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Violence Against Teachers: Principal Strategies to Reduce Teacher Victimization

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This dissertation, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the College of Graduate and Professional Studies of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

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Violence Against Teachers: Principal Strategies to Reduce Teacher Victimization

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Annette Cummings

October 2020

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Dedication

Through this journey, I have learned that you are never too old, sick, or tired to honor God. The Bible says, "Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). To my mother and father, even though you are not here with me on earth, I feel your spirit every second. Thank you for "going through" to make it easier for me to "get through." Love you both, eternally.

To my family (Darry, Erica, LaKeisha, Lula, Debra, Jazz, J.C., Jaston, Adrian, LaMya, and Blessing), thank you for holding me up when I was falling. You have no idea how large your part was in helping me accomplish this academic goal. To my niece Nakia Cole, my heart is always eternally grateful. Thank you for putting me on this journey and praying me through every step.

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce student-driven violence toward teachers. Participants of this case study included nine secondary school principals and assistant principals. All the principals had a minimum of two years of experience in campus administration and possessed an administrator's certification. Participants were asked questions based on a guided protocol to determine the best strategies to reduce teacher victimization. The researcher interviewed all participants using Skype, a videoconferencing and recording computer program; transcribed the data; member-checked; and then analyzed the interview transcripts for common themes. The findings indicate that the types of abuse directed at teachers include verbal, physical, and mental. The findings also indicate that relationship building, conflict resolution, and cultural awareness are campus-wide strategies needed to promote school safety. The findings suggest that parent-teacher understandings and school policies affect parental participation in school-safety decisions. The findings also suggest parental opinions and district rules influence challenges facing principals in promoting school-safety policies.

Keywords: teacher-targeted student violence, school violence literature, teacher

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Chapter 1: Introduction

According to Weiler and Armenta (2014), mass killings across the United States have become a disturbing issue. No incident has alarmed people more than the senseless shootings of unarmed school children throughout the United States. It is estimated that, following the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, around 2,300 people have been killed and about 8,400 have been wounded in mass shootings (Lopez, 2019). However, while much-deserved attention is given to school-related mass shootings, another issue of school violence is often overlooked: targeted violence by students against teachers.

Violence against teachers is a worldwide problem that threatens the ability of teachers to successfully practice their profession (Bass et al., 2016; Garland et al., 2007; Kajs et al., 2014). In the United States, violence against teachers is a serious national problem (American Psychology Association [APA], 2019a). Perpetrators of this violence include administrators, colleagues, parents, and students, but the most prevalent violators are students (Espelage et al., 2013). Another issue causing alarm is that violence directed toward teachers is often underreported (McMahon et al., 2017). A recent study by Wills (2018) indicated that female teachers in high-poverty non-White schools were more likely to be victimized.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES; 2017) reported that during the 2015-16 school year, 10% of public teachers reported being threatened with injury by a student at their school. The APA (2019b) reported that violence against teachers results in 927,000 lost days of work per year. Violence-related acts against teachers include verbal assaults, physical abuse, damage to personal property, social coercion, and manipulative behavior with the intent to cause immediate harm (Dzuka & Dalbert, 2007; Johnson & Barton-Bellessa, 2014).

Regarding the impact of violence against teachers, several studies revealed that educators experience a reduction in productivity, threats to their emotional well-being, work disengagement, a lack of trust in school administrators, burnout, and job termination (Bass et al., 2016; Garland et al., 2007; Kajs et al., 2014). Furthermore, researchers have associated violence against teachers with health-related issues, including depression, acute stress disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder (Daniels et al., 2007; Dzuka & Dalbert, 2007), and fear (Bass et al. 2016; Wilson et al., 2011). This study was based on a conceptual framework of school violence literature.

Statement of the Problem

Violence against teachers includes verbal abuse, physical abuse, damage to personal property, and emotional and psychological abuse (Johnson & Barton-Bellessa, 2014). Several studies have revealed that educators experience a decline in work production and severe health-related issues because of teacher victimization (Bass et al. 2016; Wilson et al., 2011). It is estimated that the cost of violence against teachers exceeds $2 billion annually, which does not include the perpetrator's legal fees, educational fees resulting in dropouts, or medical and social services (APA, 2019b).

McMahon et al. (2017) indicated that research is needed for administrative support regarding how principals view issues and policies, and a healthy school environment is dependent on implementing school-wide safety initiatives. Furthermore, Tickle et al. (2011) found that a major indicator of job satisfaction was administrative support. Stone et al. (2009) suggested that many evidenced-based programs are centered on the definition of school violence, behaviors consistent with school violence, the prevalence of school violence, and the responses to school violence. Furthermore, McMahon et al. (2017) determined that without administrator

support, teachers are negatively influenced, including in their ability to address school-related issues. McMahon et al. (2017) suggested that research supports creating teamwork relationships between administrators and teachers to address the issue of school-related violence.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

My purpose in this case study was to identify strategies implemented by school administrators that reduced student-directed violence toward teachers. This case study identified strategies that secondary school administrators used to reduce student-directed violence using a conceptual framework of school violence literature. The key participants included secondary school principals and assistant principals. The following research questions guided the study.

Q1. What type of student violence directed at teachers has been experienced or witnessed at the school?

Q2. What types of strategies have been implemented with students, teachers, and other school administrators to reduce or prevent teacher victimization at school?

Q3. What types of strategies have been implemented with parents and the larger community to reduce or prevent teacher victimization at school?

Q4. What challenges have been encountered to reduce or prevent teacher victimization?

Definition of Key Terms

Administrative support. Administrative support is managers who provide needed assistance to employees (Doyle, 2019).

Assistant Principal. A school assistant principal is a person with administrative authority to facilitate day-to-day school operations (Bates, 2012).

High poverty schools. High poverty schools are schools where over 75% of students receive free or reduced lunch (NCES, 2016).

Mass shootings. Mass shootings are incidents involving guns where four or more people are killed in a single incident (FBI, 2018).

Physical abuse. For the purposes of this study, physical abuse is the use of excessive bodily force as a means to exert control and power over a teacher (Tracey, 2019).

Principal, school. For the purpose of this study, a school principal is a highest-ranking person at the school with the ability to make decisions regarding school safety ("Principal, School," 2019).

School. A school is an institution designed for educating ("School," 2019).

School teacher. School teachers are persons that teach in a school environment ("School teachers," 2019).

School violence. School violence is any act of physical, verbal, emotional or psychological abuse within a school campus ("School violence," 2019).

School violence literature. For the purposes of this study, school violence literature refers to a collection of scholarly articles, books, stories, narratives, etc. that address the problem of school violence ("School violence literature," 2017).

Secondary school. A secondary school is an academic institution that serves students' scholastic needs beyond elementary school ("Secondary school," 2009).

Social coercion. Social coercion is forcing an act by use of threat or intimidation (Collins, 2013).

Teacher-targeted student violence. Student violence against teachers are acts of physical, verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse perpetrated by students directed toward teachers (APA, 2019b).

Summary

In summary, student violence against teachers is a serious problem that threatens the ability of teachers to successfully practice their profession. Violence-related acts against teachers include verbal and physical abuse, damage to personal property, and social coercion or manipulation with the intent to cause immediate harm.

McMahon et al. (2017) determined that teachers are limited in addressing school-related safety issues without administrator support. These researchers argued that research has supported creating teamwork relationships with administrators and teachers to address school-related violence. Therefore, my purpose in this case study was to identify strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers. This research relied on school administrators' experiences to identify specific strategies important in reducing student's violence against teachers.

In Chapter 2, I provide a literature review of specific issues related to student violence directed toward teachers. The literature addresses types of student violence at school, student violence specifically against teachers, the effects of school violence on teachers and the school environment, and strategies to reduce teacher victimization. Chapter 3 includes the methodology.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this case study was to identify strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers. Violence against teachers is a global issue that threatens teacher's lives and their ability to effectively practice their profession (Bass et al., 2016). Violence against teachers includes verbal abuse, physical abuse, threats, and destruction of property (Johnson & Barton-Bellessa, 2014). I based this study on a conceptual framework of school violence literature.

Chapter 2 is divided into four sections. In the first section, I review the literature relating to student violence at school. The second section explores literature addressing student violence specifically against teachers. The third section examines literature that addresses the effects of student violence on teachers and the school culture. Section four includes literature that suggests strategies to reduce teacher victimization at school.

Student Violence at School

Bushman et al. (2016) reported that focusing on youth violence is important because youth violence represents a vast amount of criminal activity. The same report stated the frequency of youth violence escalates from adolescence through early adulthood. Moreover, youth crime rates tend to be higher for minority males living in highly impoverished communities.

Pedersen (2018) argued that a notable factor associated with school violence is that some parents condone violence at school. Pedersen conducted a study to examine African American and Latino parental views about school violence and found that fighting was acceptable in some cases. The study revealed that Latino parents condoned fighting as a final means to protect oneself, and African American parents viewed violence as sometimes unavoidable.

School violence is any act of physical, verbal, emotional, or psychological abuse within a school campus (CDC, 2016). While most acts of school violence are a result of bullying and peer conflict, incidents resulting in teacher assaults have been reported. School violence prevents students from receiving a good education (Lester et al., 2017). The NCES (2018) reported that 27,500 criminal incidents were reported in the 2015 school year on postsecondary school campuses, representing a 2% increase from the previous year.

Risk Factors

Over 20 years ago, Drywer et al. (2000) noted that there are no clear warning signs that predict violent behavior. However, they identified several warning signs that could identify possible threats. Imminent warning signs should be taken seriously and demand immediate intervention. The imminent warning signs are as follows:

- Violent physical fighting

- Destroying school property

- Minor incidents leading to episodes of violent rage

- Threats to kill someone

- A well-thought out violent plan to hurt or kill someone

- An ability to obtain deadly weapons

The CDC (2019d) stated that risk factors are characteristics linked to youth violence. As a preventative measure, knowing what risk factors are associated with violent youth behaviors, what family risk behaviors impact youth behaviors, peer and social risk factors, and the youth's community characteristics are invaluable resources in reducing youth-related violence. The CDC (2019d) reported the following risk factors associated with youth violence:

- History of violence

- Low IQ

- Emotional stress factors

- Lacking the ability to process information

- Anti-social behaviors

- Exposure to family violence

Family risk factors included the following:

- Strong authoritative households

- Aggressive or passive disciplinary practices

- Lack of parental involvement

- Low family income

- Parental drug abuse or criminal activity

- Poor child supervision

Peer and social risk factors included the following:

- Friends involved in delinquent activities

- Involvement in gang activity

- Outside behaviors

- No interest in traditional youth activities

- Lack of interest in school

- Academic failure

Community risk factors included the following:

- A neighborhood with limited or no economic opportunities

- Poverty-driven neighborhood

- An abundance of transient or homeless populations

- An abundance of family disturbances

- Lack of community planning and projects

Types of Student Violence

Student violence at school has typically focused on mass killings (Weiler & Armenta, 2014). It is estimated that, following the 2012 Sandy Hook school shooting, around 2,300 people have been killed and about 8,400 have been wounded in mass shootings (Lopez, 2019). According to the "Victory over Violence" (2019) report, in 2011 the NCES found that nonfatal acts of school violence are widespread occurrences in the United States. In fact, regarding students ages 12–18 in the 2010 school year, 828,000 nonfatal victimizations were reported. Furthermore, the CDC noted findings from a nationally representative sample of youth in grades 9–12 that revealed that 12% of the youth sampled reported being in a physical fight, 7.4% reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property one or more times, and 20% reported being bullied on school property in the 12 months prior to the survey (Victory over Violence, 2019).

Flynn et al. (2018) investigated school violence as a problem without demographic boundaries. The study's participants were identified from rural, suburban, and urban schools in Pennsylvania. Findings suggested that types of school violence varued in range from noncontact (coercion, bullying) to physical assaults, including the use of weapons. In addition, the effects of school violence can incite emotional trauma and fear of attending school. The study used data from the 2015 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey that reported the following statistics collected from 15,624 urban students:

- 4.1% carried a weapon on school property.

- 6% threatened or injured someone with a weapon on school property.

- 23% were involved in a physical fight.

- 6% refused to attend school due to fear.

- 16% were bullied using electronic methods.

- 20% reported an incident where they were bullied at school.

Also, the Flynn et al. study (2018) used data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics regarding the 2013–2014 school year, which indicated that 65% of public schools recorded at least one violent crime on the school campus. The researchers argued that school violence is often identified as an inner-city issue. However, while rural teens have a lower victimization rate, they have the same inclinations to perpetrate school violence as urban and suburban teens. Flynn et al. labeled school violence as a public health issue that impacts the academic and social functioning of students.

