

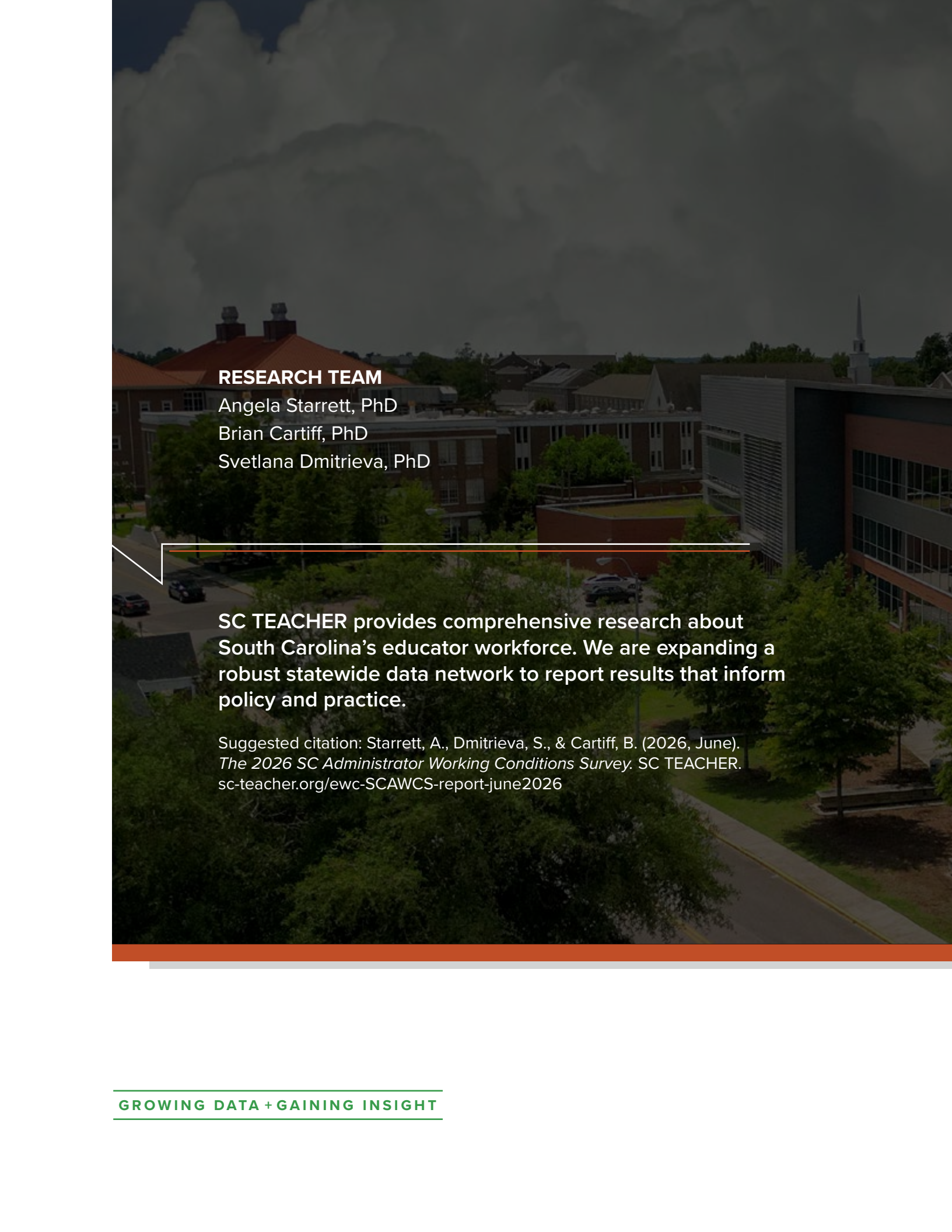


The 2026 SC Administrator Working Conditions Survey

JUNE 2026



EDUCATOR WORKING CONDITIONS



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SC TEACHER provides comprehensive research about South Carolina's educator workforce. We are expanding a robust statewide data network to report results that inform policy and practice.

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Administrator Working Conditions

+ HIGHLIGHTS

The SC Administrator Working Conditions Survey (SCAWCS) was developed to systematically examine the work environments of school leaders. Grounded in the job demands-resources (JD-R) model, the survey conceptualizes administrator working conditions as a balance between the demands of the role and the resources available to support it. The JD-R framework emphasizes that high job demands, such as workload and accountability pressures, can contribute to stress and burnout when not sufficiently offset by job resources. In contrast, robust resources can buffer these demands and promote engagement, resilience, and long-term commitment to the profession.

Designed by SC TEACHER, the SCAWCS measures 13 domains of working conditions, including seven job resources and six job demands, alongside two categories of key outcomes: job satisfaction and retention intentions. In the 2026 pilot administration, 53 of South Carolina's 72 traditional school districts (74%) participated, along with four of the state's six specialty schools. Of the 2,442 administrators invited to participate, 1,679 responded (69% response rate), providing insights from 828 schools. These survey findings offer a comprehensive picture of leadership working conditions in South Carolina to inform efforts to strengthen and sustain the state's educator workforce.

MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE 2026 SC ADMINISTRATOR WORKING CONDITIONS SURVEY

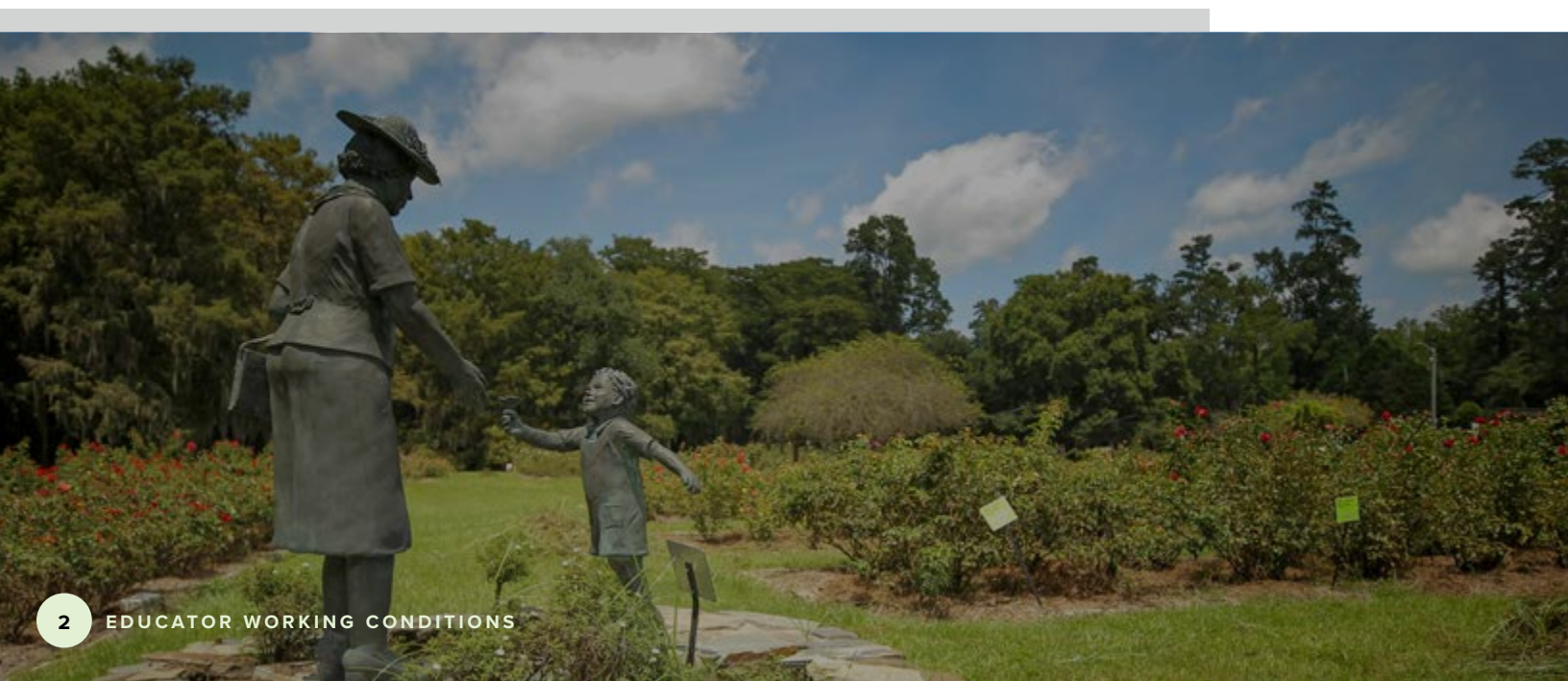
- Administrators statewide reported generally positive working conditions, with strong job resources, moderate job demands, high job satisfaction, and strong intentions to remain in the profession.
- Faculty/staff support and autonomy were the highest rated job resources, while district shared governance was rated least favorably.
- Cognitive demands were the most frequently experienced demand, occurring on average several times per week. Organizational demands were experienced least frequently.
- Differences in working conditions across elementary, middle, and high schools were generally small, with meaningful differences observed only for parent/family support and district shared governance.
- Perceptions of job resources were more strongly associated with job satisfaction and retention intentions than perceptions of job demands.
- District-level resources—particularly autonomy, district support, and professional development—were most strongly associated with intentions to remain in a current district.
- Workload showed the strongest negative association with job satisfaction and retention intentions among all demands.
- Across analyses of working conditions, relationships with job satisfaction were stronger than with retention intentions, indicating that daily experiences are more closely tied to how administrators feel about their work.

