disagree
- •   Agree
- •   Strongly Agree

Q14. Most teachers in my school are satisfied with my supervisory practice.
- •   Strongly Disagree
- •   Disagree
- •   Agree
- •   Strongly Agree

Q15. I am dedicated to my teaching staff's career-long professional learning and growth.
- •   Strongly Disagree
- •   Disagree
- •   Agree
- •   Strongly Agree

Q16. I use the information from my teaching staff's professional growth plans to develop professional development activities.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q17. I have the time and support I need to supervise teachers.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

EvaluationThe following section refers to instances where teachers have been formally evaluated for employment or certification purposes.

Q18. I have relevant knowledge and skills to evaluate teacher competence as stipulated in the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS).

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q19. I have relevant knowledge and skills to evaluate teachers' instructional practices at my school.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q20. I use multiple sources of data when evaluating teachers at my school.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q21. I communicate the purposes of teacher evaluation to my teaching staff in a respectful and transparent manner.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q22. I refer to the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) while evaluating teachers.

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q23. I have the time and support I need to evaluate teachers.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Impact on (Beliefs about) Policy Development for Principals and Superintendents

Q24. Our past experiences with Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation can inform the development of parallel provincial policy for principals and superintendents.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q25. Provincial policies for the growth, supervision and evaluation of principals and school authorities are needed.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Demographic Information

Q26. Which of the following school levels best describes your school?
- Elementary school
- Middle/Junior high school
- High school

Q27. What type of school authority do you belong to? If more than one employ you, select all that apply.
- Public
- Separate/Catholic
- Francophone
- Private/Independent
- Charter

Q28. Which term best describes the location of your school?

- Metro
- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

Q29. Approximately, what is the student population of your school?
- 100 or less
- 101-200
- 201-400
- 401-800
- 800 and above

Q30. Which of the following best describes you?
- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Associate Principal
- Vice Principal
- Other, please specify:

_____

Q31. How many years have you held in your current position?
- This is my first year
- 1 to 2 years
- 3 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 15 years
- 16 to 20 years
- More than 20 years

Q32. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?
- Bachelor degree
- Masters degree
- Doctoral degree

Q33. What is your gender?

Appendix D: TGSE Online Survey for Superintendents

Implementation of TGSE Policy

Q1. The teachers in my school authority refer to the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) while preparing their annual professional growth plans.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q2. The Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) is useful in helping most teachers to enhance professional practice.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q3 Impact on Teacher Growth Q3. Please rate the impact of each of the following activities on teacher growth within your school authority. *Please mark one choice in each row.*	Impact				
	No impact	Small impact	Moderate impact	Large impact	Not applicable
a. Teachers' development of annual professional growth plans.					
b. Teachers' collective discussions of their professional growth plans with their colleagues.					
c. Teachers' implementation of annual professional growth plans.					
d. Teachers' participation in professional development activities that aim to improve their teaching and student learning.					
e. Teachers' participation in professional learning communities that aim to improve their teaching and student learning.					
f. Teachers' participation in action research that helps improve their teaching and student learning.					
g. Teachers' participation in conferences that help improve their teaching and student learning.					
h. Teachers' reflections on their professional practices.					
i. Principal's/Supervisor's ongoing supervision of teachers to ensure their teaching is meeting the standard and enhancing professional practice.					

j. Identification of teaching behaviors or practices that need further improvement.

Q4. My school authority has clearly articulated administrative procedures to guide teachers in the development of their professional growth plans.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q5. Most principals in my school authority provide opportunities to help teachers understand the purpose, nature and usage of teacher professional growth plans.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q6. Most principals in my school authority use teacher professional growth plans to inform the allocation of professional development resources to meet specific teacher-defined needs.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q7. Most principals in my school authority use teacher professional growth plans to allocate time for teachers to meet their needs.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q8. Most principals in my school authority provide both financial resources and time for teachers in support of their professional growth planning needs.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q9. Most principals in my school authority have the time and support they need in discharging their responsibilities related to teachers' professional growth plans.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q10. The teachers in my school authority are given professional autonomy and choice to develop and implement their professional growth plans.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q11. The teachers in my school authority are expected to align the goals in their professional growth plans to the goals of school and district.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q12. Most principals in my school authority provide teachers with guidance and support needed in developing and implementing teacher professional growth plans.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Ongoing Supervision

Q13. Teachers' instructional practices in my school authority have improved as a result of principals' ongoing supervision.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q14. Most teachers within my school authority are satisfied with their principals' supervisory practices.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q15. Most principals in my school authority demonstrate dedication to teachers' career-long professional learning and growth.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q16. Most principals in my school authority use the information from their teaching staff's professional growth plans to develop professional development activities.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q17. Most principals in my school authority have the time and support they need to supervise teachers.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

EvaluationThe following section refers to instances where teachers have been formally evaluated for employment or certification purposes.

Q18. Most principals in my school authority have relevant knowledge and skills to evaluate teacher competence as stipulated in the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS).
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q19. Most principals in my school authority have relevant knowledge and skills to evaluate teachers' instructional practices.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q20. Most principals in my school authority use multiple sources of data when evaluating teachers.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q21. Most principals in my school authority can communicate the purposes of teacher evaluation to their teaching staff in a respectful and transparent manner.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q22. Most principals in my school authority refer to the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) while evaluating teachers.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q23. Most principals in my school authority have the time and support they need to evaluate teachers.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Impact on Policy Development for Principals and Superintendents

Q24. Our past experiences with Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation can inform the development of parallel provincial policy for principals and superintendents.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q25. Provincial policies for the growth, supervision and evaluation of principals and school authorities are needed.
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q26. What type of school authority do you belong to? If more than one, select all that apply.
- Public
- Separate/Catholic
- Francophone
- Private/Independent
- Charter

Q27. Which of the following best describes you?
- Superintendent
- Deputy Superintendent
- Associate Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendent
- Director
- Other, please specify:

Q28. How many years you have held your current position?
- This is my first year
- 1 to 2 years
- 3 to 5 years
- 6 to 10years
- 11 to 15 years
- 16 to 20 years
- More than 20 years

Q29. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?
- Bachelor degree
- Masters degree
- Doctoral degree

Q30. What is your gender?