When and Where School Violence Occurs

The CDC (2019b) stated that school violence can occur during regular school hours, before or after school, or before, after, or during any school-related event. The CDC (2019c) also reported related findings that guns used in school-related homicides and suicides were easily accessible to the perpetrator through their home. Additionally, in school-related homicide cases, almost 50% of offenders gave a verbal or written warning signal.

Pitofsky (2018) stated that in the 2017-2018 school year over 50% of incidents involving school violence occurred in 10 states. The 10 states with the highest percentage of violent school attacks were California, Florida, New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Texas, Illinois, North Carolina, and Virginia. While there are several factors that contribute to state rankings on the top 10 school-violence list, states having more school districts had a higher risk of incidents.

School Violence by Gender

In 2019, The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reported that 235,600 cases involving females and 614,900 cases involving male juvenile offenders were processed in 2016. Table 1 shows a profile of U.S. juvenile offenders. The report indicated that of the 850,500 cases in 2016, White youth had the highest rate of severe juvenile crimes. However, Black youth offenders committed crimes at a concerning rate in comparison to their national juvenile population.

Table 1

Race Profiles of Youth Juvenile Cases in 2016

	Juvenile Delinquency Cases	Person	Property	Percentage of U. S. Juvenile Population
Total	100	100	100	100
White	44	40	43	55
Black	36	40	37	15
Hispanic	18	17	16	23
American Indian	2	1	2	2
Asian	1	1	1	6

Note. Adapted from *Juvenile Justice Statistics, National Report Fact Sheet,* Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquent Prevention, 2019.

Bullying

Another type of school violence is bullying. The CDC (2019a) reported that bullying is defined as violent, aggressive behavior intended to hurt the victim through repeated actions using abuse of power and control. In fact, reports show that the highest reported discipline problem in public schools is bullying. It is estimated that 14% of bullying incidents happen at least once a week (CDC, 2019a). Bullying behaviors include physical, verbal, and social incidents. The CDC noted that social bullying involves spreading rumors or demeaning a person (2019a).

Meires (2019) reported that bullying in the workplace involves factors that include power and control. While most incidents of bullying involve student-to-student relationships, reports indicate that student-to-faculty bullying relationships are becoming more frequent. Students use demeaning tactics to control faculty members with threats and intimidation through, fear, and verbal and emotional abuse. Figure 1 shows a profile of teachers reporting verbal threats and physical altercations in public schools.

Figure 1

Public School Teachers Threatened or Physically Attacked in School Years 1993-94 Through 2015-2016
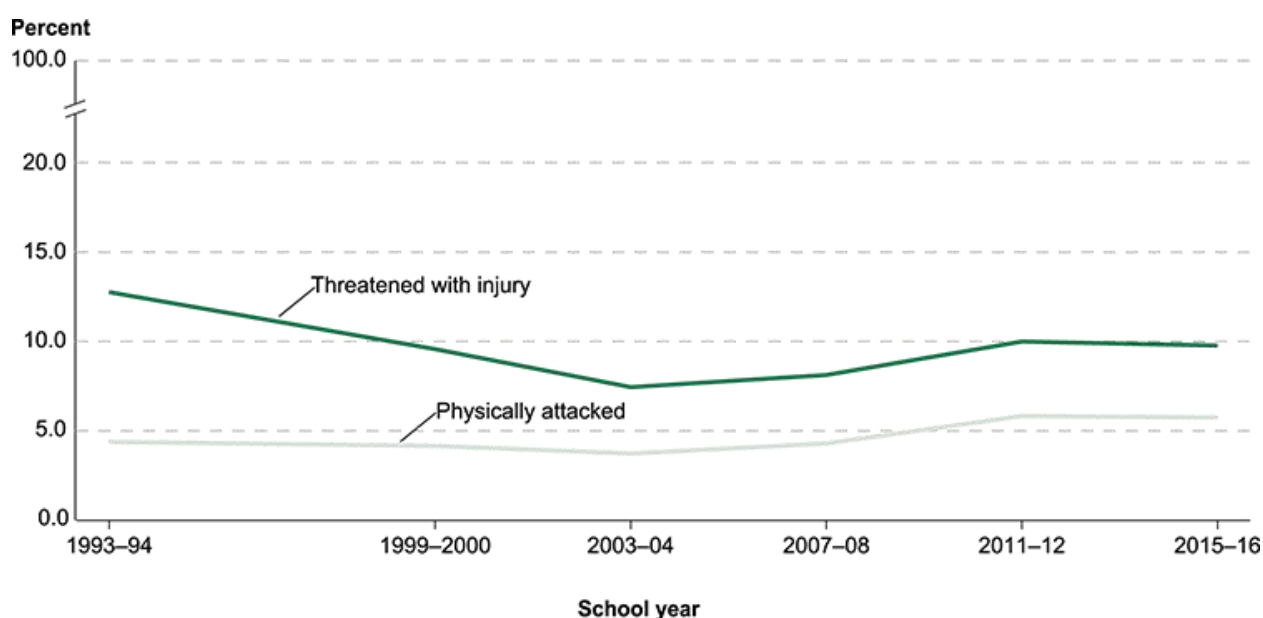
Note. Adapted from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS;1999-2000, 2015-2016). Copyright 2018 by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Student Violence Specifically Against Teachers

Student violence is also directed at teachers and threatens their professional ability through fear and intimidation (Bass et al., 2016; Garland et al., 2007; Kajs et al., 2014).

McMahon et al. (2014) researched violence directed at teachers based on work conducted by the APA Classroom Violence Directed Against Teachers Task Force. Included in the study were 2,998 K-12 teachers from 48 states. The study was based on results collected from an anonymous web-based survey that asked teachers about their experiences with victimization. The McMahon et al (2014) study found that 80% of teachers reported at least one victimization at school and 94% had been attacked by a student. Other findings revealed that nearly 75% of participants surveyed reported experiencing at least one episode of harassment and 50% of teachers reported victimization that included property offenses. Moreover, McMahon et al. found that 44% of teachers surveyed reported being a victim of a personal physical attack. In addition, the study's findings publicized that male teachers were more likely to be targeted for violence. Teachers in urban settings showed a higher probability of being victimized and African American teachers were less likely to report victimization.

Longobardi et al. (2018) conducted a meta-analysis of published articles to examine the prevalence of student violence against teachers. The study's findings included 24 published articles that fit the criteria from a literature search that originally identified 5,337 articles. The authors reviewed the prevalence of violence perpetrated against teachers by students in the reference to time frame, reporter (teacher or student), and type of violence. Minnesota teachers revealed that 8% of teachers had been physically assaulted and 39% reported experiences with threats, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and bullying. A national 2011-2012 survey conducted by Swaby (2019) revealed that 10% of teachers in Texas reported being threatened with physical harm at school by a student. The same report stated that Texas Senate Bill 2432 is a new law designed to protect Texas teachers from student-related violence.

Longobardi et al. (2018) noted that while other perpetrators victimize teachers, students are responsible for the highest rates of teacher victimization. The authors suggested that teachers underreport the extent of victimization due to concerns of being negatively judged for poor classroom management. The study's findings revealed that the most likely occurrences of teacher victimization are nonphysical violence and low-level victimization (intimidation, bullying, and verbal threats). The findings indicated that the most likely types of student-directed violence toward teachers within the previous two years were obscene gestures (44%), offensive/obscene remarks (29%), damage or theft of personal property (17%), intimidation (10%), physical attacks (3%), and sexual violence (3%; Longobardi et al., 2018).

Effects of Student Violence on Teachers and School Environment

Espelage and Hong (2019) referred to the school climate as the acceptable boundaries of behavior, including norms and rules that impact school safety. Studies have shown that positive school climates can encourage students to develop a more positive self-identity and detour from negative behaviors that could lead to school violence. The complexity of a negative school climate can contribute to behaviors that result in violence toward teachers leading to fear, health issues, and poor work performance.

Bass et al. (2016) investigated the effects on how student violence contributed to employee burnout and work engagement. Study findings based on a cross-sectional self-reported survey with 728 employees revealed a positive relationship between victimization and both burnout and work engagement. The study findings concurred with other research that student violence causes physical and emotional symptoms, depression, and professional and personal detachment for educators. Bass et al. argued that transformation leadership can be a critical

resource in addressing employee burnout and work engagement by buffering the negative effects of student violence and promoting a healthier work environment for educators.

Skaland (2016) examined the effects of school violence on teachers. Interviews with 14 Norwegian K-12 grade teachers revealed that victimization caused teachers to have a distorted and limited view of their role as professionals, which impacted their job performance. The study's findings suggested that a teacher's identity is negatively impacted as a result of being victimized.

School safety policies are procedures in the United States for keeping school environments safe from incidences of bullying, harassment, violence, and drug use (Cuellar, 2018). U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy Devos oversees making policies and recommendations to provide school safety, address youth and firearms, and reduce the impact of violence associated with videogames and media (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

Strategies to Promote School Safety

Several state legislatures have mandated school safety policies to reduce school violence. In addition to state legislation, school districts are required to adopt a student code of conduct to inform students about behaviors that could result in removal from the classroom or school (Texas AFT, 2020). For example, Texas, California, and Florida have enacted policies and laws to protect teachers from school violence (Extrom, 2019).

School Violence State Laws

The state of Texas has responded to student violence by mandating legislation to promote school safety (Texas Classroom Teachers Association (TCTA), 2020). The Texas Safe School Act has provided teachers and school bus drivers with the authority to remove students to promote and maintain a safe and orderly school environment for over twenty years (Texas AFT,

2020). In 2019, the 86th Texas Legislature added students engaging in offensive harassment as a mandatory reason for removal from a classroom or school bus (TCTA, 2020). Texas Governor Gregg Abbott released the School and Firearm Safety Action plan which included 40 recommendations to promote school safety in Texas (Office of the Attorney General (OAG), 2018). Governor Abbott's plan included more campus security, firearm awareness, safety training for employees, student mental health evaluations, and identification of students at risk for harmful behaviors (OAG, 2018).

According to California Legislative Information (2020), the California Senate Bill 419 mandates that teachers should maintain a safe learning environment for students. However, student expulsions are only ordered by a student's school principal or district superintendent. The California Education Code Section 48900 recognizes threats of bodily harm and physical injury as valid reasons to expel a student.

Florida's K-20 Education Code Section 1003.32 states that district personnel, school board members, and the school's principal are mandated to respect a teacher's authority to remove a student for defiant, disruptive, and violent behavior (Florida Legislature, 2020). In response to the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Florida's Governor Ron DeSantis signed several laws to promote school safety (Florida Department of Education, 2020). Senate Bill 7030, passed in the Florida legislature in 2019, provides provisions to create a behavioral assessment tool, district policy monitoring, promotion of mobile security surveillance, expedited student transfer information between schools, a clear understanding of school safety rules and regulations, and an extension of school safety laws to cover charter schools (Florida Legislature, 2020).

School protection laws permit disciplinary actions, including expulsion for students that commit acts of violence against teachers (Johnson & Barton-Bellessa, 2014). Other views include identifying programs that work with students to modify and redirect their behavior (Thakore et al., 2015). Targeted intervention programs have been successful in helping to reduce school violence (Cuellar, 2018).

Targeted Violence-Intervention Programs

Cuellar (2018) noted that targeted violence-intervention programs include using physical strategies, interactionist strategies, and legal strategies. The physical strategies include using mechanisms that control school access (metal detectors, locked doors, and school surveillance cameras). While effective in limiting occurrences of school violence, Cuellar argued that physical strategies are controversial and shown to create a prison-like school climate.

Interactionist strategies are violence-intervention programs that are aimed at changing a student's behavior through counseling, group support systems, and conflict resolution, according to Cuellar (2018). These types of programs are provided by school-based interventions and have shown satisfactory results in positively connecting students in the school culture but less successful in reducing school violence.

Legal strategies are violence-intervention programs that involve school administrators and law enforcement, as noted by Cuellar (2018). These types of programs involve student body searches and drug inspections. Legal strategies are expected to increase as a favorable intervention to address school violence. Other intervention programs include preparedness strategies, which include a written plan of action to address school violence.

The CDC (2016) emphasized that understanding youth violence is vital due to its impact on youths and adults. The report also noted that exposure to school violence can contribute to

alcohol use, drug use, and some cases suicide. Moreover, the CDC stated that all levels of a student's social system are needed to help reduce school violence (2016). Research has suggested that combined efforts by teachers, school leaders, parents, students, and community advocates can promote a safer school climate.