+ INTRODUCTION

A strong and stable school leadership workforce is essential for sustaining positive teaching and learning environments. Effective administrators foster school cultures that support meaningful engagement among students, teachers, families, and community members. At the same time, administrators must navigate numerous and often competing demands, which can limit their capacity to maintain these conditions (Horng et al., 2009).

A substantial body of research shows that working conditions matter for educators. Among teachers, perceptions of job demands and available resources are closely associated with job satisfaction, work engagement, and occupational commitment (Admiraal & Røberg, 2023; Alonzo et al., 2025; Collie, 2023). Administrative support is among the strongest predictors of these outcomes, underscoring the central role school leaders play in shaping teachers' day-to-day experiences (Burkhauser, 2016; Gao et al., 2025; Tickle et al., 2011).

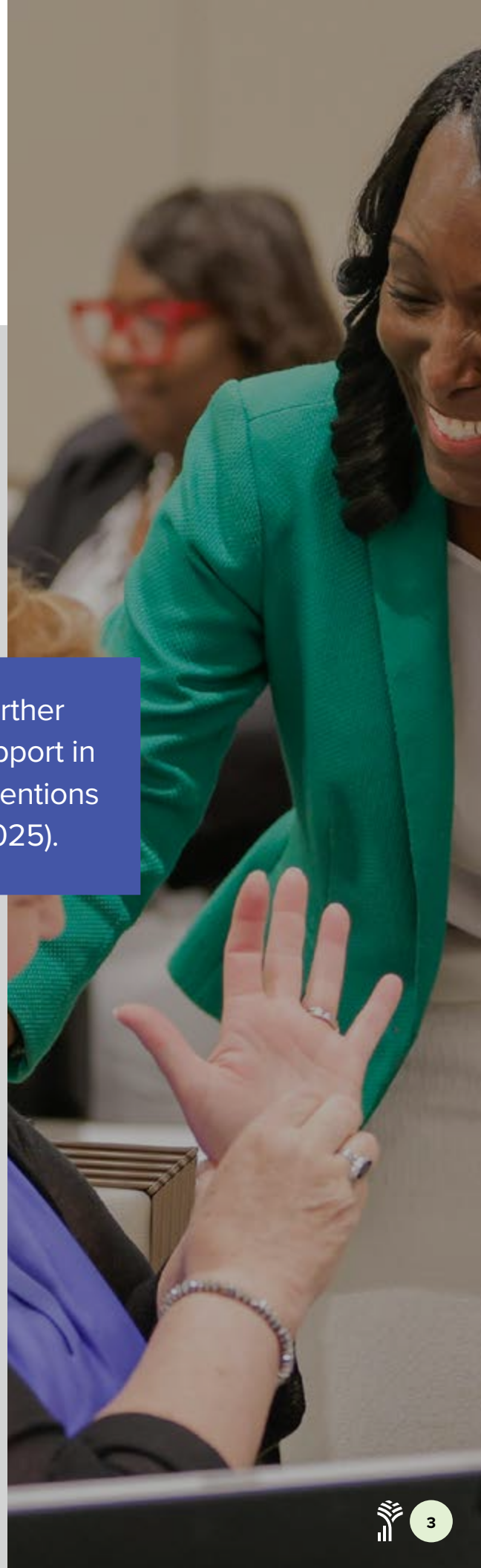
Despite extensive research on teacher working conditions, much less is known about the conditions under which school administrators work. Existing evidence suggests that these environments are associated with administrators' well-being (Collie et al., 2020; Marsh et al., 2023; Mitani, 2018; Steiner et al., 2022), as well as their ability to support teachers and staff (Doyle Fosco, 2022; Grissom et al., 2025; Wang, 2025b). School administrators manage complex instructional, operational, and relational responsibilities, each accompanied by distinct job demands and resources (Marsh et al., 2023). Workload pressures, policy expectations, student behavioral challenges, autonomy, and professional support may all shape administrators' ability to lead schools effectively (Marsh et al., 2023; Spillane & Kenney, 2012).



Additionally, although school leaders in elementary, middle, and high schools share many core responsibilities, the organizational and developmental contexts of these settings differ in ways that may uniquely shape administrators' working conditions (Eccles & Roeser, 2009; Gale & Bishop, 2014). Clarifying these conditions and whether they differ across school contexts is important not only for strengthening leadership capacity and supporting administrator retention but also for understanding how they influence school climate and teachers' daily experiences.

Findings from the 2025 administration further affirm the critical role of administrator support in shaping teachers' job satisfaction and intentions to remain in the profession (Gao et al., 2025).

In recent years, SC TEACHER has developed and administered the SC Teacher Working Conditions Survey (SCTWCS). Developed and piloted in 2023 and 2024, the SCTWCS is grounded in the JD-R model (Starrett et al., 2023). Findings from the 2025 administration further affirm the critical role of administrator support in shaping teachers' job satisfaction and intentions to remain in the profession (Gao et al., 2025). As such, SC TEACHER developed a complementary working conditions survey for school administrators, conducting the inaugural administration in 2026.





To ensure conceptual alignment with the SCTWCS, the pilot SC Administrator Working Conditions Survey (SCAWCS) was developed using the same JD-R framework. In this model, job demands are aspects of work that require sustained physical, psychological, social, or organizational effort, whereas job resources are aspects of work that support goal attainment, professional growth, and the management of work-related demands (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). Although job demands are not inherently negative (Granziera et al., 2020), persistently high demands without sufficient recovery or support can increase the risk of stress and burnout (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Job resources can also help buffer these pressures and promote well-being, engagement, and resilience (Dicke et al., 2018; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007; Xu & Payne, 2020). Applied to school leadership, the JD-R model helps explain how administrators' working conditions may be associated with their own outcomes, as well as the broader environments they help shape for their school communities.

With this background and framework, the pilot SCAWCS was designed to provide an initial picture of administrators' working conditions in South Carolina while also supporting refinement of the survey for future use. The analyses of this pilot provided preliminary evidence on administrators' job demands and resources and identified areas for survey improvement in item content, construct coverage, and future data collection. These results, alongside data from the SCTWCS and other SC TEACHER findings, will build toward a more complete understanding of school working conditions and the broader effort to support and retain South Carolina educators.



KEY QUESTIONS

This report details the development, implementation, and administration of the 2026 SCAWCS. Results from this survey can provide stakeholders with an understanding of working conditions for school leaders in South Carolina's public schools. Findings can be used to support and improve the stability of South Carolina's educator workforce.

Using data collected from the 2026 SCAWCS, the following key questions regarding administrators' working conditions in South Carolina schools were examined.

1. How do school administrators across South Carolina perceive their working conditions, overall job satisfaction, and retention intentions?
2. How do school administrators' perceptions of working conditions vary by school organizational level?
3. How do school administrators' perceptions of working conditions relate to their job satisfaction and retention intentions?

Key terms used throughout the report are listed in the Glossary beginning on p. 21.

SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

The SCAWCS was developed specifically for use with South Carolina school administrators and designed to complement the SCTWCS, which measures teacher working conditions and workplace satisfaction. Initial development during the 2024–25 academic year involved a review of existing surveys, validated scales, and prior research. This process informed the conceptualization of a set of job resources and job demands specifically relevant to school administrator roles, along with outcomes related to job satisfaction and retention. Survey items aligned with these constructs were drafted based on the JD-R literature and expert knowledge. These constructs and individual items were then reviewed by eleven focus groups composed of school and career and technical education (CTE) administrators from across the state. The feedback from these focus groups guided revisions to better align the survey with administrators' experiences.

Additional details on the survey development process are provided in the Technical Appendix.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Based on findings from the focus groups, the pilot SCAWCS was refined to include 13 working conditions (seven job resources and six job demands), a set of items related to job satisfaction, and three distinct items measuring intent across three dimensions of retention (i.e., intent to remain in South Carolina public education, intent to remain in a school administrator role, and intent to remain in school leadership in their current district). The survey was designed for the approximately 3,700 South Carolina school administrators serving as principals, assistant principals, assistant administrators, CTE center directors, or assistant CTE center directors.

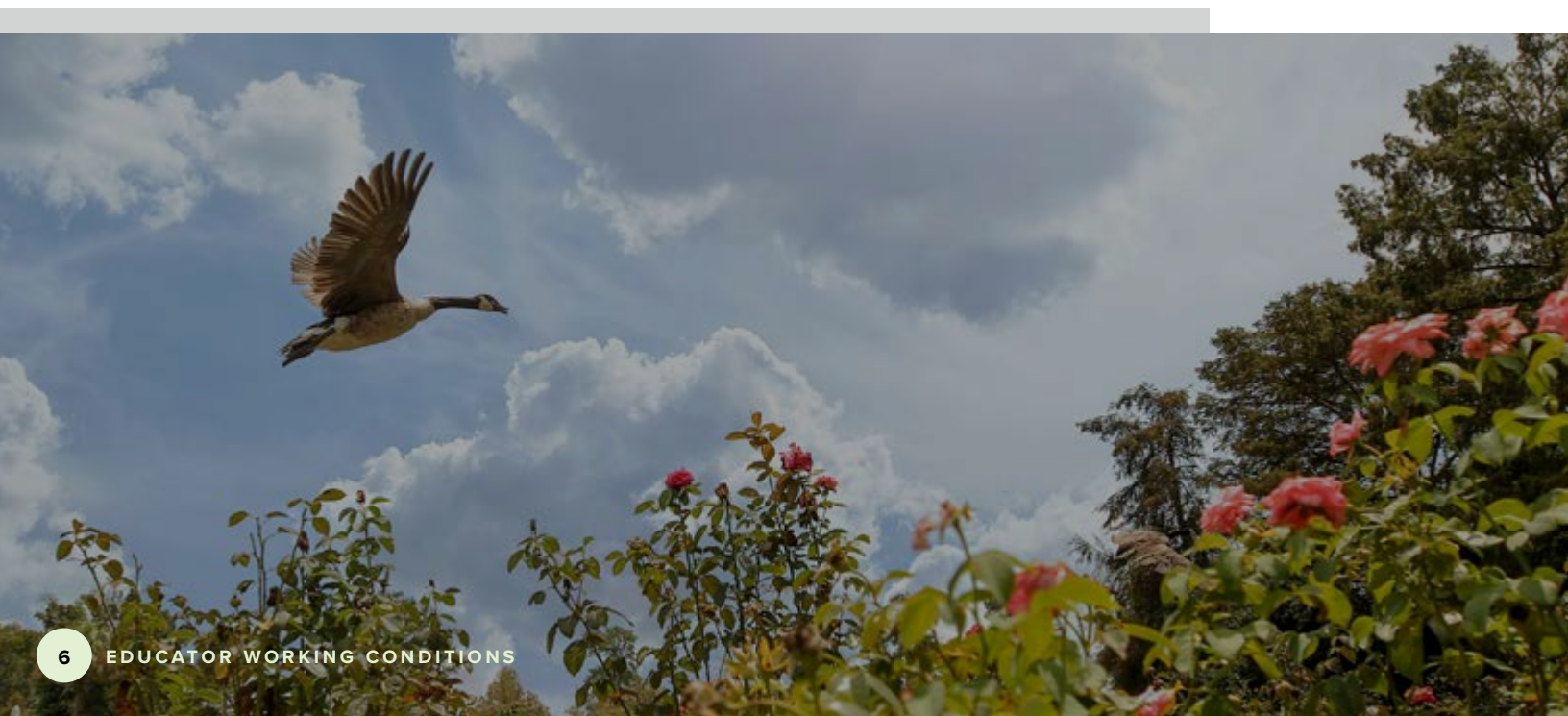
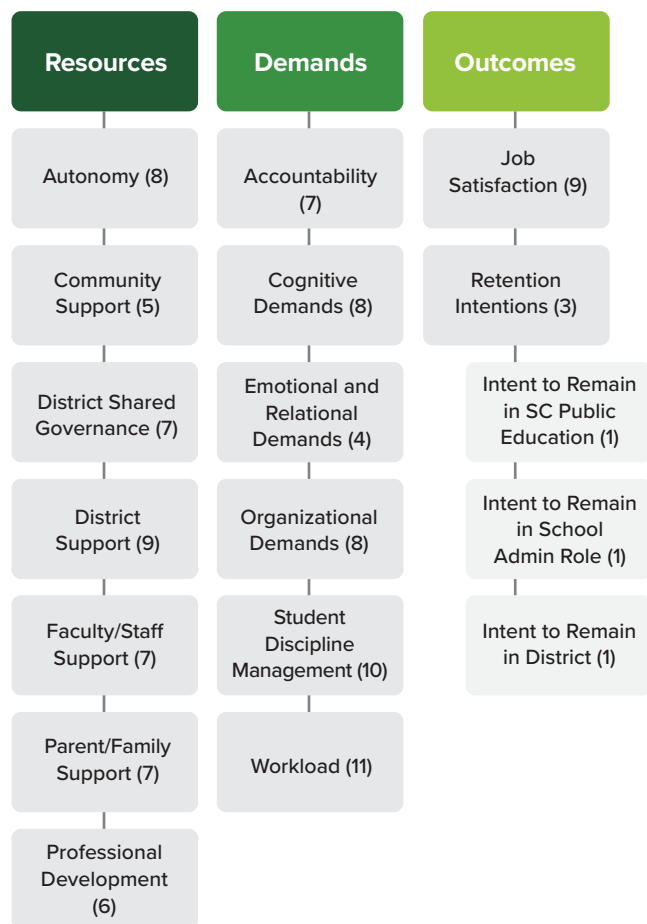


Figure 1 provides the specific working conditions and outcomes included in the SCAWCS. The numbers in parentheses denote the number of items for each construct. The items related to job resources were measured on a 7-point agreement scale (i.e., 0 = *Strongly disagree*, 1 = *Disagree*, 2 = *Somewhat disagree*, 3 = *Neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *Somewhat agree*, 5 = *Agree*, and 6 = *Strongly agree*). Items related to job demands were measured on a 7-point frequency scale (0 = *Never*, 1 = *At least a few times this year*, 2 = *At least once a month*, 3 = *Several times a month*, 4 = *Once a week*, 5 = *Several times a week*, and 6 = *Every day*). Outcome items for job satisfaction and the three retention intention items were measured on the same agreement scale as job resources.

Figure 1. *Constructs Included in the SCAWCS*



Note. Numbers in parentheses represent the number of items measuring the construct. During survey validation, four items for cognitive demands and one item for emotional and relational demands were dropped from the analysis.

More details on the survey validation can be found in the Technical Appendix.





SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Prior to data collection, all survey content and administration procedures were approved by the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board. Starting in October 2025, SC TEACHER invited superintendents and personnel administrators in all 72 traditional public school districts and six specialty schools to participate in the 2026 SCAWCS. Districts electing to participate shared the necessary information for SC TEACHER to conduct the survey for school administrators in their district.

Eligible administrators received an initial survey invitation between January 12 and February 19, 2026, depending on when district contact information was received. Administrators who did not respond to the initial invitation received reminder emails containing the survey link until they completed the survey or the survey closed on February 27, 2026.

More details about the survey administration can be found in the Technical Appendix.

SURVEY PARTICIPATION

Of the 72 traditional public school districts in South Carolina, 53 districts (73.6%) participated in the SCAWCS. Four of the six specialty schools in the state also participated. Within these districts and schools, 2,442 school administrators received an email to complete the survey, and 1,679 (68.8%) responded, working at 828 schools. Respondents with incomplete data were retained in the dataset to preserve overall accuracy. Individual district participation rates ranged from 15.1% to 100%.

DATA AND VARIABLES

The 13 identified working conditions (seven resources and six demands) served as the focal variables for addressing the report's key questions. Each working condition was measured using multiple items with responses averaged to produce a single score. This allowed for interpretation on the same 7-point agreement and frequency scales used throughout the survey. Higher scores indicate greater agreement with the presence of a resource or more frequent experience of a demand. Job satisfaction was also measured using a multi-item scale and averaged accordingly.



The survey included three indicators of administrators' retention intentions. Although all three items address anticipated continuation in the field, they refer to different organizational or professional anchors: the South Carolina public education system, the school administrator role, and the respondent's current district. Given these conceptual distinctions, the items were treated as separate outcomes rather than combined into a single composite measure.

For Key Question 2, school organizational levels were determined using data from the most recent South Carolina School Report Cards.

Additional details about items, scales, and scoring are available in the Technical Appendix.

ANALYSES

Descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients, and tests of mean differences were used to examine the key questions. Where data were nested, multilevel modeling with robust maximum likelihood estimation was employed, and Holm-Bonferroni corrections were applied to control the familywise error rate across omnibus tests. For each question, the relevant variables are summarized, and findings with meaningful implications are highlighted. A detailed technical description of the research methods, including statistical procedures, significance levels, and effect size coefficients, is provided in the Technical Appendix.

A woman with short brown hair, wearing glasses, a black blazer, a chunky gold chain necklace, and large hoop earrings, is leaning over a table. She is looking down at a stack of papers and holding a pen. In the foreground, the back of a person wearing a blue and white striped shirt is visible, slightly out of focus. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

Our Key Questions



+ KEY QUESTION 1:

How do school administrators across South Carolina perceive their working conditions, overall job satisfaction, and retention intentions?

To address Key Question 1, the analysis focused on average scores for the 13 working conditions included in the SCAWCS. Higher scores on resource measures reflect more positive perceptions of support, while lower scores on demand measures indicate less frequent stressors and therefore more positive perceptions.

School Administrator Working Conditions in the 2025–26 Academic Year

Figure 2 presents average scores for administrators’ perceptions of job resources. Overall, administrators reported generally positive perceptions across all resource domains. Faculty/staff support and autonomy received the highest ratings, followed by parent/family support and district support. Community support and professional development were rated slightly lower, though still favorably, while district shared governance received the lowest ratings among the resources.