Mckenna et al. (2016) conducted a two-part survey with school administrators involving school safety. The findings revealed that 75% of administrators rated understanding the roles of school safety officers as very important or extremely important in promoting school safety. More school districts are hiring school resource and safety officers as the first-line intervention in addressing issues of school violence, including student assaults (Eklund et al., 2017).

The Texas School Safety Center issued the "2017 District Audit Report" that recommended a safety plan for Texas school districts that would reduce violence and keep schools safer (2018). The plan suggested implementing a comprehensive emergency management program that includes a Multi-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), mandated evacuation drills, trained personnel in safety evacuation, a bullying prevention plan, and a suicide prevention plan.

The TCTA (2019) released a survival guide for classroom teachers called the "2019-20 Survival Guide." TCTA included a safety plan for teachers that includes knowing their rights to remove students from their classrooms. TCTA stated that students committing a serious offense, which includes inflicting another person with a bodily injury, can be removed for up to 45 days at a time. In addition, Texas law enforcement requires school districts to notify staff of potentially dangerous students in their classrooms. The dangers include students with any felony, criminal conduct that poses a danger, and the sale and possession of drugs.

Strategies Involving Parents

The National Association of School Psychologists (2015) stated that open communication between parents and students is critical in preventing youth violence. The report shared that parents should communicate with their children regarding their peer relationships, school atmosphere, and safety issues. The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA; 2019) released information for parents to help prevent violence in schools. The PTA suggested the following strategies for parents:

- Engage in open communication with your children.

- Set limits, rules, and boundaries.

- Know the risk factors and warning signs.

- Fight the fear of parenting; intervene and redirect.

- Stay involved in the child's school activities.

- Join a violence prevention program for parents.

- Get your community leaders involved.

- Support and learn your child's school violence action plan.

- Take a media workshop to deal with a crisis.

- Use your influence to support positive violence prevention strategies with lawmakers.

The World Health Organization (WHO; 2019) suggested that schools should involve parents with school safety implementation. The WHO suggested the following strategies for parent engagement in school safety:

- Communicate with parents about school safety policies.

- Share with parents ways to get involved in school safety.

- Work with parents to improve negative child behaviors that impact school safety.

- Invite parents to organize safety initiatives.

Strategies to Reduce Teacher Victimization

Perris (2016) proposed solutions to student-on-teacher victimization. Perris discussed several strategies to reduce student violence directed at teachers, including educating both teachers and students about common law cases and student expulsion. Several incidents of teacher victimization were reported, including a teacher in Buffalo, New York, who required 40 stitches and 32 staples to close a wound caused by a student's attack with a metal trash can.

Perris (2016) addressed the widespread teachers' belief that reporting incidents might result in being terminated or being blamed for causing the incident. The author argued that one plan of action is not enough to address the issue of student-directed violence. Perris stated that students in the United States have a false sense of spirit. In other words, they feel entitled to commit crimes without punishment. A key weapon in addressing this issue is educating students about teacher's rights to protect and defend themselves, including the use of force.

Perris (2016) discussed using existing laws to protect teachers. For example, Texas law states that assaulting a teacher (public servant) is a third-degree felony. Virginia law requires a mandatory prison sentence for at least 15 days for perpetrators of teacher victimization. Perris suggested that simply punishing students is not enough; preventative procedures (prophylactic measures) are needed, including expulsion. Several states have laws that allow school districts to remove students who commit acts of violence. For example, the state of Michigan allows school districts to expel students in sixth grade or higher for committing a physical assault against a school employee.

Thakore et al. (2015) examined strategies to reduce teacher victimization in a study conducted in Nashville, Tennessee. The study's findings revealed that school-based programs have been proven to reduce violent behavior, beliefs, and actions of students. Thakore et al.

reviewed 27 nationwide programs to identify a school-based violence prevention program for middle schools in metropolitan Nashville (2015). In addition, two discussions with African American males under 25 years of age, admitted in a level 1 trauma center for assault-related injuries, were included. The participants included 122 students who completed the program and described their experiences in a self-rated pretest and posttest questionnaire. The findings showed a decrease in violent behavior and an increase in student's abilities to deal with violence. Thakore et al. found that the implementation of a targeted violence-intervention program can be effective in reducing violent behaviors associated with middle school students (2015).

McMahon et al. (2019) conducted a study to investigate student verbal aggression toward teachers. The study's sample included 98 teachers ranging from prekindergarten to 12th grade with a reported incident of verbal aggression. The study's findings revealed the student population most likely to threaten teachers was high school students. The study indicated that a teacher's directive to a student to complete work was a factor causing student aggression.

David-Ferdon et al. (2016) reported that student violence and physical aggression begin early in life. Saracho (2017) noted that children as young as one years old show aggressive behaviors toward their peers. Children around four years of age display aggressive behaviors that lead to bullying and violence toward their playmates. Other factors contributing to youth violence include a history of child abuse or neglect, failure to thrive academically, lack of adult supervision, and misdirected child behavioral modification (David-Ferdon et al., 2016).

School violence research has suggested that awareness of risk indicators can reduce youth violence (McMahon et al., 2019). Reddy et al. (2018) revealed that a teacher's personal and school characteristics are risk indicators for teacher victimization. The report also stated that the

teacher's level and type of school where they work could be mitigating factors reducing violent acts toward teachers.

Espelage et al. (2013) suggested using a multitier plan to address teacher victimization, which includes four levels: student, teacher, classroom, and school. The student-level has a three-tier plan that provides for activities and programs that address students without disciplinary problems, behavioral modification programs for students at risk for aggressive behavior problems, and intense wrap-around services for students with extremely violent and aggressive behaviors. The teacher-level includes assertive classroom management that emphasizes rules and engagement, such as posting classroom rules. that reduce the likelihood of aggressive behaviors. The plans' third tier involves strategies for classroom-level safety (Espelage et al., 2013). The plan suggested that policies and procedures be implemented on the classroom level to identify the teacher as the classroom leader. The fourth tier is the school-level. Espelage et al. suggested that the fourth tier should mandate classroom policies and procedures that support teachers in creating safer classroom environments.

Summary

The literature review provided relevant and scholarly information to support the current study. The review began with a brief introduction of the study's purpose to identify strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers. To support the study's purpose, I discussed several topics, including several examples of student violence at school, violence against teachers, and mass school shootings. I also found literature that reported a comprehensive view of fatal and nonfatal incidents.

The section on student violence specifically against teachers reported how violence traumatizes teachers physically and psychologically. I cited several studies that revealed how

fear and intimidation threaten a teacher's job performance. Reports revealed that students are more likely to victimize teachers. The report also revealed that African American teachers were less likely to report incidents of violence.

The effects of student violence on teachers and school environments explored the risk factors associated with a negative school culture. I reviewed research findings in a study that found a positive relationship between teacher victimization and both burnout and work engagement. The study findings revealed that violence also contributed to problems with a teacher's physical and emotional well-being.

In the section on strategies to reduce teacher victimization, I discussed ways to lessen the violence. This three-tier view addressed reducing teacher victimization by examining strategies at school, strategies involving parents, and strategies involving the community. The research revealed that a significant key to reducing teacher victimization is knowing student's risk factors, knowing laws and policies, and creating a collaborative plan involving parents, school administrators, community advocates, and lawmakers.

Chapter 3 includes the research design and methodology of this case study. Chapter 4 reports the findings. Chapter 5 presents a summary of the study, conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this case study was to identify strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers. This case study identified strategies that secondary school administrators used to reduce student-directed violence using a conceptual framework of school violence literature. School administrators are identified as campus leaders with the duty and purpose to provide a safe place for students to learn and teachers to educate (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2019). This chapter will include information about the research design and method, population, sampling, materials and instruments, the qualitative data collection and analysis, the researcher's role, ethical considerations, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.

Research Design and Method

The study was a qualitative exploratory collective instrumental case study. Patton (2015) argued that qualitative methodology is useful in small groups when the participant's lived experiences are critical to the study. Qualitative research was conducive to this study because of the ability to gain rich descriptive data based on people's circumstances, activities, and lived experiences (Leavy, 2017).

Whereas case studies draw some skepticism, they are successful in exploratory stages of research due to the ability to offer structured experimentation (Rowley, 2002). The case study methodology is suited for researchers because of the in-depth focus and exploration benefits (Yin, 2014). Hancock and Algozzine (2017) provided three characteristics of case studies that are relevant to the proposed research:

- Case studies are an effective means for research on a group or organization.

- Case studies provide an opportunity to investigate a phenomenon in its natural setting.

- Case studies are a good source of detailed and focused information.

Case studies are important for in-depth analyses provided by multiple sources (Creswell, 2014). Instrumental case sampling can be beneficial by collecting multiple cases that lead to findings useful in changing policies, programs, and practices (Patton, 2015). Stake (1995) emphasized that collective case studies that involve multiple cases are important in describing and comparing information gathered on an issue. Using case studies with conceptual frameworks creates a strong trust between the researcher and participant essential in gathering and analyzing data (Aaltio & Heilmann, 2012).

Therefore, I chose the case study design for this research because it was imperative to identify school administrators' strategies to help reduce student-directed violence toward teachers. This case study collected data from secondary school administrators to better understand the best strategic practices to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to identify strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers. I conducted the research using open-ended interviews from a guided protocol based on the research questions to identify strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers.

Q1. What type of student violence directed at teachers has been experienced or witnessed at the school?

Q2. What types of strategies have been implemented with students, teachers, and other school administrators to reduce or prevent teacher victimization at school?

Q3. What types of strategies have been implemented with parents and the larger community to reduce or prevent teacher victimization at school?

Q4. What challenges have been encountered to reduce or prevent teacher victimization?

Population

Qualitative sampling in this study consisted of secondary school administrators to document and record personal experiences that identified strategies to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers. Researchers use sampling to improve their ability to answer the study's questions (Ivankova, 2015). Sampling can involve individuals or group participants. A specific sample size is not required for qualitative research; however, researchers should identify sample participants who are relevant and credible to the study's purpose (Patton, 2015). Therefore, I used purposeful sampling to identify the population for this proposed study. Purposeful sampling relies on participants with prior knowledge or experiences regarding the research topic.

I conducted this study through a purposeful sample of secondary school principals and assistant principals with administrative experience working in urban school districts. According to a report from the TEA (2019), 8,416 school principals were working in Texas in 2017-2018. School principals are defined as the person assigned to direct and manage day-to-day education programs. School principals have the responsibility to resolve issues that threaten school safety (United States Department of Labor, 2019).

The benefit of purposeful sampling for this study was to ensure that participants were relevant to the topic. The primary participant requirement criterion was approximately eight to 10 secondary school principals or assistant principals who had prior or current knowledge or experience of strategies to reduce school-related violence directed at teachers. I chose this

number of participants because it would provide useful information with the "available time and resources" (Patton, 2015, p. 211). This study consisted of nine secondary school administrators.

The criteria for participation in this study was as follows:

- Participants had access to Skype, a web-based video conferencing and recording program.

- The sample for this study consisted of nine secondary school principals and assistant principals with a minimum of two years' experience and possession of an administrator's certification.

- The study included secondary principals and assistant principals with prior or current experiences in an urban secondary school setting.

- The sample included secondary principals and assistant principals who had experiences with school-related violence against teachers.

Following Abilene Christian University's (ACU's) Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (Appendix B) to conduct the study, I contacted the first participant in the study's target location by telephone. This action initiated the study's snowball sampling process. The characteristics of snowball sampling are purposefully starting with individuals who suggest other participants, who can then provide helpful information to the research (Ivankova, 2015). A consideration of snowball sampling is saturation. The goal of saturation is to maximize information and eliminate redundancy (Patton, 2015). This study achieved saturation when referred participants failed to provide new or additional beneficial information. Each principal received notice of their participation and was provided the informed consent to release form (Appendix C). Participants signed and returned the informed consent before I began interviewing. Roberts (2010) noted that informed consent is a document that fully lets

participants know about the research project, including any possible risks involved. The informed consent contains a statement about the research, purpose of the research, time involved for participants, research procedures, and intended experimental information. In this study, participants' information was confidential using the following responsive actions based on Leavy's (2017) confidentiality guidelines:

- I replaced participant names with pseudonyms.

- I omitted all identifying information including school, city, and personal identifiers.

- Information obtained by the guided protocol will only be shared for the study's research.

- I securely safeguarded information following the interviews.

- I securely safeguarded audiotapes and other materials following transcriptions.

- I used pseudonyms of participants to identify their interview transcripts.

Participants

The participants for this study included nine secondary school administrators, which included seven principals and two assistant principals. The methodology used to identify participants was a snowball sampling process. The snowball sampling process used purposeful sampling. Participants were asked to suggest other study participants who could provide personal experiences related to student-directed violence. The study's participants included seven from Texas, one from Georgia, and one from Illinois. The participants' years of experience as secondary administrators ranged from five years to over 20 years in managing school-related discipline. See Table 2 for the participants' years of experience, state, and school administrative level. The participants included five males and four females. There were eight African American participants and one White participant.

Table 2

Participants: Secondary School Administrators

Participant	Years of Experience	State	School Level
1	6	Texas	Middle/High
2	5	Texas	Middle
3	10	Texas	Middle/High
4	8	Georgia	Middle/High
5	11	Texas	Middle
6	20	Texas	Middle/High
7	16	Illinois	Middle/High/Superintendent
8	11	Texas	Middle/High
9	14	Texas	Middle/High/Administrator

Data Collection and Instrument

I obtained IRB approval and each administrator signed a consent form before I conducted this study. This study relied on school administrators' lived experiences to identify strategies to reduce school-related violence directed at teachers. I conducted the interviews using Skype, an online video conferencing and recording program. The Skype program allowed for video conferencing and recording of administrators' responses to the questions. I contacted participants via telephone to explain the study's purpose and asked them to participate in the research.

The interview process followed a primary data collection process using a guided protocol, which began with open-ended formatted interview questions followed by three to four subquestions (Appendix A). I limited subquestions to no more than five to seven. The final subquestion ended with an additional summary question (Creswell, 2014). For example, "Who would you recommend that I talk to that could provide insight on this topic"? An expert reviewed the guided protocol before the actual interviews to assure that questions were appropriate to gather the information needed. The interviews lasted from about 15 minutes to an hour.

The benefit of using this type of data collection for this study was the ability to record and obtain personal data. Interviews were helpful in this study by obtaining information based on the administrator's personal stories and experiences. In qualitative research, trustworthiness and credibility are the basis of validity (Leavy, 2017). I asked each participant the same questions to demonstrate its validity and trustworthiness. Pseudonyms were used to replace participant names and secure participant's privacy and confidentiality.

I transcribed the interview data using the MAXQDA coding software's transcription tools and sent the transcriptions to administrators to validate them in a process called member checking that allowed participants to check it for accuracy (Creswell, 2014). Also, I asked participants to submit other data, including school violence meeting agendas, strategy prevention memos, meeting agendas, school newspaper articles, school website information, and any other information that emphasized school safety activities and other relevant artifacts.

Qualitative Data Analysis Procedures

Coding is the process of organizing and sorting data (Center for Evaluation Research, 2012). Data analysis needs to be performed systematically to yield credible results (Ivankova, 2015). Creswell (2014) noted that qualitative data analysis can involve an inductive or deductive coding approach. Inductive coding reduces the quantity of data by organizing it into categories. In this study, I used inductive coding to allow the data to determine the themes. The coding method for this study was emergent thematic coding. Emergent thematic coding is the process of finding themes, ideas, concepts, meanings that emerge after several readings. The data coding followed Tesch's eight steps in the coding process:

- Read all transcripts and make notes.

- Analyze a single interview document and write underlying meaning and thoughts in the margin.

- Analyze several interviews, cluster similar themes, and place in columns.

- Return to data and abbreviate the topics as codes.

- Reduce categories by grouping common themes.

- Finalize code abbreviations.

- Assemble like categories and perform a preliminary analysis (Creswell, 2014).

I used coding to identify principals' similar words, themes, suggestions, and ideas to identify strategies to reduce student-directed violence against teachers. Bringing closure to fieldwork embraces a matter of rigor, the process of disconfirming, and confirming cases (Patton, 2015). Establishing rigor in a research project includes questioning and investigating all possible data, participants, and related information to complete a study. The data process for this study began by assigning pseudonyms to each participant. I collected the data through individually recorded interviews using Skype. I transcribed the interviews after all nine interviews were completed. After transcribing all the interviews, I coded the data using MAXQDA software. I coded the data after all nine transcriptions were completed and sent to participants for member checking. Data saturation for this study was determined after participants did not recommend new participants. In addition, the narrative responses began to say the same thing suggesting data saturation. Establishing credibility was vital for this study to clarify principals' suggested strategies for reducing school violence.

Researcher's Role

The role of qualitative researchers is "to effectively develop themselves to a research instrument capable of collecting rich data and developing a nuanced and complete interpretation

congruent with the philosophical underpinnings of the research and reflective of the complexity of health" (Xu & Storr, 2012, p. 15). The qualitative researcher is the "data collection tool" (Terrell, 2016, p. 162). Qualitative researchers must be truthful and honest when reporting data. A case study requires collecting data from various resources. For this study, I collected the data through interviews using a web-based program called Skype.

Violence against teachers is a serious problem that can cause physical, emotional, and mental trauma (Bass et al, 2016). Even more concerning are the incidents of violence directed toward teachers that are underreported, taking away their rights to practice their profession in a healthy and safe environment (McMahon et al., 2017). As a researcher, it is important to establish trustworthiness. Establishing trustworthiness is the "overall plan" in qualitative data research (Terrell, 2016).

My professional background includes more than 30 years of working with people affected by violence. I worked for seven years at a rape crisis center and four years working with victims of domestic violence. Throughout my 10 years working in a middle school, I have seen many teachers intimidated by violent incidents from students. Due to my background working with violence, I need to be conscious of my assumptions to make generalizations about victims of violence. I stayed focused and relied on the research questions and the data to limit biases within the study.

My plans as an undergraduate student were to become a teacher and work with at-risk students. After completing my first 25-hour internship, I realized that education was a challenging field. I worked at an elementary school and witnessed students fighting daily and disrespecting teachers. I changed my degree plan to social work. I have two degrees in social work (BSW and MSSW). Someone once told me that "if you want to make God laugh, tell him

your plans." With all my efforts to avoid the education profession, I now claim this as my calling or my purpose in life. As an educator, I work with students to prepare them for college and a future career. My job does not directly involve academics, so I do not have the same challenges as classroom teachers. My greatest challenge is watching good teachers quit because they fear becoming a victim of school violence.

Trustworthiness

Patton (2015) stated, "The qualitative analyst owns and is reflective about her or his own voice and perspective, a credible voice conveys authenticity and trustworthiness; the inquirer's focus becomes balanced understanding, and depicting the world authentically in all its complexity" (pp. 603–604). Patton listed several strategies that ensure a credible and trustworthy study. My strategies to ensure credibility and trustworthy for this study included the following:

- Use member checking to verify principals' responses.

- Look for an alternative means to explain results.

- Search for exceptions that questioned findings.

- Compare the data through triangulation.

- Stay focused on the study's purpose, but seek different perspectives to analyze the data.

- Keep research findings consistent.

Ivankova (2015) suggested using credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to assess trustworthiness in qualitative research. Credibility refers to findings that reflect confidence. Transferability refers to the findings being applicable to other contexts. Dependability is the extent the findings are repeatable. Confirmability refers to information being informed by participant's views and not the researcher's biases. First, I transcribed the

interviews, analyzed them by coding, and sent them to participants for checking. Establishing credibility was important for this study because reporting correct interpretations of principals' comments were essential in identifying strategies to reduce student-directed violence against teachers.

An important step in a research study is sharing the data or findings with stakeholders. Coghlan and Shani (2014) explained this practice provides the power to understand and change human systems by involving pertinent members in the process inquiry. In this study I used narrative storytelling to inform participants about the findings. Storytelling can take the form of vignettes and is geared at relaying information, not solving the issues. I established trustworthiness through member checking, an expert's review of the guided protocol, and triangulation. Leavy (2017) explained that using the strategy of triangulation to collect data from different resources to answer the same question creates a foundation of confidence in the research findings. I asked all participants the same questions using the guided protocol interview questions. In addition, I invited school administrators to provide school meeting agendas, school newspaper articles, school website information regarding campus safety, school activities geared at school safety, and other relevant artifacts related to the study. Triangulation of data occurred by reviewing interview responses, and other data sources including artifacts, such as the Student Handbook, the Student Code of Conduct policy document, and the School Safety Plan. These documents validated the administrators' comments regarding school safety guidelines, student disciplinary consequences, student and teacher conduct, and school and district safety policies. For example, a participant shared that district policies allowed students to return to school after being removed for violent acts. I validated and supported participants' interview comments with artifact documents. In Chapter 4, I display and explain the data through narrative text.

Ethical Considerations

I addressed ethical issues throughout the study. Patton (2015) suggested following an ethical checklist that includes using methods the participant understands, being respectful to participants, resisting making promises, evaluating risk potential, being honest about confidentiality requirements, obtaining participant's written consent before proceeding, and disclosing data ownership and access, the data collection process, ethical responsibilities, and other pertinent information that could negatively impact the study. I used this checklist throughout this study to maintain honest and credible data collection and data analysis.

Assumptions

An assumption is defined as a factual statement used in research to build a theory ("Assumption," 2005). In this study, it was the assumption that secondary school principals and assistant principals had an in-depth understanding of their personal experiences with student-directed violence against teachers. It was my assumption that participants had strategies to reduce violence based on lived experiences. This research has the potential to help teachers learn strategies to reduce teacher victimization, thereby improving the learning environment and creating a safer working climate. Another assumption was that participants answered questions truthfully.

Limitations

Limitations are factors the researcher cannot inherently control (Terrell, 2016). A limitation of this study was generalizability. A study's generalizability refers to how the findings of a sample can be transferred to the population as a whole (Terrell, 2016). Important to generalizability is external validity. External validity involves extending the study's results beyond the sample (Leavy, 2017). A threat to external validity for this study was population

validity. An issue of population validity in this study would be attempting to apply the findings involving secondary school administrators to an elementary school environment or college campus.

Delimitations

Delimitations are factors controlled by the researcher (Terrell, 2016). Delimitations help the researcher stay within the "study's scope and boundaries" (Leavy, 2010, p. 138). A delimitation in this study was that participants had access to Skype, a web-based video conferencing program. I asked participants to voice information about student directed violence toward teachers using actual witnessed events.

Another delimitation in this study was that the participants for this study consisted of administrators, who were primarily secondary school principals and assistant principals with a minimum of two years' experience and possessed an administrator's certification. This ensured that participants had relevant experiences and qualifications to strengthen the study's data collection with administrative-level responses. Another delimitation of this study was that the participants for this study had prior or current work experience in an urban school environment. This ensured that participants had relevant responses and the experience to help identify strategies that reduce student-related violence toward teachers.

Summary

Chapter 3 focused on the study's research design and methodology. The chapter began with information supporting a case study methodology for this project. The chapter contained information about the problem, purpose, and the study's research questions. I presented a detailed explanation for data collection and data analysis, which included step-by-step design methods. I described the study's population. I also discussed factors regarding qualitative

research, such as establishing trustworthiness, ethical considerations, assumption, delimitations, and limitations. Chapter 4 reports the findings. In Chapter 5, I summarize the study and present conclusions, implications for practice, and make recommendations for future research.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory collective instrumental case study was to identify strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers. This case study identified strategies that secondary school administrators used to reduce student-directed violence using a conceptual framework of school violence literature. School administrators were identified as campus head leaders with the duty and purpose to provide a safe place for students to learn and teachers to educate (TEA, 2019). This chapter includes the findings based on the four research questions.

This study responded to four major research questions related to student-directed violence toward teachers:

Q1. What type of student violence directed at teachers has been experienced or witnessed at the school?

Q2. What types of strategies have been implemented with students, teachers, and other school administrators to reduce or prevent teacher victimization at school?

Q3. What types of strategies have been implemented with parents and the larger community to reduce or prevent teacher victimization at school?

Q4. What challenges have been encountered to reduce or prevent teacher victimization?

RQ 1: Types of Student Violence Directed at Teachers

Research Question 1 investigated the types of student violence that were directed at teachers. The findings indicated there were several types of student violence directed toward teachers, primarily verbal and physical. Two participants mentioned mental and emotional abuse and one mentioned sexual harassment. See Table 3 for types of violence.

Table 3

Types of Student-Directed Violence Toward Teachers Witnessed by Participants

	Verbal	Physical	Emotional/ Mental	Sexual Harassment
Participant 1	X	X		
Participant 2	X	X		
Participant 3	X		X	
Participant 4	X	X		
Participant 5	X	X		
Participant 6	X	X		
Participant 7	X	X	X	
Participant 8	X			X
Participant 9	X	X	X	

Verbal Abuse Directed Toward Teachers

Verbal abuse is defined as the usage of words to demean and devalue another person's worth ("Verbal abuse," 2020). All nine participants witnessed verbal abuse at their school directed toward teachers. The verbal abuse described ranged from name-calling to threats of bodily harm. One participant described incidents of verbal abuse between students and teachers as resulting from "misunderstandings that weren't dealt with appropriately" resulting in outbursts that lead to verbal or physical violence.