Figure 2. Average Scores for Job Resources

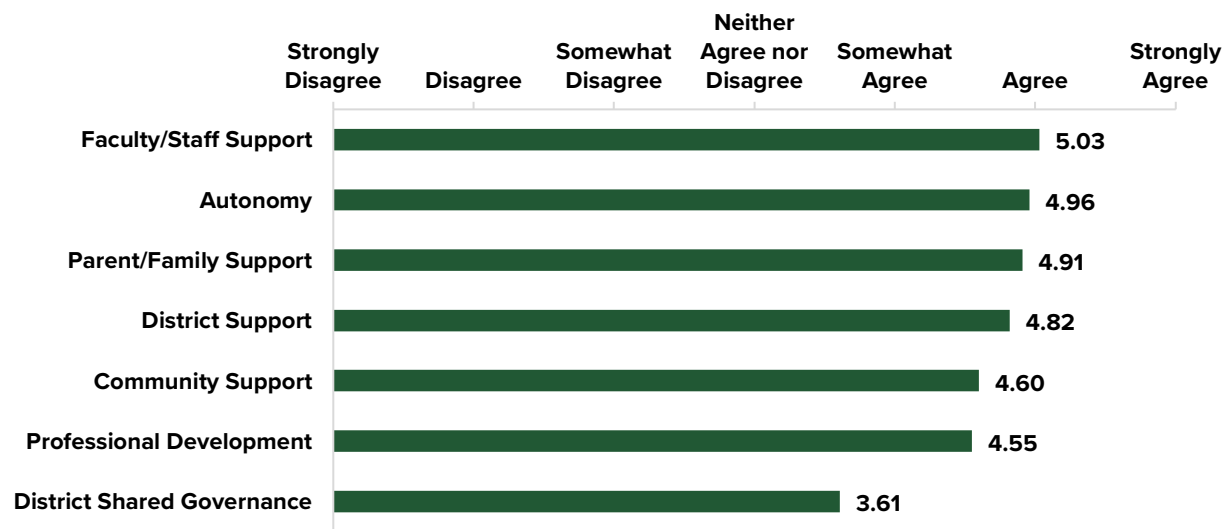
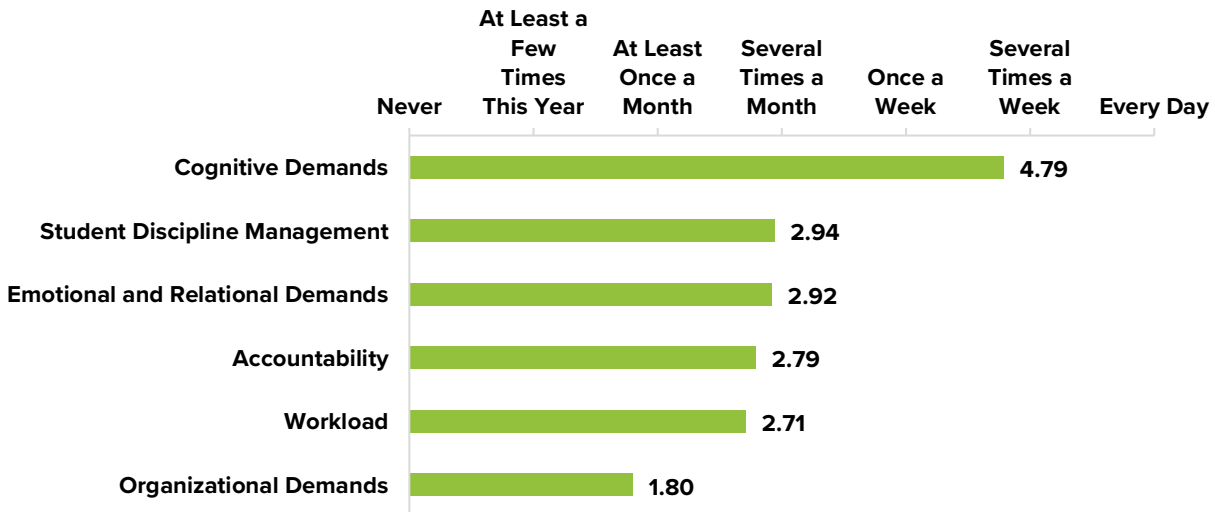


Figure 3 presents average scores for administrators’ perceptions of job demands. Cognitive demands were experienced most often, occurring several times per week on average. This result is aligned with prior research highlighting the complex decision-making and cognitive flexibility required of school administrators (Kaufman, 2019; Wang, 2025a). Other demand constructs experienced several times per month on average included emotional and relational demands, student discipline management, accountability, and workload. Organizational demands were reported as occurring the least frequently.

Figure 3. Average Scores for Job Demands



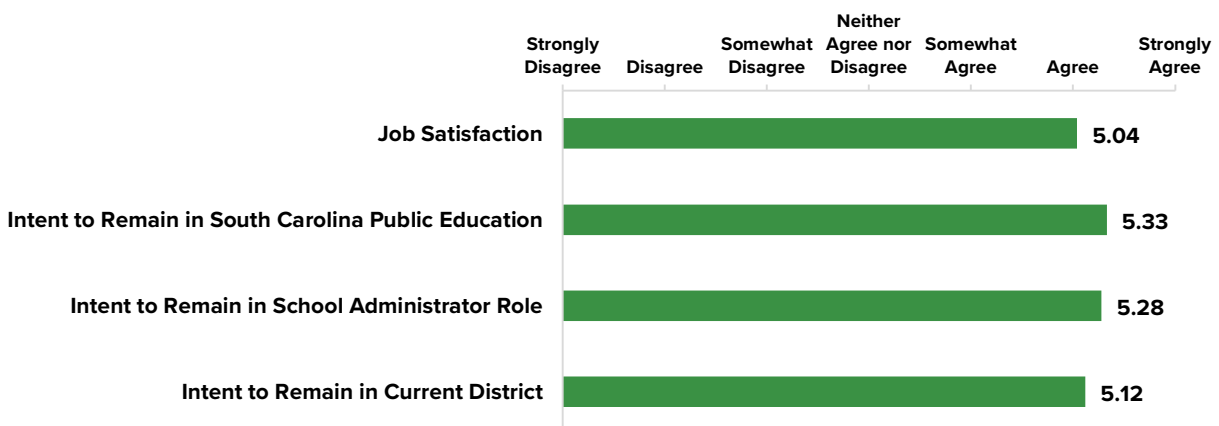
Job Satisfaction and Retention Intentions

In addition to working conditions, the SCAWCS assessed administrators' job satisfaction and retention intentions. Job satisfaction was measured using nine items and summarized as an overall average score, with responses recorded on the same 7-point agreement scale used for job resources. Higher scores indicate more positive job satisfaction.

Retention intentions were measured using three items capturing distinct aspects of administrators' future work plans: intentions to continue working in public education in South Carolina, to remain in the field of public school administration, and to remain in school leadership within their current district. Each item was analyzed separately and measured using the same 7-point agreement scale.

Figure 4 displays the average job satisfaction score and the mean scores for each individual retention item. Overall, administrators reported high levels of job satisfaction and strong intentions to remain in public education in the state and in school administration, with slightly lower—and still positive—intentions to remain in leadership roles within their current districts.

Figure 4. Average Scores for Job Satisfaction and Retention Intentions



In general, administrators across South Carolina reported positive working conditions, marked by strong perceptions of key job resources, moderate levels of job demands, and high job satisfaction and retention intentions. Autonomy and faculty/staff support emerged as particular strengths, while district shared governance was perceived less favorably. Cognitive demands were the most frequently experienced stressor, whereas organizational demands occurred less often than others, on average. Building on these statewide patterns, the next section examines how perceptions of working conditions varied across school organizational levels.

+ KEY QUESTION 2:

How do school administrators' perceptions of working conditions vary by school organizational level?

To address Key Question 2, differences in perceptions of the 13 working conditions were examined across elementary, middle, and high school administrators. School organizational levels were determined using the most recent South Carolina School Report Card designations, with classifications for schools opening in 2025–26 based on data published by the South Carolina Department of Education (2026).

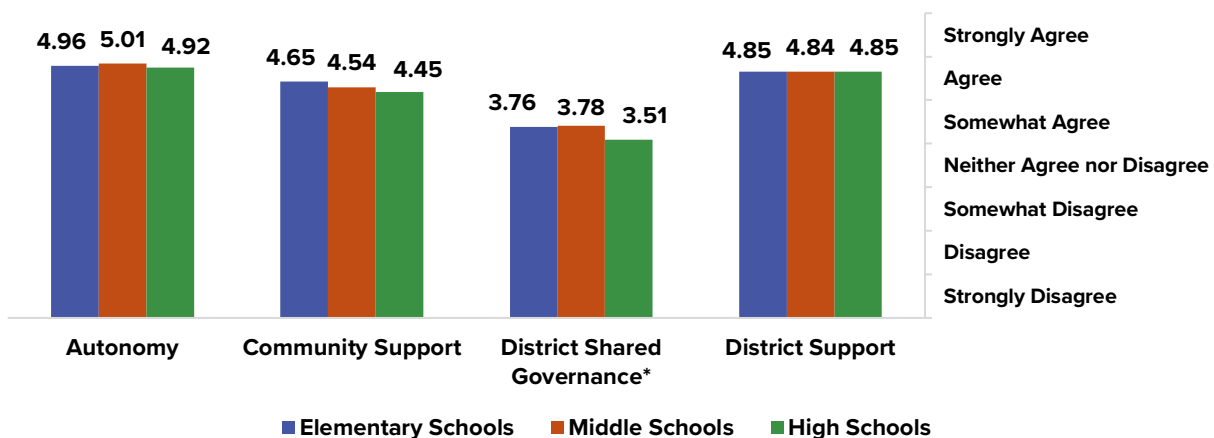
Of the 1,679 school administrators in the full sample, 1,635 had available information on school organizational level. Among these administrators, 44.3% worked in elementary schools, 22.6% in middle schools, and 23.5% in high schools. An additional 4.1% worked in combined-level schools (e.g., K–8), 2.9% in early education centers, and 2.5% in CTE centers. Early education centers and CTE programs were excluded from further analysis due to small sample sizes, and combined-level schools were excluded because of limited representation and variability in grade configurations (e.g., K–6, 7–12).

Estimated means for each job demand and job resource were calculated by school level, and statistical tests were conducted to identify differences across groups. Full statistical results, including test statistics, are reported in the Technical Appendix.

Administrator Working Conditions by School Organizational Level

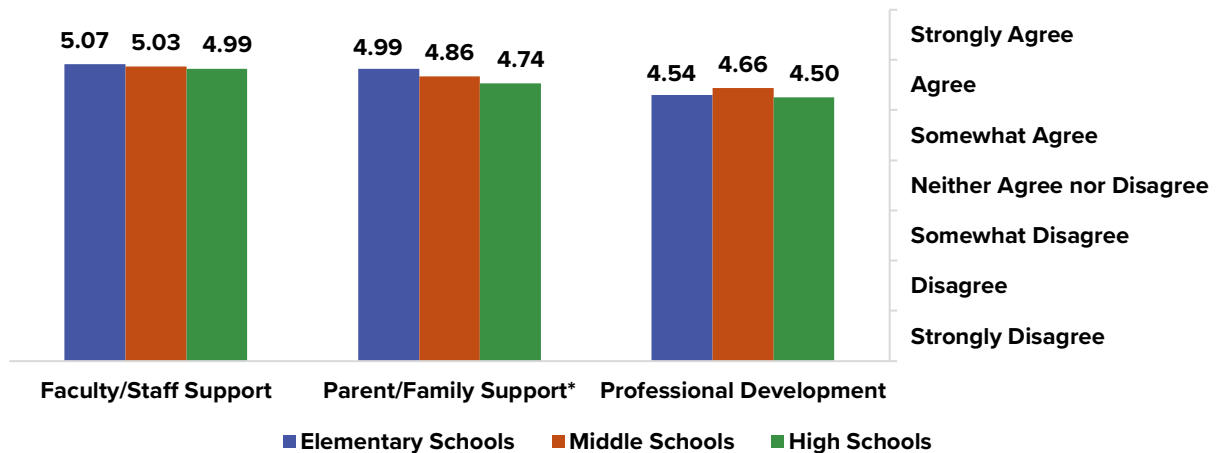
Estimated means for job resources by organizational level are presented in Figures 5 and 6. For most resources, these means were similar across elementary, middle, and high schools. Statistically significant differences emerged only for parent/family support and district shared governance. High school administrators reported lower levels of parent/family support than elementary school administrators. High school administrators also reported lower levels of district shared governance than both elementary and middle school administrators.

Figure 5. *Estimated Means for Autonomy, Community Support, District Shared Governance, and District Support Across School Organizational Levels*



Note. * indicates statistical significance after applying the Holm-Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons ($\alpha_f = .05$).

Figure 6. *Estimated Means for Faculty/Staff Support, Parent/Family Support, and Professional Development Across School Organizational Levels*



Note. * indicates statistical significance after applying the Holm-Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons ($\alpha_T = .05$).

Estimated mean scores for job demands by organizational level are presented in Figures 7 and 8. All job demands were similar across school levels. While elementary school administrators reported lower frequencies of organizational demands and student discipline management and higher frequencies of cognitive demands than middle and high school administrators, these differences were not statistically significant.

Figure 7. *Estimated Means for Accountability, Cognitive Demands, and Emotional and Relational Demands Across School Organizational Levels*

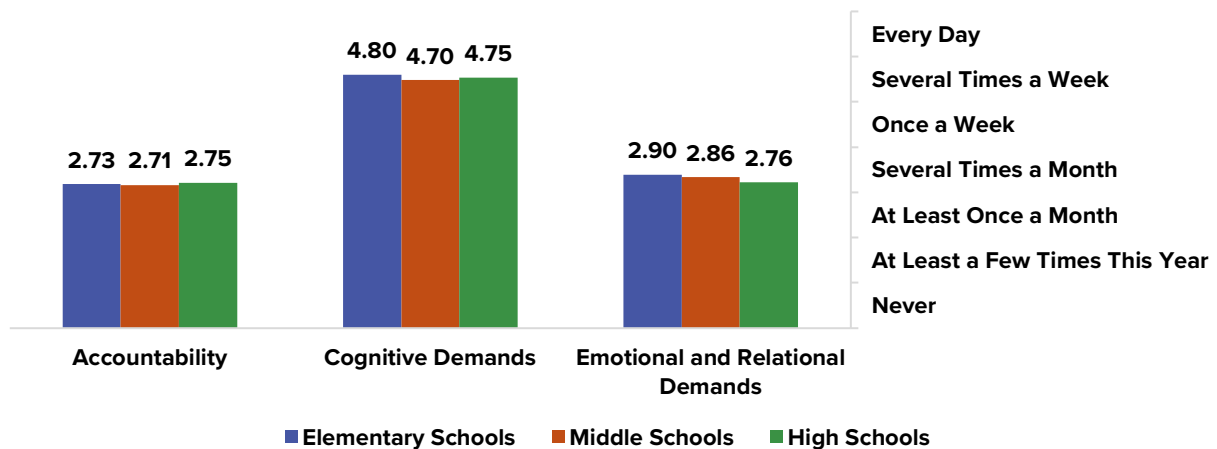
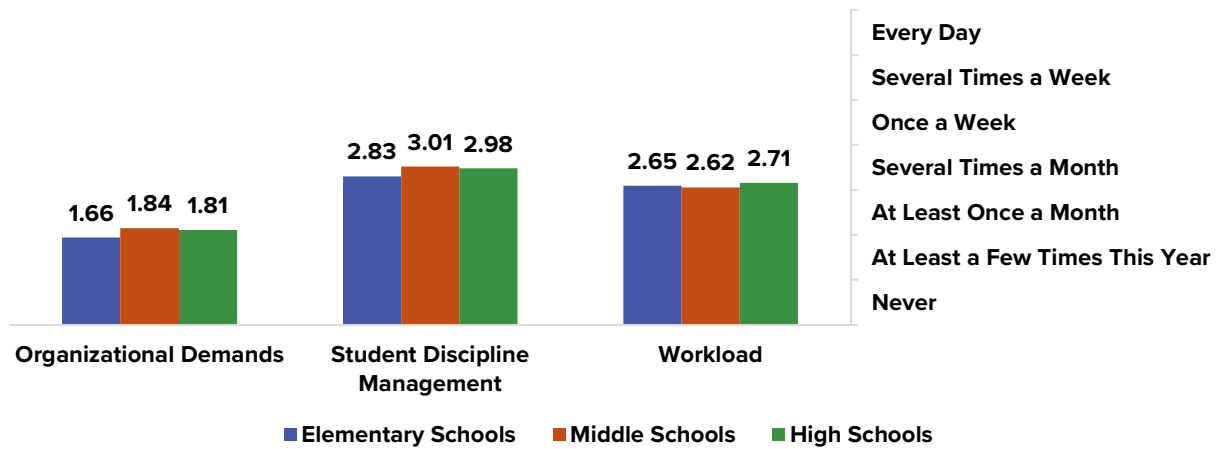


Figure 8. *Estimated Means for Organizational Demands, Student Discipline Management, and Workload Across School Organizational Levels*



Overall, findings suggest that administrators' working conditions were broadly similar across organizational levels. High school administrators reported less favorable perceptions than elementary school administrators on both parent/family support and district shared governance, and less favorable perceptions than middle school administrators on district shared governance. No other statistically significant differences emerged. Perceptions of job demands did not differ significantly across elementary, middle, and high school settings.

Regarding job resources, the differences in parent/family support and district shared governance may point to structural features of high school environments, such as reduced family engagement and larger, more complex organizational hierarchies, that shape administrators' day-to-day experiences. These findings may warrant attention to how high school administrators are engaged in district decision-making and how family involvement is structured and supported at the secondary level.

+ KEY QUESTION 3:

How do school administrators' perceptions of working conditions relate to their job satisfaction and retention intentions?

To address Key Question 3, the analysis examined associations between administrators' perceptions of working conditions and the measured outcomes. Job satisfaction was calculated as an average of the nine items within the construct, and correlations between working conditions and job satisfaction were estimated for the full sample. Correlations between working conditions and each individual retention intention item were calculated separately.

Correlations capture the direction and strength of the association between two variables, ranging from -1 to +1. Positive values indicate that higher perceptions of a working condition are associated with better outcomes, while negative values indicate the reverse. Values closer to zero reflect weaker associations, and values closer to -1 or +1 reflect stronger ones. Correlation does not indicate causation.

Relationships Between Administrators' Perceptions of Job Resources and Measured Outcomes

Correlations between administrators' perceptions of job resources and job satisfaction and retention intention outcomes are presented in Table 1. All resources were significantly associated with each outcome, with consistently stronger relationships with job satisfaction than with the retention intention measures. For job resources, associations with intention to remain in public school administration and intention to remain in South Carolina public education were similar in magnitude. However, autonomy, district shared governance, and district support showed notably stronger associations with intention to remain in school leadership within the current district than other job resources. These patterns suggest that district-dependent resources may be particularly salient for administrators' decisions to remain in their current districts.