Several participants discussed the teacher's mindset as a factor in creating an atmosphere of verbal abuse. A participant shared an experience at her school where she suggested the teacher's mindset was a factor in creating conflict. She said that

I think it is when I see that a student is struggling . . . We're starting to see some

escalation between a teacher and a student. It is usually the ones that have that mindset of

whatever I say goes. This is my classroom. There's no compromising. It's the ones that

don't build the relationships with kids in that sense, or they just it's not about the kids it's

about teaching, my job. I'm here to teach you and that's all I'm here to do. So, it's that

mindset of embarrassing kids in front of the class.

Also, participants reported that teachers with strong classroom management styles create situations that are destined for a violent episode. For example, a participant reported the following scenario:

> I've seen where a student who is already agitated or upset about something else and they enter the classroom. The teacher starts to ask them questions or tells them, "No, you can't sit there, or you need to sit up and you do what I say" and usually, in those moments the student then lashes out and that could be a verbal confrontation.

Yet, several participants supported teachers and their roles as classroom managers. They reported that verbal abuse often follows an episode where a teacher is trying to get control of the classroom. The following is a participant's lived experience with classroom management leading to a verbal altercation:

> A teacher has to reprimand, you know, this is happening several occasions. A teacher has to reprimand a student or tell a student to sit down or be quiet. And you know the student, the student snaps on the teacher, verbally. So that happened many times.

Physical Abuse Directed Toward Teachers

For this study, *physical abuse* is the use of excessive bodily force as a means to exert control and power over a teacher (Tracey, 2019). Seven out of nine participants reported witnessing physical abuse directed toward teachers. Two participants stated that teachers most vulnerable to student violence are special education teachers. A participant shared that students with learning disabilities and social dysfunctions tend to get more easily frustrated and lash out physically at teachers. Another noted that special education teachers deal with "a lot more violent behaviors" due to the population they serve.

Race and Violence. Three participants stated that race was a factor in student-directed violence toward teachers. The participants cited White teachers as being most vulnerable to student-directed violence. A participant noted that students at his school view White male teachers as "being the man" or "part of the system," which can be a cause of conflict. Another participant stated that at her school, White teachers, in general, have a harder time with students of color. One participant shared the following:

If those White employees who make up the majority of the workforce have not received any type of cultural diversity training; if they have not been put in settings or trained on how to deal with race and how to identify cultural things; they are going to be at risk.

Violent School Culture. Several participants discussed the school culture as a factor in creating an environment conducive to student-directed violence against teachers. Important in understanding student-directed violence toward teachers was the participants' accounts of how acts of violence fed into creating a school culture of violence. One participant described the school environment as very violent with daily fights, students being injured, weapons being used, and individual students being attacked by several students at one time. Another participant reported witnessing a student bring a box cutter to school and use it to attack a student, causing a major injury resulting in loss of blood, multiple stitches, and skin grafts to repair the damage. A participant reported that students at her school bring bleach in water bottles and throw the bleach in a student's face. The most alarming incident of school violence involved a participant's account of a school incident that resulted in a student being stabbed to death.

Teacher Assaults. The reported physical violence toward teachers included punching, kicking, and biting. A participant stated that teachers are at risk for abuse because "they fear their students." Several participants reported teacher injuries when working with students with

behavioral problems or trying to control a student's violent episode. A participant reported that "You know in the context of these holds (restraining a student) you have to get really close to the student . . . and punches and, you know, scratching and that sort of thing." Another participant reported that teachers get injured trying to control outbreaks of student violence:

We had a fight turn into a brawl . . . So, when the teacher tried to intervene and separate it, more students jumped in. And so, one of the kids grabbed a chair and started swinging the chair, which ended up hitting the teacher.

A participant described an incident where a student made a threat to kill a teacher and had the plans to carry it out. The student was immediately removed from the school and referred to an alternative placement. Following a district hearing, the student was sent back to the school. The participant wrote that "the threat was disregarded because she needed more stability in an education environment. And so that becomes a balance of the education of the student, the stability of the student, but with the aggression of the student."

Other Abuse Directed Toward Teachers

The other types of abuse reported were emotional and mental as well as sexual harassment. Three participants reported emotional and/or mental abuse. For example, a participant reported that a teacher was subjected to mental and emotional abuse as a result of waking a student up.

And the teacher, all she did was wake a student up that was asleep. And so, she tapped her on the shoulder and asked her to lift her head up. And the young lady woke up swinging (trying to hit) on the teacher. And the teacher was actually fired because she touched the student first.

Another participant reported that as an administrator it is a "catastrophic situation" to witness a teacher confronted with a student involving a physical altercation. The participant shared that the emotional and mental impact for the teacher results in questioning his or her ability to teach and the magnitude of the event is like being "shell-shocked."

One participant reported an incident that involved sexual harassment. The participant shared that teachers in Link classes are often "grabbed and physically touched." The participant described Link students as special education students that have a "kind of physical or mental disability that prohibits them from learning in a normal learning class."

RQ 2: Strategies Implemented to Reduce Teacher Victimization

Research Question Two investigated the types of strategies implemented with students, teachers, and other school administrators to reduce or prevent teacher victimization at school. The findings indicated that three main types of strategies used to prevent student-directed teacher violence were relationship building, conflict resolution, and cultural awareness training (Table 4).

Table 4

Principals' Strategies to Reduce Teacher Victimization at School

	Relationship Building	Conflict Resolution	Cultural Awareness Training
Participant 1	X	X	X
Participant 2	X	X	X
Participant 3	X		X
Participant 4	X	X	X
Participant 5	X	X	X
Participant 6	X	X	X
Participant 7	X	X	X
Participant 8	X	X	X
Participant 9	X		

Relationship Building

All nine participants reported that relationship building with students was a needed strategy to reduce teacher victimization. Participants discussed multiple relationship-building strategies to reduce teacher victimization. For example, one participant stated that relationship building involves defining roles: "Where the students know that they are there to learn and teachers know they are there to lead." Another participant reported that developing a relationship with students has benefits that prevent violence. In fact, "It's probably the biggest factor that can help to prevent student violence." Several participants reported that once a relationship has been established, students will trust and respect their teachers, creating a bond that promotes healthy student behaviors.

One participant shared that the school's focus on relationship building involved social-emotional learning. The staff used strategies that focused on strengthening teacher-student relationships through understanding the emotional impact on all involved. Relationship-building strategies included the following:

- Following an altercation, remove the student and allow the student to sit alone for 10 minutes.

- Gauge the student's emotional ability to talk with administrators regarding the incident.

- Conduct conversations with respect for the teacher and student.

- Be honest about a student's consequences and expectations.

- Invite the teacher and student to talk about their experience and work on mending the relationship.

Another participant reported that relationship building at the school involves creating a "family atmosphere" within the school building. Teachers are trained to lead curriculum-focused character development for students. The participant stated that this builds a school culture with well-defined roles and clear expectations and has been successful in reducing school violence.

A participant shared that a strategy for relationship building at the school was "purposefully building the relationship outside the classroom that would affect inside the classroom." The strategy involved focusing on student's lives outside of normal school hours by attending sporting events, games, and weekend cookouts. The participant reported that this strategy of relationship building has resulted in a 50% reduction in student discipline referrals at the school.

A participant reported that a strategy for the school's relationship-building initiative started with recruiting fraternity members to reinforce a positive school culture. The initiative started with 40 fraternity members and grew to over 300 members, including sororities that helped female students. The members would patrol school hallways and provide a strong safety presence at the school while talking and interacting with students. The participant stated that the impact of this type of positive exposure improved student's perceptions of their future and "really changed their existence."

Three participants reported that their main strategy for building relationships between students and teachers is restorative circles. The Student Code of Conduct (Appendix F) supports teachers' efforts to use restorative circles for behavior modification. A participant reported that restorative circles involve red and green circles where both parties are permitted to express their view of the story, explain the emotional impact, and identify ways to respectfully work together. Another participant explained that restorative circles are a systematic strategy to address student

discipline, especially with African American females and males, who are disproportionately suspended. A participant shared that restorative circles encourage relationship building by "mending the relationship between a student and teacher."

Conflict Resolution

Seven participants reported that conflict resolution was a critical strategy in reducing student-directed violence toward teachers. A participant wrote the administrator's "rule of thumb" for working with student discipline is to observe the student's interaction with other teachers:

> The first line of defense for the administrator is to observe the other teachers' interactions with the student as well. If you see that this student is not being kicked out of multiple classes, then you have to do the process of elimination and determine the child is evidently in some type of conflict with this relationship with this teacher. But if you see the student is being kicked out of multiple classes, then you know, it not just that issue with that teacher. There is a serious behavioral concern for that student.

Another participant pointed out that often the violence escalates between students and teachers over electronic devices. He said the following:

> There's a limited time in the classroom where students have to learn, and teachers have to teach . . . A lot of times students will check out with cell phones or one-to-one Chromebook devices and that becomes the struggle with teachers keeping them on task. So more often than not that is the result of the initial conflict that escalates from there.

Another participant reported that a concern with using conflict resolution is the teacher's willingness to change their mindset and work with students. The participant reported that when trying to de-escalate an issue the teacher can often be a deterrent to progress. The teachers with

the mindset that "whatever I say goes, this is my classroom" or "it's not about the kids, it's about teaching my job" often escalate the violence. Another participant reported that it is often this mindset that leads to embarrassing students and placing them on the defense, which often leads to the student striking back at the teacher.

One participant reported that the school's strategy for using conflict resolution is having an open dialogue with students about their needs, challenges, and consequences. The school districts' Student Handbook (Appendix D) provided by a participant informs students about disciplinary procedures for violent behaviors. The conflict resolution strategy also includes hiring extra school counselors and other professional staff, who have experience working with students. This participant reported that the strategy of using experts to talk with students has resulted in 90% of the issues being resolved with no further occurrences of conflict.

Another participant reported that their conflict resolution strategy involves using the "round table." Students and staff are permitted to request a meeting and discuss their issues at the round table. He said the following:

> If a student comes to me and tells me about a conflict, immediately, I call them to the round table. So, we sit down, we establish the rules of the round table . . . Basically, we're going to respect each other. We're going to give each other time to express ourselves . . . And we're going into the situation wanting to resolve the conflict.

A strategy used in collaboration with conflict resolution is de-escalation. Several of the study's participants reported using de-escalation as a successful conflict resolution strategy. A participant reported that de-escalation at his school involved having access to district-level trained staff that are available to report to the school when help is needed. The district-level employees help train school staff on conflict resolution, help conduct student threat assessments,

and provide school staff with plans of action to protect students from hurting themselves or others.

A participant reported that de-escalating classroom conflict involves removing the audience. Students tend to react more when they have others observing their behaviors. When asked to enter a classroom to resolve a conflict, administrators first observe the interaction between the student and teacher. If the student is persistently violent and disrespectful, he or she is asked to leave the room. If the student refuses, the teacher is directed to remove the other students. In fact, a participant emphasized that "as usual the behaviors start to decrease if the audience isn't there. That's not always true. But about 70% or 85% of the time that's been my experience; when the audience is gone, I can de-escalate."

Cultural Awareness

Eight participants reported that cultural awareness was an important factor in reducing student-directed violence toward teachers. Cultural awareness refers to understanding different cultures and the consciousness of different customs, values, and beliefs (O'Brien, 2017). A participant reported that misunderstanding a student's cultural customs can lead to issues. She said, "You know just because the student is talking loud does not necessarily mean they're yelling at you. This is just the culture of their background . . . So we are really proactive at making sure that our teachers understand." Another participant explained that understanding a student's culture is "about empathy and having an understanding, but at the same time having high expectations."

A participant shared a story about how a teacher's insensitivity to the culture created an altercation between her and a student. He reported the following:

One particular day she [the teacher] began to ridicule the kid, you know telling him that

he wasn't dressed appropriately . . . And, he looked like he didn't get any sleep . . . He

[the student] went ballistic! Luckily, I heard the eruption in the classroom and was able to

intervene just in time.

Later it was discovered that the student's mother was on drugs. The student was working at night

to provide for the family and taking responsibility as the primary caregiver for younger children

in the household. The participant continued by saying that knowing the student's circumstances

could have prevented this situation from getting out of control.

A participant shared that her strategy for using cultural awareness is to train teachers

about the importance of social-emotional learning. She said, "We also have been really

intentional about building the social-emotional learning capacities of our teachers. Teachers have

access to information about students, including the data results obtained in the annual social-

emotional survey."