Table 1. *Correlations Between Perceptions of Job Resources and Job Satisfaction and Retention Intentions*

Resource	Job satisfaction	Intent to remain in South Carolina public education	Intent to remain in school administrator role	Intent to remain in current district
Autonomy	.501***	.338***	.344***	.410***
Community support	.434***	.281***	.269***	.282***
District shared governance	.460***	.283***	.282***	.355***
District support	.596***	.395***	.415***	.498***
Faculty/staff support	.528***	.341***	.329***	.372***
Parent/family support	.480***	.342***	.328***	.323***
Professional development	.526***	.345***	.339***	.412***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Relationships Between Administrators' Perceptions of Job Demands and Measured Outcomes

Correlations between administrators' perceptions of job demands and job satisfaction and retention intention outcomes are presented in Table 2. All correlations were negative, indicating that more frequent demands were associated with lower job satisfaction and weaker retention intentions. Overall, these associations were smaller in magnitude than those observed for job resources, suggesting that job demands were less strongly related to outcomes than available supports. Among demands, workload showed the strongest relationships with all outcomes, followed by organizational demands, while accountability and cognitive demands exhibited the weakest associations.

Table 2. *Correlations Between Perceptions of Job Demands and Job Satisfaction and Retention Intentions*

Demand	Job satisfaction	Intent to remain in South Carolina public education	Intent to remain in school administrator role	Intent to remain in current district
Accountability	-.076**	-.058*	-.067**	-.081**
Cognitive demands	-.118***	-.068**	-.088***	-.080**
Emotional and relational demands	-.192***	-.126***	-.133***	-.138***
Organizational demands	-.282***	-.191***	-.198***	-.231***
Student discipline management	-.240***	-.151***	-.170***	-.175***
Workload	-.380***	-.260***	-.276***	-.263***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

In summary, administrators' perceptions of working conditions were associated with both job satisfaction and retention intentions, with job resources holding stronger relationships than job demands. Regarding resources, district support, autonomy, and district shared governance were particularly relevant for intentions to remain in a current district, while workload emerged as the demand with the strongest relationships with all outcomes.

Overall, for both job demands and resources, associations were stronger with job satisfaction than with retention intentions. While demands are often shaped by structural and policy forces outside any single district's control, resources can represent a more actionable target. These findings suggest that strengthening district-level supports and expanding administrators' sense of autonomy, professional development, and shared governance may be meaningful strategies for improving outcomes.

+ FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This report presents findings from the 2026 pilot administration of the SCAWCS, offering the first statewide snapshot of school administrators' working conditions within a JD-R framework. Overall, administrators across South Carolina reported relatively strong access to key job resources, moderate levels of job demands, and high job satisfaction and retention intentions.

Resources such as autonomy, faculty/staff support, parent/family support, and district support were perceived especially positively, while district shared governance emerged as a comparatively weaker area. This pattern suggests that, while administrators generally feel supported in their day-to-day work, opportunities may exist for districts to more meaningfully involve school leaders in decisions that affect their schools. Among job demands, cognitive demands were experienced most frequently, reflecting the complex and multifaceted nature of school leadership, whereas organizational demands were reported less often.

Administrators' perceptions of working conditions were meaningfully related to both job satisfaction and retention intentions. Job resources demonstrated stronger and more consistent associations with these outcomes than job demands. This suggests that cultivating supportive conditions may be a more tractable strategy for sustaining administrator well-being and commitment than reducing demands, which are often shaped by structural and policy forces outside any single district's control. District-level resources—especially autonomy, district support, and professional development—were most strongly associated with intentions to remain in a current district, underscoring that how districts engage with and support school leaders may have direct implications for leadership stability. Among demands, workload stood out as the most strongly associated with outcomes, suggesting it may be a priority area for attention even where demands are harder to eliminate entirely.

Taken together, these findings point to several practical opportunities: strengthening district-administrator relationships, expanding opportunities for shared governance, protecting administrators' professional autonomy, and monitoring workload as a retention risk. The pilot SCAWCS provides a foundation for both ongoing monitoring of leadership working conditions and continued refinement of the survey itself. Future administrations will enable trend analyses, deeper subgroup comparisons, and stronger connections among administrator working conditions, teacher working conditions, and educator outcomes, ultimately supporting district- and state-level strategies aimed at building sustainable leadership environments across South Carolina.

+ GLOSSARY

Accountability

The external and internal pressures to demonstrate measurable performance, meet established metrics, and respond to performance evaluation requirements from various stakeholders.

Assistant Principal

An educational leader who assists the principal in the overall administration of a school, taking on various roles, including operational management, student discipline, instructional leadership, and teacher/student support. In South Carolina, assistant principals are designated with a position code of 2.

Autonomy

In the SC Administrator Working Conditions Survey, the degree of professional freedom and self-governance afforded to school leaders in making critical decisions related to school operations, instructional leadership, resource allocation, and organizational adaptation.

In the SC Teacher Working Conditions Survey, a measure of teachers' perceptions regarding control over key instructional and classroom decisions, including content, pacing, behavior management, instructional strategies, and assessment tools.

Career and Technical Education Center Director

An educational leader who oversees the planning, development, and implementation of a career and technical education center. Those in this role ensure compliance with regulations and coordinate with other departments and agencies to prepare students for careers and post-secondary education. In South Carolina, career and technical education center directors are designated with a position code of 13. In this report, these directors have been analyzed alongside principals and referred to as principals because they share similar responsibilities and evaluation requirements with traditional principals.

Career and Technical Education Center Assistant Director

An educational leader who assists the director in the overall administration of a career and technical education center. In South Carolina, career and technical education center assistant directors are designated with a position code of 14. In this report, these assistant directors have been analyzed alongside assistant principals and referred to as assistant principals because they share similar responsibilities with traditional assistant principals.

Cognitive Demands

The mental complexity and cognitive load associated with school leadership, characterized by frequent task-switching, decision-making under uncertainty, and managing competing priorities across multiple domains.

Community Support

The engagement, recognition, and active involvement of the broader social ecosystem in supporting school objectives, celebrating achievements, and contributing resources.

Demands (Job Demands)

The physical, social, psychological, and organizational aspects of a job that require sustained effort and are associated with psychological or physiological costs.

District Shared Governance

The extent to which school leaders are meaningfully integrated into broader organizational decision-making processes, providing input, recommendations, and strategic contributions beyond their immediate school context.

District Support

The perceived organizational backing, recognition, and interpersonal support provided by district leadership that validates the school leader's professional competence, achievements, and contributions.

Emotional and Relational Demands

The psychological and interpersonal challenges arising from managing complex human interactions and emotional experiences within the school environment.

Faculty/Staff Support

The collective organizational capacity and interpersonal dynamics within the school that enable effective leadership through trust, collaboration, shared vision, and operational commitment.

Job Satisfaction

In the SC Administrator Working Conditions Survey, the extent to which a school administrator experiences positive emotions, personal satisfaction, intellectual engagement, and a sense of purpose and value in their leadership role.

In the SC Teacher Working Conditions Survey, a measure regarding teachers' feelings of personal and professional fulfillment in their work, as reflected in their enjoyment of teaching, sense of purpose, emotional well-being, self-perceived success, and satisfaction with their career choice.

Organizational Demands

In the SC Administrator Working Conditions Survey, the systemic challenges and operational obstacles that impede effective school management, characterized by resource limitations, staffing difficulties, external mandates, and infrastructure constraints.

In the SC Teacher Working Conditions Survey, a measure of broader school or district-level conditions that may interfere with teaching, such as limited instructional resources, policy mandates, accountability pressures, inadequate facilities, or school-wide interruptions.

Parent/Family Support

The collaborative relationship between school leadership and families characterized by mutual trust, open communication, and shared commitment to student success.

Position Code

A numerical designation assigned by the state or district to categorize an educator's role within the school system (e.g., classroom teacher, instructional coach, administrator). For this report, administrators are those with position codes 1 (principal), 2 (assistant principal), 13 (career and technical education center director), 14 (career and technical education center assistant director), or 88 (administrative assistant or coprincipal).

Principal

An educational leader and administrative head of a school, responsible for overseeing daily operations, managing staff, implementing policies, and ensuring a productive and safe learning environment for students, teachers, and staff. In South Carolina, principals are designated with a position code of 1.

Professional Development

In the SC Administrator Working Conditions Survey, the perceived availability of and access to structured learning opportunities that support school leaders' professional growth, build capacity to address school-specific challenges, and promote continuous improvement in leadership practice.

In the SC Teacher Working Conditions Survey, a measure of teachers' perceptions regarding the availability and relevance of professional learning opportunities that support instructional improvement, content knowledge, differentiation, and technology integration.

Resources (Job Resources)

The physical, social, psychological, and organizational aspects of a job that support employees in reaching their work goals, promoting their growth, and, in some cases, reducing their job demands.

Retention Intentions

The degree to which a school administrator intends to remain in their current role and in the broader profession. In the SC Administrator Working Conditions Survey, retention intentions are captured across three dimensions: intent to remain in South Carolina public education, intent to remain in a school administrator role, and intent to remain as a school leader in their current district. Together, these items reflect administrators' commitment at the state, professional, and local levels.

Student Discipline Management

The complex administrative and interpersonal challenges associated with managing student behavior, navigating disciplinary processes, and balancing institutional expectations with individual student needs.

Workload

In the SC Administrator Working Conditions Survey, the perceived time scarcity and volume of tasks that prevent school leaders from effectively managing their core leadership responsibilities, instructional support, and personal well-being.

In the SC Teacher Working Conditions Survey, a measure of teacher experiences regarding time-related pressures that interfere with instructional responsibilities and professional duties, including covering for absent staff, managing large classes, and fulfilling non-instructional obligations during or after the school day.

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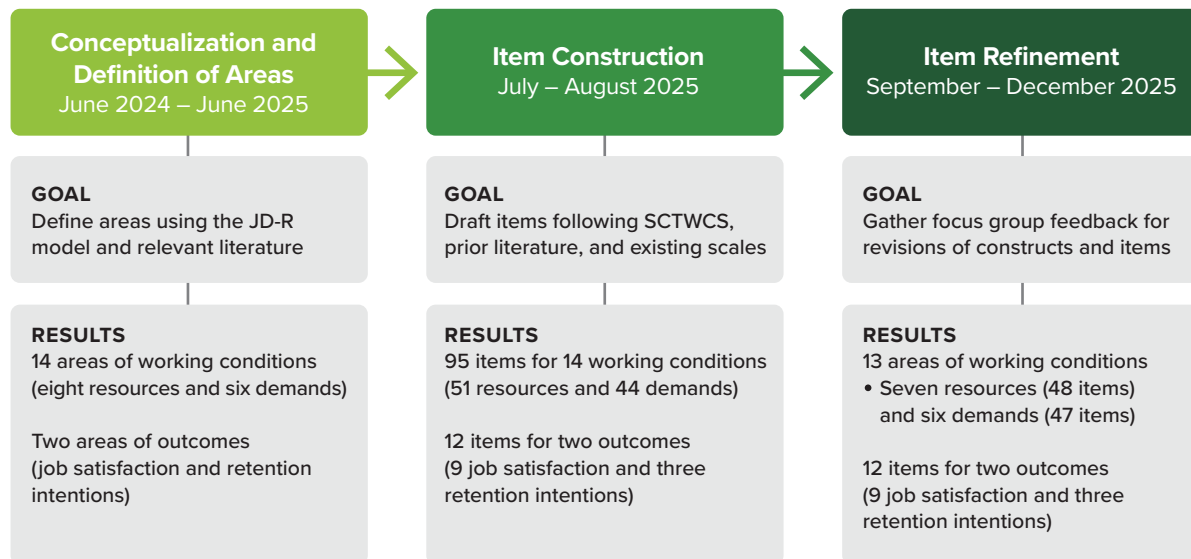
+ TECHNICAL APPENDIX

This appendix provides technical details about the SC Administrator Working Conditions Survey (SCAWCS) development, administration, and validation. It presents information about the research study, data analysis procedures, and results, including all relevant statistical methods, hypothesis tests, and tests of assumptions.

Survey Development

The SCAWCS was developed as a new instrument specifically for use with South Carolina public school administrators. Figure A1 outlines the process used to construct the survey, which was designed to measure administrators' working conditions, job satisfaction, and retention intentions. Because administrators' work environments are shaped by multiple, interrelated factors, accurately capturing these conditions presents significant measurement challenges. To ensure the collection of valid and useful data, SC TEACHER conducted an extensive review of existing surveys and scales, prior research, and alternative construct definitions. The SCAWCS was designed in accordance with best practices in survey design and is grounded in the job demands-resources (JD-R) model, which conceptualizes how workplace demands and resources influence employee well-being and effectiveness.

Figure A1. *Stages of Development for the SCAWCS*



Based on this review, the research team initially developed an instrument measuring eight job resources and six job demands, along with items related to job satisfaction and retention intentions. School administrators from across the state were then recruited to participate in focus groups to review the proposed constructs and items. Eleven focus groups were conducted in early September 2025, and feedback from these sessions informed subsequent refinement of the survey.

The resulting SCAWCS includes 13 areas of working conditions (seven resources and six demands), and a job satisfaction outcome aligned with the JD-R framework. Three distinct items related to retention intentions were included to measure intentions to remain in public education in South Carolina, intentions to remain in the school administrator workforce, and intentions to remain in school leadership in the current district. The survey was designed for the approximately 3,700 South Carolina school administrators serving in position codes 1 (principal), 2 (assistant principal), 13 (career and technical education [CTE] center director), 14 (CTE center assistant director), and 88 (administrative assistant or coprincipal).

Survey Participation

Prior to data collection, the Institutional Review Board at the University of South Carolina approved all survey content and administration procedures. In late September and early October 2025, the SC TEACHER team sent overview mailers about the SCAWCS to every traditional district and specialty school superintendent and personnel administrator in South Carolina. This communication was followed by emails in mid-October 2025. These mailers and emails detailed the purpose and benefits of the survey and sought district participation. To take part, districts shared school administrators' district email address, SC Educator identification number or teaching certificate number, school name, and 7-digit school identification number. Reminder emails were sent to personnel administrators requesting participation and information for eligible administrators in November and early December.

Prior to the survey window opening, a total of 53 of the 72 traditional school districts in South Carolina elected to participate (73.6% participation rate) by submitting school administrators' information. Four of the six specialty schools in the state also elected to participate.

Survey Administration

The SCAWCS administration opened on January 12, 2026. All eligible school administrators within a participating district were sent an email explaining the purpose of the survey, assuring recipients that their responses would be kept confidential within the SC TEACHER research team, and providing a unique link to the survey on the Qualtrics platform.

Administrators who clicked the survey link in the email were taken to a Qualtrics landing page for SCAWCS that reiterated their participation was voluntary and confidential. It also stated that clicking "Next" to begin the survey indicated their consent to participate. Three districts sent their initial or corrected administrator data after January 12th. School administrators in those districts received an email to participate within 1–2 business days of SC TEACHER receiving the personnel data.

In total, 2,442 administrators across more than 900 South Carolina public schools were sent an email to complete the SCAWCS. Until the survey closed, administrators who had not completed the survey were sent a reminder email two to three times a week to encourage participation. During this period, the SC TEACHER team also contacted district personnel, encouraging them to communicate with school administrators to promote participation in the SCAWCS. Sending batch emails to roughly 2,500 administrators can result in server inefficiency, and some administrators may not have received the original email or reminders. The survey was open for participation for 7 weeks and officially closed on February 27, 2026.

Participants

In total, 1,679 school administrators across 828 schools participated in the survey. School organizational levels were categorized into six types based on the most recent South Carolina School Report Cards: elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, combined-level schools (e.g., K–8), early childhood centers, and CTE centers. Of the 1,679 school administrators included in the analysis, 1,635 had available data on their school organizational level. Table A1 details this information.

Table A1. School Administrators by School Organizational Level (N = 1,635)

Organizational level	Number	Percentage
Elementary school	725	44.3%
Middle school	370	22.6%
High school	385	23.5%
Combined-level school	67	4.1%
Early childhood center	47	2.9%
CTE center	41	2.5%

Survey Measures

The 2026 pilot SCAWCS initially consisted of 109 closed-ended items and three open-ended items. These items covered two general areas of working conditions (i.e., job resources and demands), job satisfaction, and three distinct aspects of retention intentions. Open-ended items asked about other sources of support received in the current year, other challenges experienced in the current year, and any additional comments about working conditions that affected their role as a school administrator.

Resources

The seven job resources included in the pilot survey were measured with 49 closed-ended items on a 7-point agreement scale (i.e., 0 = *Strongly disagree*, 1 = *Disagree*, 2 = *Somewhat disagree*, 3 = *Neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *Somewhat agree*, 5 = *Agree*, and 6 = *Strongly agree*). A higher score on this scale indicates a more positive perception of the resources available to school administrators at work. The measured resources included autonomy ($\omega = .926$), community support ($\omega = .948$), district shared governance ($\omega = .955$), district support ($\omega = .959$), faculty/staff support ($\omega = .948$), parent/family support ($\omega = .927$), and professional development ($\omega = .960$). All resource factors demonstrated excellent reliability as indicated by McDonald's omega (ω s = .926–.960, all $\geq .90$). Items were averaged for each resource. Individual resource items are detailed in Table A3.

Demands

The six job demands included in the pilot survey initially consisted of 48 closed-ended items on a 7-point frequency scale (0 = *Never*, 1 = *At least a few times this year*, 2 = *At least once a month*, 3 = *Several times a month*, 4 = *Once a week*, 5 = *Several times a week*, and 6 = *Every day*). A higher score on this scale generally indicates a more negative perception of the demands placed on school administrators in the workplace. The six specific demands were accountability ($\omega = .889$), cognitive demands ($\omega = .894$), emotional and relational demands ($\omega = .758$), organizational demands ($\omega = .875$), student discipline management ($\omega = .897$), and workload ($\omega = .909$). McDonald's omega coefficients indicated good ($\omega \geq .80$) to excellent ($\omega \geq .90$) reliability for five of the six demand factors, with emotional and relational demands falling in the acceptable range ($\omega \geq .70$). Items were averaged for each demand. Individual demand items are detailed in Table A3.

Job Satisfaction

School administrators' job satisfaction was measured using nine items on a 7-point agreement scale (0 = *Strongly disagree*, 1 = *Disagree*, 2 = *Somewhat disagree*, 3 = *Neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *Somewhat agree*, 5 = *Agree*, and 6 = *Strongly agree*). A higher score indicates greater job satisfaction among administrators. The McDonald's omega coefficient for the scale was high ($\omega = .941$), indicating strong reliability. Items were averaged to obtain an overall measure of job satisfaction. Individual items for job satisfaction are detailed in Table A3.