Cultural awareness helps teachers understand racial customs and values. For example,

one participant shared that understanding how Hispanic culture relates to authorities is important

in cultural awareness. He said, "In Hispanic cultures, there is a high regard for authority. If the

teacher says it then, they [Hispanic students and their parents] basically trust the leadership."

Another participant shared that having cultural awareness can prevent altercations with African

American students. He said the following:

There are some things that I might can say to another African American student that

someone else can not because it may not be received or perceived in the same manner.

So, I think, first learn the culture of your kids, you know, don't assume.

RQ 3: Types of Strategies With Parents and the Community

None of the nine participants reported that parents or the community were involved in planning the school's safety strategies. For example, when asked about parents and communities helping with school safety strategies, a participant stated the following:

On the parenting side, to be honest, as far as teacher victimization, I have not seen anything specifically around that. So, the research that you are doing will actually bring light to that. Everything is really done in the school itself. That will actually be a place where your research will really benefit administrators as far as closing the gap between communities coming to help decrease school violence.

All nine participants stated that parents help out on campus in various school committees, such as the PTA, the Parent-Teacher Organization, the Parent-Teacher-Student Association, or the Site-Based Team Management with projects like school fundraising. But there is no participation related to school safety. A participant shared that parental involvement in school safety issues would require a vast amount of training for parents. He said, "They're [parents] not assigned duties . . . It [safety planning] comes with a lot more training because you get into that very gray area of somebody saying something to somebody else's child."

A participant shared a lack of parental and community involvement in safety planning could be a result of the community's mindsets regarding school administrator roles. She said, "I feel like the community is of the mindset that assistant principals, principals, and teachers are supposed to be keeping kids safe during the school day and they put all of that on us."

Several participants discussed initiatives to get parents more involved with school safety. For example, a participant shared that parents have an opportunity to receive school safety data and voice their concerns at monthly parent meetings. However, another participant stated that

school staff invites parents to participate in their student's social-emotional learning process to help assure a positive outcome. A participant shared that he communicates with parents about school safety issues through on-campus safety committees. Another participant shared his district's safety plans and guidelines in the booklet titled "Welcome to Safety & Security Services" (Appendix E) that is available to parents and students.

RQ 4: Principals' Challenges to Reducing or Preventing Teacher Victimization

Research Question 4 identified the principal's challenges in reducing and preventing student-directed teacher violence. Several factors influenced participants' ability to address issues of teacher victimization, including parent and student understandings and school policies in general.

Parent and Teacher Understandings

A participant stated that a challenge can be the parents' understanding of their students. He said, "Sometimes parents don't want to believe that their kid is a different way when they're not around them." Another participant shared that a challenge for her was how teachers understand to report school violence. She said the following:

> I think it is how it's reported. You know teachers don't go to the maximum extent of pressing charges themselves. I think it's a fear for their job or how they will be looked at for pressing charges. A lot of it [teacher victimization] is not always documented. It's hard to actually quantify to say specifically how much violence is occurring. So, I would say that more violence occurs than what is documented or recorded.

Nevertheless, another participant shared that a challenge for him is dealing with understanding the human factors associated with violence where teachers are emotional about being mistreated by students. He said that

it is hard to tell a teacher to remove their emotion from a situation that they feel has

gotten personal, even though they know it is a student. We have teachers that go over and

beyond, and so their personal feelings are invested.

A participant stated that a challenge at his school is the teacher's understanding that they

cannot talk to administrators about their safety concerns. He said the following:

I think that that is always something that we can improve in. If they [teachers] truly feel a

certain way about a student or about a situation, then they can come to talk to us. And so,

that's something that is hard. It's hard to judge if we're doing a good job or not because

I'm not inside the teacher's head. But that is an area we can always grow, making sure

that teachers feel safe and they feel comfortable coming to administrators.

However, another participant shared his challenge of reducing and preventing teacher

victimization was dealing with a teacher's fear of getting fired for discussing student behavior.

He said, "They [teachers] are victimized by the students as well as the system that should be

helping to protect them."

School Policies in General

Two participants discussed the impact of policies as a challenge in reducing and

preventing teacher victimization. A participant stated that district policies found in the school's

code of conduct for students (Appendix F) returned several students to school after they attacked

a teacher. He reported that

policies are black and white, but schools have many gray areas. I think a lot of times

were finding reasons to bring students back. We always want to put education first, make

sure the kids are educated, but in doing that, we're overlooking the effect it is having on

teachers and the campus. If the teacher does not feel safe or nobody feels safe where they work, why should they come to work?

Another participant replied that district-based school policies were identified as a challenge because it prevented principals from having the autonomy to set campus rules regarding school safety. He stated, "I think sometimes [it is] policy from the central administration level, because sometimes those worlds are very different when they are looked at from a traditional lens."

A participant reported that her challenge is clarifying policies to avoid conflict and keep staff safe. As a result, she always tries to educate her staff on strategies that will keep them safe. Her list of safety strategies includes the following:

- Never block the doorway from a student who is agitated or upset.

- Do not extend arms to block their pathway.

- Do not lose professional composure.

- Always avoid arguing with a student.

- Avoid inappropriate playing and joking with students that can escalate issues.

- Seek administrative help to help de-escalate conflict and avoid violence.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory collective instrumental case study aimed to identify strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers. Nine administrators participated in the study using a video-conferencing program. Chapter 4 reported the findings. In Chapter 5, I summarize the study, identify conclusions, and suggest implications for practice as well as make recommendations for future research studies.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this case study was to identify strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers. This case study identified strategies that secondary school administrators use to reduce student-directed violence using a conceptual framework of school violence literature. This chapter contains a summary of the study: the background, purpose statement and research questions, methodology (sample, data collection, and data analysis), and the findings. Then the chapter provides conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future studies.

Summary of the Study

Violence against teachers includes verbal abuse, physical abuse, personal property damage, and emotional and psychological abuse (Johnson & Barton-Bellessa, 2014). Several studies have revealed that educators experience a decline in work production and severe health-related issues due to teacher victimization (Bass et al. 2016; Wilson et al., 2011). It is estimated that the cost of violence against teachers exceeds $2 billion annually, which does not include the perpetrator's legal fees, educational fees resulting in dropouts, or medical and social services (APA, 2019b).

Overview of the Problem

Student-directed violence is a severe problem that affects teachers' professional ability across the United States (APA, 2019a). Violence against teachers includes verbal assaults, physical attacks, destruction of personal property, emotional abuse, and mental abuse (Dzuka & Dalbert, 2007; Johnson & Barton-Bellessa, 2014). The NCES (2017) reported that during the 2015-2016 school year, 10% of public teachers reported a student-related incident that resulted in a threat of injury. Violence against teachers has a high economic impact costing an excess of $2

billion annually (APA, 2019b). The APA (2019a) reported that violence against teachers also affects employment attendance with 927,000 lost teacher-workdays per year.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this case study was to identify strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers.

Q1. What type of student violence directed at teachers has been experienced or witnessed at the school?

Q2. What types of strategies have been implemented with students, teachers, and other school administrators to reduce or prevent teacher victimization at school?

Q3. What types of strategies have been implemented with parents and the larger community to reduce or prevent teacher victimization at school?

Q4. What challenges have been encountered to reduce or prevent teacher victimization?

Review of the Methodology

This case study was designed to identify strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers. Aaltio and Heilmann (2012) shared that using case studies with conceptual frameworks creates a strong trust between the researcher and participant essential in gathering and analyzing data. Case studies are useful for group or organization research, and provide an opportunity to research a natural setting and receive detailed information (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). I chose the case study for this research due to its ability to provide rich, personally experienced data.

I conducted this study through a purposive sampling of secondary school principals and assistant principals with administrative experience working in urban school districts. School principals are defined as the person assigned to direct and manage day-to-day education

programs. School principals have the responsibility to resolve issues that threaten school safety (United States Department of Labor, 2019).

This study consisted of nine secondary school administrators. The participants' demographics included five males and four females. The participants' racial demographics included eight African Americans and one White administrator. The participant's years of experience as secondary administrators ranged from five years to over 20 years in school discipline. The criteria for participation in this study was as follows:

- Access to Skype, a web-based videoconferencing, and recording program.

- A minimum of two years' experience and possession of an administrator's certification.

- Prior or current experiences in an urban secondary school setting.

- Experiences with school-related violence against teachers.

I contacted the first participant in the study's target location by telephone. This action initiated the study's snowball sampling process. Snowball sampling characteristics are purposefully starting with individuals who suggest other participants who can provide helpful information to the research (Ivankova, 2015).

Each principal received notice of their participation and was provided the informed consent to release information form. The participants signed and returned the informed consent form before I began interviewing. The informed consent form contains a statement about the research, purpose of the research, time involved for participants, research procedures, and intended experimental information (Appendix C).

This study relied on school administrators' lived experiences to identify strategies to reduce school-related violence directed at teachers. I conducted the study's interview process

using Skype, an online video conferencing, and a recording program. The interview process followed a primary data collection process using a guided protocol, which began with open-ended, formatted research questions followed by three to four subquestions (Appendix A). This study used the same questions for each participant to demonstrate its validity and trustworthiness. This study achieved saturation when referred participants failed to provide new or additional beneficial information.

I assigned pseudonyms to replace participants' names and secure participant's privacy and confidentiality. I transcribed the data using MAXQDA coding software and sent the transcriptions to participants for validation in a process called member checking that allowed participants to check the final report for accuracy (Creswell, 2014). Also, I asked participants to submit other materials, including school violence meeting agendas, strategy prevention memos, meeting agendas, school newspaper articles, school website information, and any other information that emphasized school safety activities and other relevant artifacts that could provide information pertinent to the study.

Summary of the Findings

The following is a summary of the findings based on participants' responses to the four primary research questions. Each research question focused on strategies implemented by school administrators to prevent or reduce student-directed teacher violence.

Research question 1, focused on types of student abuse directed at teachers that were personally experienced or witnessed by administrators on the school campus. The findings included the following types of abuse:

- Verbal

- Physical

- Mental/Emotional

- Sexual Harassment

All nine respondents stated that they witnessed teachers verbally abused by students. Verbal abuse includes name-calling. Seven out of nine participants reported witnessing physical abuse directed toward teachers. Three participants reported witnessing emotional and/or mental abuse. One participant reported sexual harassment.

Research question 2 identified campus-wide strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce or prevent teacher victimization. The findings included the following:

- Relationship Building

- Conflict Resolution

- Cultural Awareness

Participants stated that relationship building, conflict resolution, and cultural awareness were the tactics they used to create a safer school environment. All nine respondents stated that relationship building was essential in helping teachers and their students create a connecting bond. Several participants reported that students would trust and respect their teachers once a relationship has been established, promoting healthier student behaviors.

Seven participants reported that conflict resolution was a critical strategy in reducing student-directed violence toward teachers. They identified conflict resolution and utilized it as a tactic to de-escalate violent situations, mostly in classroom settings. A participant stated that "removing the audience" or clearing other students from the classroom worked in de-escalating violence 70%–85% of the time.

Eight participants reported that cultural awareness was an important factor in reducing student-directed violence toward teachers. Cultural awareness refers to understanding different

cultures and the consciousness of different customs, values, and beliefs (O'Brien, 2017). A

participant reported that understanding a student's racial customs was essential. For example,

Hispanic students tend to have a higher respect for authority. Another participant reported that

cultural awareness could prevent altercations between teachers and African American students.

Research question 3 focused on safety strategies implemented with parents and the school

community to reduce or prevent teacher violence. The findings revealed a lack of parental

participation. All nine participants stated that parents help on campus in various school

committees but do not participate in school safety policies. Participants reported that several

factors prevented parents from helping with safety issues, including the training needed, district

policies, and parental and community mindsets that student safety is the school administrators'

role.

Research question 4 regarding the principal's challenges in reducing and preventing

student-directed teacher violence included the following findings:

- Parent and teacher understandings

- School policies in general

A participant stated that parents were a challenge because they failed to believe their

child displayed negative school behaviors. Another participant stated that dealing with the

"human factor" was a challenge because teachers get emotional when mistreated by students.

Two participants reported their challenge was district policies that made school safety rules with

no regard for teachers or individual campus needs. A participant reported that her challenge was

avoiding conflict and keeping staff safe.

Conclusions and Discussion of the Findings

This case study identified strategies implemented by school administrators aimed to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers. Teachers are impacted by student violence, causing a reduction in workability, emotional and mental instability, work burnout, premature job termination, and distrust in school administrators (Bass et al., 2016; Garland et al., 2007; Kajs et al., 2014). McMahon et al. (2017) stated that administrative support, which includes teamwork relationships, is essential in strengthening teachers to address school-related violence issues.

An overall conclusion based on findings resulting from this research is that addressing student-directed violence toward teachers demands a multi-strategic approach influenced by school administrators. McMahon et al. (2014) suggested that a healthy school environment is dependent on the ability to execute schoolwide safety initiatives. All the principals and assistant principals in this study demonstrated leadership skills and were capable of suggesting strategies essential in reducing and preventing student-directed teacher violence.

Research Question 1

Research question 1 explored the types of student abuse directed at teachers that were personally experienced or witnessed by administrators on the school campus. Based on the current study's findings, school administrators in this study witnessed verbal abuse, physical abuse, mental and emotional abuse, and sexual abuse directed toward teachers. All participants stated they witnessed students verbally abusing teachers. Seven out of nine participants reported witnessing a school episode involving a teacher being physically abused (hitting, biting, or punching) by a student. These findings support the conclusion that student abuse directed at teachers is indeed an occurrence during the school day.

Johnson and Barton-Belessa (2014) stated that violence against teachers includes verbal abuse, physical abuse, and personal and school-property damage. A study conducted by McMahon et al. (2014) revealed that 80% of teachers reported at least one victimization at school, and 94% were attacked by a student. The same study revealed that urban settings were more likely settings for school violence, and African American teachers were less likely to report victimization than White teachers.

Meires (2019) suggested that workplace bullying is a result of students wanting power and control. The same report stated that student-to-faculty bullying is a growing problem that controls teachers through intimidation, fear, and emotional abuse. In fact, Longobardi et al. (2018) emphasized that while teachers experience victimization by other perpetrators, the largest group to victimize teachers is students. In addition, Longobardi et al. (2018) noted that the most likely types of student-directed violence to teachers within the past two years were obscene gestures (44%), offensive/obscene remarks (29%), damage or theft of personal property (17%), intimidation (10%), physical attacks (3%), and sexual violence (3%).

Research Question 2

Research question 2 explored campus-wide safety strategies used by school administrators to reduce and prevent student-directed violence toward teachers. The research findings from this question revealed that relationship building, conflict resolution, and cultural awareness were essential strategies in creating and maintaining a safer school climate. Espelage and Hong (2019) argued that the school's climate is the foundation of behavioral norms and rules that affect school safety. Thus, studies have shown that encouraging positive school climates inspire students to develop a strong self-identity, detouring away from negative school violence

behaviors. In addition, safety-focused strategies are critical in creating a positive school climate necessary to reduce and prevent school violence.

Congruent with Espelage and Hong (2009), all nine administrators in this study stated that relationship building was the key element in creating a student-teacher bond. Respondents indicated that relationship building provided teachers with pertinent student information (risk factors) valuable in knowing how to interact with students safely. The CDC (2019d) stated that knowing violent risk factors associated with youth behaviors is essential in reducing youth violence.

Seven participants supported using conflict resolution, including de-escalation and student removal, to reduce student-directed teacher violence in the classroom. The Texas AFT (2020) reported that state legislation provides school districts with the authority to remove students that threaten the school environment. Texas Governor Gregg Abbot's School and Firearm Safety Action plan provides guidelines for student classroom removal in the 40 recommendations to promote school safety (OAG, 2018). Cuellar (2018) shared that interactionist strategies, like conflict resolution, can effectively change a student's behavior.

Eight participants reported cultural awareness as an essential strategy for reducing student-directed teacher violence. Pedersen (2018) suggested that cultural awareness is vital in working with African American and Latino groups, where there are often acceptable and condoning views of school violence in these communities. David-Ferdon et al. (2016) stated that children show aggressive behaviors as young as one years old that contribute to violent behaviors, and have many causes, including cultural deprivations.

Overall, the findings in this study lead to the conclusion that creating bonds between teachers, administrators, and students can support safer schools. This can be done by building

relationships and improving cultural awareness. At the same time, conflict resolution strategies also contribute to a more personal understanding of students.

Research Question 3

Research question 3 explored strategies implemented by parents and the community to reduce and prevent teacher victimization. The findings showed that community members shared a mindset that school safety was the school personnel's responsibility. Also, the findings based on all nine respondents indicated that, while parents participate in school fundraising and social campus events, they rarely contribute to issues surrounding school safety. While several issues (safety concerns, behavioral training, district policies, parental views about administrative roles) prevent parents from actively participating in school safety planning, research shows that parental support is vital in modifying student behaviors (CDC, 2019d). Parents need to communicate with their students about issues involving peers, the school environment, and school safety concerns to help discourage student-centered violence (National Association of School Psychologists, 2015). This study's findings indicated that parents had little or no involvement with school safety issues, including planning and implementing school policies.

Research Question 4

Research question 4 focused on the principals' challenges encountered when implementing strategies to reduce or prevent student-directed violence against teachers. Participants reported that child-centered parental mindsets were a challenge. For example, one participant stated that getting parents to believe that their child displayed negative and violent behaviors was a difficult task. The CDC (2019d) reported that family risk factors for youth violence include lack of parental involvement and aggressive or passive disciplinary practices.

The research findings also showed that principals encountered challenges with school and district policies that impacted their ability to implement school safety rules. For example, one participant reported that while administrators were permitted to remove violent students, the district often returned students based on policies that emphasize academic learning as a priority. Johnson and Barton-Bellessa (2014) shared that schools across the nation enact protection laws that permit the expulsion of students who perpetrate violent acts at school. Findings regarding these challenges suggest the conclusion that issues exist when trying to obtain parental agreement about their children, as well as which policies will be most effective in resolving safety issues.

Implications of Practice

My main objective in this study was to identify strategies to reduce student-directed violence against teachers. I interviewed the participants in this study using a guided interview protocol based on the study's four research questions (Appendix A). The following are recommendations for practice for faculty and staff to implement based on the study findings:

- Provide professional development training to school personnel that defines violent behaviors and specific ways to respond appropriately. The TCTA (2019) supports teacher training that includes knowing their rights, identifying dangerous students, and student classroom removal policies. A key factor in helping teachers take control of violent situations is classroom management. Teachers should be trained in effective classroom management that emphasizes de-escalating aggressive behaviors (Espelage et al., 2013). A healthy school climate depends on implementing safety initiatives in response to violent behaviors (McMahon et al., 2017).

- Provide professional development regarding cultural awareness for various school populations. The CDC (2019d) stated that knowing a student's violent risk factors including family life, social life, and community characteristics are invaluable resources for addressing youth violence.

- Provide professional development regarding social-emotional learning. Flynn et al. (2018) stated that school violence is a public health issue that threatens the academic and social functioning of students.

- Provide opportunities to educate parents and community members about school administrator roles and school safety. WHO (2019) suggests that schools engage parents by communicating safety policies, sharing ways to help with safety plans, working with parents to improve students' behaviors, and letting parents organize safety projects on school campuses.

Recommendations for Future Studies

This study identified strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers. Future study recommendations are the following:

1. Conduct research studies involving teachers' perceptions and suggestions to reduce student-directed school violence.

2. Examine nonurban schools to identify strategies to reduce teacher victimization.

3. Examine the impact of student-directed violence on first-year teachers.

4. Investigate students' perceptions of attending violent schools.

5. Examine parental views on school policies that condone classroom removal of students for violent actions.

6. Explore the influence of cultural stereotypes in creating and implementing school violence policies.

7. Examine community views about administrator roles and school involvement.

General Remarks

In this research I interviewed nine school administrators to identify strategies that would reduce or prevent student-directed violence against teachers. During the research process, the participants' shared experiences involving school violence from verbal assaults to murder. The principals sincerely acknowledged the importance of their role as school leaders. Many of them shared that they saw a worsening of the school's climate and environment due to school violence. Educators cannot effectively teach children when the teachers work with the threat of violence. I completed this study knowing that the safety strategies obtained from this research could provide safer working conditions for teachers. I plan to share this research through school conferences and classroom presentations to continue deepening awareness of teacher victimization and advocate for school safety.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol and Interview Questions

Background Information on voluntary participant

Name: _____

Date: _____

<u>Review of Participation Rights to Interview</u>

Initial statement of inquiry. Before we begin, let me tell you about my study.

The purpose of this case study will be to identify strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce student-directed violence toward teachers. In the United States, violence against teachers is a serious nationwide problem (American Psychology Association, 2019a). Perpetrators of teacher victimization include administrators, colleagues, parents, and students, but the most prevalent violators are students (Espelage et al., 2013). Even more concerning are the incidents of violence directed toward teachers that are underreported (McMahon et al., 2017). It is estimated that the cost of violence against teachers exceeds $2 billion dollars annually which does not include the perpetrator's legal fees, educational fees resulting in dropouts, or medical and social services (American Psychology Association, 2019b). However, McMahon et al. (2017) indicated that research is needed for administrative support regarding how principals view issues and policies regarding school safety. The collected data will be used to identify strategies that would reduce student-directed violence toward teachers.

Guided Protocol Interview Questions

Q1. What type of student violence directed at teachers has been experienced or witnessed at the school?

a. Can you describe an incident where a student verbally abused a teacher at your school?

a. Tell me about an incident of teacher abuse that required you to contact safety resources (law enforcement) outside of the school?

b. Can you describe a classroom disruption that triggered an episode resulting in violence directed toward a teacher?

Q2. What types of strategies with students, teachers, and other school administrators have been implemented to reduce or prevent teacher victimization at school?

a. What policies and practices are implemented specifically with students throughout the school day to reduce teacher victimization?

b. How effective have these strategies been in reducing teacher victimization at school?

c. How often do school administrators assess the recommended strategies for needed improvement changes?

d. What strategies have not yet been implemented and why?

e. Describe your school safety vision for your campus.

Q3. What types of strategies have been implemented with parents and the larger community to reduce or prevent teacher victimization at school?

a. Describe ways that parents are encouraged to participate at your campus?

b. In what way does your school parent organization help to implement school safety policies?

c. Describe the involvement of community businesses in helping reduce school violence.

Q4. What challenges have been encountered to reduce or prevent teacher victimization?

a. What is your plan to overcome these challenges?

b. Who would you recommend that I talk to that could provide insight on this topic?

Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885

April 14, 2020

Annette Cummings
Department of Educational Leadership
Abilene Christian University

Dear Annette,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled
"Violence against Teachers: Principal Strategies to Reduce Teacher Victimization",

(IRB# 20-037   )is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

Appendix C: Informed Consent to Release Form

TITLE OF STUDY
Violence Against Teachers: Principal Strategies to Reduce Teacher Victimization

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Annette Cummings
Abilene Christian University School of Educational Leadership
xxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx
xxx-xxx-xxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

You may be able to take part in a research study. This form provides important information about that study, including the risks and benefits to you as a potential participant. Please read this form carefully and ask the researcher any questions that you may have about the study. You can ask about research activities and any risks or benefits you may experience. You may also wish to discuss your participation with other people, such as your family doctor or a family member. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or stop your participation at any time and for any reason without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this study is to identify strategies implemented by school administrators to reduce student-driven violence toward teachers.

If selected for participation, you will be asked to attend one visit with the study staff over the course of a week. The visit is expected to take 30-60 minutes in an online video conferencing format. During the course of these visits, you will be asked to participate in the following procedures:
You will be asked to answer open ended questions about the strategies you use to facilitate discussions about sensitive and controversial issues such as lived work-related experiences with student violence directed toward teachers. Approximately 30 minutes of your time will be requested to participate in an online interview using Skype a video conferencing program. The interview will be recorded and later transcribed.

RISKS & BENEFITS:
A minimal risk in this study includes Breach of Confidentiality. Precautions to protect your privacy and confidentiality are a major component of this study. You might also find some questions difficult to answer. You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.
Another risk in this study relates to COVID-19 safety compliance. To comply with COVID-19 safety guidelines signatures of consent will be collected using Hellosign an online legally binding signature site. The interview process will be taking place online using Skype. Using Skype will eliminate the need to meet face to face adhering to the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) social distancing guidelines.

There are no direct benefits to you for your participating in this study. However, the results of this study may have positive benefits for teachers by identifying proven strategies that can reduce student-directed violence.

PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY: Any information you provide will be confidential to the extent allowable by law. Some identifiable data may have to be shared with individuals outside of the study team, such as members of the ACU Institutional Review.

Otherwise, your confidentiality will be protected by the following:

- Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents
- Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher.

Participant data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents. These incidents include, but may not be limited to, incidents of abuse and suicide risk.

CONTACTS: If you have questions about the research study, the lead researcher is Annette Cummings, MSSW and may be contacted xxx-xxx-xxxx, xxxxxxxxxxxx and/or xxxx xxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx. If you are unable to reach the lead researcher, or wish to speak to someone other than the lead researcher, you may contact Dr. Sandra Harris at xxxxxxxxxxxx. If you have concerns about this study, believe you may have been injured because of this study, or have general questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact ACU's Chair of the Institutional Review Board and Executive Director of Research, Megan Roth, Ph.D. Dr. Roth may be reached at

xxx-xxx-xxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Additional Information

There may be unexpected risks associated with your participation in this study and some of those may be serious. We will notify you if any such risks are identified throughout the course of the study which may affect your willingness to participate
Your participation may be ended early by the researchers for certain reasons. For example, we may end your participation if you no longer meet study requirements, the researchers believe it is no longer in your best interest to continue participating, you do not follow the instructions provided by the researchers, or the study is ended. You will be contacted by the researchers and given further instructions in the event that you are removed from the study.
Please let the researchers know if you are participating in any other research studies at this time.

Consent Signature Section

Please sign this form if you voluntarily agree to participate in this study. Sign only after you have read all of the information provided and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You should receive a copy of this signed consent form. You do not waive any legal rights by signing this form.

_____ _____ _____
Printed Name of Participant   Signature of Participant   Date

_____ _____ _____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent   Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Appendix D: Student Handbook 2019-2020

DISCIPLINE LUNCH DETENTION

Lunch detention is a first step intervention strategy for minor classroom or hallway incidents. Parents should be contacted by the teacher regarding why the student is in detention either before lunch or that evening. Students will be allowed to eat during lunch detention. Students assigned to lunch detention will report to their teacher assigning the detention, where they will eat their lunch while serving their detention time.

IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION—ISS

ISS is a form of in-house suspension that provides students an opportunity to learn in an alternate environment that encourages behavior modification through positive reinforcement. Students will be provided with the same or similar assignments in an alternate classroom and are expected to complete all assignments.

ON CAMPUS INTERVENTION - OCI

A student may be placed in the On-Campus Intervention program for 6 successive school days for violation of the student code of conduct on or within 300 feet of school property or while attending a school sponsored or school related activity on or off school property. Students placed in OCI are prohibited from being on any other school campus or from attending any school-sponsored or school related activities during their OCI placement. Not adhering to this directive could result in further disciplinary action.

• Six days of OCI will be given to any student for possession, using, selling, distributing of vapes. Any student suspected of having a controlled substance is subject to arrest and possible removal to an alternative school campus. ISS/OCI RULES • Students are NOT TO TALK to anyone without permission from the ISS/OCI teacher. The student may only talk to the ISS/OCI teacher but only with permission. The student is to get permission by raising his/her hand and waiting to be called on by the ISS/OCI teacher.

 • Students are not to leave ISS/OCI for any reason unless escorted by a staff member. Students are not to ask to go out of the ISS/OCI room for any reason. 10

• The ISS/OCI teacher will accompany all students assigned ISS/OCI to the restroom as a group. One student at a time will be allowed in the restroom. The ISS/OCI class will go once in the morning, once at lunch, and once in the afternoon.

• Students will walk down the hall on the right-hand side and speak to no one. Students may only talk with a teacher or other adult in the hall if the adult talks to the student first. • Students in ISS/OCI will go to lunch when the ISS teacher determines the time is appropriate. During lunch students are able to purchase the hot food (plate) lunch tray only. Students will not be allowed to go through the snack line and will not be allowed to purchase soft drinks or snack food from the lunch line.

• Students who are assigned to ISS/OCI will work at all times. Free time will not be permitted. The ISS/OCI teacher will assign work to students who have finished their class assignments. If a student believes that a teacher has sent work which he/she has already completed, the student is to do it again unless he/she can present it to the ISS/OCI teacher to verify that the assignment has already been completed.

• Students are to cooperate with the Counselors or Intervention Specialist and participate during counseling sessions. These sessions are to help students in developing positive behaviors which will allow the student to be more successful in school and life. The principal and assistant principal may make unannounced visits to ISS/OCI to address the students. A Counselor or the Intervention Specialist will make a daily visit and address the specific problem(s) that brought the student(s) to ISS/OCI. Counselors will maintain a log of these visits as a matter of record for future possible use. Students removed from ISS/OCI for behavior or discipline incidents are subject to further disciplinary action to including at home suspension or request for removal from the school through a Central Office Conference.

Appendix E: School Safety Plan

Welcome to Safety & Security Services

_____ ISD is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for students, staff and visitors. In an effort to accomplish this goal the district provides a comprehensive security program. The department of Safety and Security Services works closely with each campus and local public safety agencies on contingency planning and ensuring the proper response of necessary emergency services. This partnership stands ready to address any situation that may arise.

The district safety program is designed to provide students, staff and visitors with facilities that meet or exceed standards in fire safety, air quality, hazardous materials management, chemical safety and building safety.

» Visitor Guidelines

In _____ ISD, we are proud of our schools and welcome visitors. In order to protect the security of our students and staff and the learning environment at our schools, visitors must adhere to the following guidelines:

- All visitors to campuses must report to the school office, present government issued photo ID, sign in, state reason for being on campus and obtain approval from the principal or designee
- All visitors to school campuses shall wear a visitor name badge provided by the school office.
- Visitors who wish to disseminate information to students or staff must comply with district board policies.
- Visitors may not recruit for fund-raising activities, religious groups, youth groups or political causes when visiting school campuses in accordance with this policy.
- Clergy and other representatives of religious organizations (ministers, rabbis, imams, priests and the like) or youth group representatives may visit with their congregants and have lunch with them, but shall not use the visit to proselytize to others.
- Media representatives shall arrange visits to school campuses with the District's Communications Department at the central Administration Building. Visitors are must wear appropriate attire when visiting district schools. [Policy FNCA]
- A request for a parent and/or others to visit a classroom must be approved by the teacher and the principal. Approval shall be subject to the classroom activities scheduled for the day of the requested visit and must be conducted in accordance with district policies.
- Due to privacy issues, videotaping in the classroom by parents is not permitted. Exceptions shall be granted only by the superintendent or designee.
- Visitors who fails to comply with any of these guidelines and/or district policies may be prohibited from visiting the school and other District Facilities.

» Security Procedures

_____ ISD's comprehensive safety and security program includes

- Uniformed police officers who provide traffic safety services on campuses with a demonstrated need.
- Uniformed police officers who provide security and law enforcement services on secondary campuses and at athletic events, socials, proms, fund-raisers and other District events as deemed necessary.
- Uniformed School Liaison Officers assigned to secondary campuses to develop a rapport between students and police officers, and to provide an extra measure of security on these campuses. The officers also serve as counselors and instructors on matters related to law enforcement.
- Campus Crime Stopper Programs are active on all secondary campuses. The program is administered by students and is designed to teach them the need for citizen involvement in reporting and preventing criminal activity.
- District canine ("K9") program that makes specially trained dog and handler teams available to detect the presence of drugs, alcohol or explosive devices. The teams check ISD campuses and other facilities, including cars parked on District property, school lockers, classrooms and common areas of the buildings.
- CCTV Camera systems in all schools help administrators monitor the interior and exterior of the building. The systems are also used on conjunction with the access control system, so District personnel can see persons requesting entrance into the building.
- Access control systems are computer operated and allow personnel to make informed decisions related to admitting visitors.
- All _____ ISD campuses and facilities use the RAPTOR electronic visitor management system. The RAPTOR system, which requires the visitor to present a driver's license or other acceptable form of government-issued identification, logs the visitor into the building and provides the visitor with a temporary, photo-identification badge to wear while in the building. The visitor management system also checks the visitor's identification against a nationwide database of registered sex offenders.
- Radio systems provide campus and district-wide communications with a special radio channel for the joint use of police, fire and district administrators during emergencies.
- All campuses are monitored by computerized intrusion systems. Panic and/or robbery alarms are provided at select locations.
- Criminal history background checks are required for applicants for employment, volunteers, mentors and contractors.
- The District has four (4) Security Specialists assigned to manage all issues related to security or student safety issues within that cluster.
- Each campus has a copy of the District's Emergency Procedures Manual.
- Each campus has an individual security plan.
- Weapons and threat assessment guidelines are in place.

» Emergency Procedures

ISD has comprehensive emergency procedure plans in place. The department of Safety and Security Services works closely with each campus and local public safety agencies

on contingency planning and ensuring the proper response of necessary emergency services. This partnership stands ready to address any situation that may arise.

Appendix F: Student Code of Conduct

This student code of conduct, approved by the _____Board of Education, provides information and direction to students and parents regarding expectations of behavior, as well as consequences for code of conduct violations. Parents and students are encouraged to read and regularly review the district's student code of conduct to ensure a successful and productive school year for all.

Student responsibilities:

● Follow the district's dress code and grooming guidelines.

● Attend and be on time to all classes every school day.

● Follow classroom rules and/or respect agreements in all classes and all school-sponsored events or activities.

● Be prepared for each class with the appropriate classroom materials.

● Respect and be polite to staff, students and school visitors.

● Do not use profanity or threatening statements toward anyone.

● Do not post threatening messages on social-media outlets, directed at students, parents, staff or school property.

● Students are responsible for all items they bring on campus and are encouraged to inspect items in their personal belongings before arriving at school.

● Drugs, alcohol, firearms and other illegal weapons are prohibited on campus, on district vehicles and at school sponsored events or activities.

● Help keep your campus safe, report any verbal threats or incidents of violence toward other students, staff or district property.

● Comply with campus administrator's authority to determine appropriate possession and use of electronic devices (mobile phones included) on campus and at school sponsored activities.

● The use of school computers and internet services is a privilege; respect the district's electronic communications system.

● Students participating in sports or other extra-curricular activities may have to follow higher standards of behavior than the district's student code of conduct.

● Be prepared to learn something new every day; prepare yourself to be successful in college, career and community leadership.

Campus administrator and teacher responsibilities:

● Demonstrate positive attitude toward parents and students.

● Promote a positive learning environment for all.

● Value parents as partners to assist their children with academic success.

● Assist students develop good study habits.

● Work with students and parents to solve problems at the classroom level.

● Explore restorative consequences when possible to address behaviors of concern.

● Promptly work with parents/guardians and other district professionals to address behaviors of concern.

● Promptly notify parents/guardians when students are suspended due to serious or persistent misconduct.

● When the student's inappropriate behavior breaks local and state laws, the campus administrator is required by law to notify law enforcement.

● Follow local and state guidelines to maintain discipline and keep all students safe.

The District has the authority to handle discipline and give consequences when:

Students violate the code of conduct during the school day, while students walk to and from school, at a bus stop, while attending or participating in school-sponsored events or activities and while riding on a school bus or any vehicle owned by the district.

● When students post threatening messages on social-media toward other students, staff or district property, regardless of time or location.

● When students engaged in specific criminal activity, determined by law enforcement, regardless of time or location. 3 Determining consequences:

● As required by law, the principal or the assistant principal will serve as the Campus Behavior Coordinator (CBC). The CBC is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline.

● Before the CBC recommends a suspension or the student's removal to an alternative school setting they must consider:

     A. If the student acted in self-defense

     B. The student's intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct

     C. The student's disciplinary history

     D. Whether the student has a disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct, regardless of whether the decision involves a mandatory or discretionary action

● The CBC may offer students restorative options to address social and emotional development, and keep students engaged with their academic progress at their home campus; including:

  A. Parent/teacher conference

  B. Conflict resolution

  C. Restorative circles (circles can be used to establish a respect agreement, building school community, repairing harm, decision making strategies and/or teaching content.)

  D. Behavior coaching

  E. Behavior improvement plan

  F. Referral to the school's student support team

  G. Referral to social services in the community

  H. Option to pay for damages to personal and/or school property

  I. Option to perform school assigned duties

  J. Transfer student to another classroom

  K. In school or out of school suspensions T

The District has the right to remove a student to an alternative school setting, for serious or persistent misconduct or when the student breaks local or state law:

● Students have the right to participate in a due-process conference before they are removed from their regular school setting.

● Students can be removed to a district alternative education program for up to 60 school days.

● If a student engages in a serious criminal act, the student can be expelled to the juvenile alternative education program for up to one school-calendar year.

● Students placed in alternative educational programs are not allowed to attend nor participate in any extracurricular activities.

● Students are not allowed to visit their home campus during the time of removal.

● Students have the right to appeal a removal to an alternative education program.

Note: The student, parent and/or guardian must each sign the acknowledgement form on page 48, and then return the page to the principal's office. Please note that failure to sign and return the acknowledgement form may prevent the student from attending and/or participating in any school activities.