Retention Intentions

School administrators' retention intentions were measured using three items on a 7-point agreement scale (0 = *Strongly disagree*, 1 = *Disagree*, 2 = *Somewhat disagree*, 3 = *Neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *Somewhat agree*, 5 = *Agree*, and 6 = *Strongly agree*). These items were designed to capture related but distinct dimensions of intended continuity in school leadership. Rather than representing a single unidimensional construct, the items reflected administrators' intentions to remain (a) in public education in South Carolina, (b) in public school administration, and (c) in school leadership within their current district. Because these items differ conceptually by reflecting administrators' commitment at the state, professional, and local levels, each item was analyzed separately. Higher scores indicate stronger intentions to remain in the specific role or context referenced by each item. The individual items for retention intentions are detailed in Table A3.

Survey Validation

Survey Factor Structure

As a preliminary step for addressing all research questions, confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were conducted to evaluate whether the hypothesized factor structures of the scales used in this report were supported by the data. Analyses were conducted in Mplus (Version 8.10) using robust maximum likelihood estimation (MLR) to account for nonnormality, with the TYPE=COMPLEX option used to obtain robust standard errors accounting for the nesting of administrators within districts.

Model fit was assessed using the chi-square statistic, the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR). Reasonable model fit was defined as CFI and TLI $\geq .90$, RMSEA $\leq .08$, and SRMR $\leq .10$, and close model fit as CFI and TLI $\geq .95$, RMSEA $\leq .05$, and SRMR $\leq .08$ (Kline, 2023). Local fit was evaluated through standardized factor loadings (values $\geq .40$ considered acceptable) and the standardized residual covariance matrix (values > 13.01 indicating potential misfit; Kline, 2023). Modification indices were reviewed to identify sources of local misspecification when overall fit was inadequate.

Working Conditions

The theoretically hypothesized structure for the working conditions items was a 13-factor correlated model, with items loading onto distinct factors representing autonomy, professional development, district shared governance, district support, faculty/staff support, parent/family support, community support, accountability, cognitive demands, workload, student discipline management, organizational demands, and emotional and relational demands. An initial 13-factor CFA estimated with all items produced fit below acceptable thresholds ($\chi^2(4481) = 16761.57$, CFI = .884, TLI = .879, RMSEA = .040 [.040, .041], SRMR = .050), and examination of local fit indicated several areas of misspecification.

To address local fit, individual CFAs were first estimated for each of the 13 factors separately. These analyses revealed adequate fit for all factors with two exceptions. For emotional and relational demands, one item showed a standardized loading below .40 and was removed. For cognitive demands, four items showed relatively lower loadings (range: .46–.59) and contributed to standardized residuals exceeding 13.01 in the full model. Substantively, these items—pertaining to making high-stakes decisions with incomplete information, keeping up with district or state requirements, adjusting plans due to changes in external expectations, and balancing central office demands with school priorities—appeared to reflect district-level pressure more than cognitive demands per se and were removed from the scale.

The 13-factor model was reestimated with these five items excluded. Although global fit improved, CFI and TLI remained below .90. Sequential examination of modification indices and standardized residuals identified three pairs of items warranting correlated residuals, each supported by conceptual overlap. Two accountability items—addressing pressure to demonstrate measurable school improvement and addressing directives about performance expectations—shared overlap in externally imposed performance accountability. Two workload items—time constraints from special education compliance and time constraints from addressing a variety of student needs—both captured compliance-related time demands associated with students with disabilities. Two student discipline management items—addressing inappropriate student behavior and investigating behavior incidents—both described responses to behavioral incidents. Each correlated residual was added sequentially and evaluated for conceptual justification prior to implementation.

After these adjustments, the revised 13-factor model demonstrated improved fit meeting acceptable thresholds across all indices ($\chi^2(4013) = 12506.15$, CFI = .915, TLI = .911, RMSEA = .036 [.035, .036], SRMR = .046). All standardized factor loadings exceeded .40, ranging from .457 to .950 across the working conditions scales.

To evaluate whether the 13-factor structure provided better fit than more parsimonious alternatives, three additional models were compared: a unidimensional model in which all items loaded onto a single factor, a two-factor model distinguishing job resources from job demands, and a second-order model in which two higher-order factors (resources and demands) accounted for the covariance among the 13 first-order factors. Because the unidimensional, two-factor, and second-order models produced nonpositive definite derivative matrix warnings under TYPE=COMPLEX, attributable to the cluster-to-parameter ratio, these models were reestimated without the cluster correction solely for the purpose of obtaining global fit indices for model comparison. The final 13-factor model was estimated with TYPE=COMPLEX for all substantive analyses. The unidimensional model showed poor fit ($\chi^2(4091) = 64081.15$, CFI = .399, TLI = .385, RMSEA = .093, SRMR = .146). The two-factor model improved on the unidimensional solution but still fell short of an acceptable fit ($\chi^2(4090) = 49659.87$, CFI = .543, TLI = .533, RMSEA = .081, SRMR = .088). The second-order model, while showing better fit, did not meet acceptable thresholds for all indices ($\chi^2(3987) = 13333.53$, CFI = .903, TLI = .901, RMSEA = .037, SRMR = .063). The revised 13-factor correlated model provided the best fit among all models tested and was retained for subsequent analyses. Model fit statistics are presented in Table A2, and standardized factor loadings for the final model are presented in Table A3.

Job Satisfaction

A one-factor model was estimated for job satisfaction. This model demonstrated reasonable fit ($\chi^2(27) = 247.34$, CFI = .953, TLI = .937, RMSEA = .074, SRMR = .032), with standardized loadings ranging from .63 to .90.

Table A2. CFA Model Fit Statistics

Scale	Model	χ^2 (df)	CFI	TLI	RMSEA [90% CI]	SRMR
Administrator working conditions	Model A: initial 13-factor	16761.57(4481)	.884	.879	.040 [.040–.041]	.050
	Model B: final 13-factor	12506.15(4013)	.915	.911	.036 [.035–.036]	.046
	Model C: one-factor	64081.15(4091)	.399	.385	.093 [.093–.094]	.146
	Model D: two-factor	49659.87(4090)	.543	.533	.081 [.081–.082]	.088
	Model E: two-factor higher order	13333.53(3987)	.903	.901	.037 [.037–.038]	.063
Job satisfaction	One-factor	247.34(27)	.953	.937	.074 [.065–.082]	.032

Note. χ^2 = chi-square test statistic; *df* = degrees of freedom; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; CI = confidence interval. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$.

Table A3. CFA Results: Standardized Estimates

	Factors and items	Factor loadings	SE
Administrator working conditions	Autonomy: In your work this school year, you have been able to...		
	Q1. Make decisions about school operations.	.836	.022
	Q2. Design and/or implement changes that reflect the needs of the school.	.881	.011
	Q3. Act based on your professional judgment.	.819	.015
	Q4. Set instructional priorities for the school.	.814	.015
	Q5. Determine how the school's budget is used.	.616	.024
	Q6. Make staffing decisions that support school goals.	.716	.016
	Q7. Establish school-level policies and/or procedures.	.797	.017
	Q8. Adapt district initiatives to fit the school's context.	.745	.018
	Community support: This school year, members of the community have...		
	Q1. Celebrated school successes (e.g., through banners, announcements, awards).	.797	.020
	Q2. Provided support for the school and its initiatives.	.895	.008
	Q3. Been reliable for help addressing challenges the school faces.	.939	.006
	Q4. Been actively engaged in supporting the goals and priorities of the school.	.950	.005
	Q5. Regularly volunteered their time and/or resources to assist the school.	.840	.012
	District shared governance: This school year, district administrators have included your input on...		
	Q1. District-level budget priorities and expenditures.	.839	.016
	Q2. Allocation of school resources (e.g., staffing, materials, supports).	.816	.015
	Q3. District-level strategic planning.	.881	.013
	Q4. District-level decision-making processes.	.930	.007
	Q5. Curriculum development and/or instructional strategies at the district level.	.886	.008
	Q6. Decisions that impact school operations.	.818	.013
	Q7. Districtwide initiatives.	.903	.007
	District support: This school year, district administrators in your district have...		
	Q1. Shown confidence in your ability as an administrator.	.862	.009
	Q2. Demonstrated that they value the work you do.	.912	.006
	Q3. Recognized your accomplishments.	.897	.005
	Q4. Provided ongoing, constructive feedback.	.876	.009
	Q5. Shown fairness in your evaluation.	.808	.012
	Q6. Had positive interactions with you.	.818	.012
	Q7. Demonstrated that they are interested in your ideas.	.898	.006
	Q8. Distributed resources fairly.	.756	.015
	Q9. Been accessible when you needed support.	.821	.012
	Faculty/staff support: At your school this school year...		
	Q1. School faculty and staff have supported your efforts to lead effectively.	.843	.013
	Q2. You have been able to trust faculty and staff to follow through on school goals.	.872	.013
	Q3. Faculty and staff have been open to change.	.833	.010
	Q4. You have been able to work with faculty and staff as a team.	.854	.015
	Q5. Faculty and staff have completed tasks delegated to them.	.869	.014

	Factors and items	Factor loadings	SE
	Q6. Faculty and staff have supported the vision for the school.	.906	.010
	Q7. Faculty and staff have provided you with actionable feedback.	.775	.015
	Parent/family support: This school year, the parents of students have...		
	Q1. Supported the decisions you make as a school leader.	.820	.017
	Q2. Partnered with you to address student behavior or academic concerns.	.805	.016
	Q3. Trusted you to act in the best interest of their children.	.805	.019
	Q4. Supported school activities (e.g., open houses, parent-teacher conferences, extracurriculars) through attendance.	.721	.015
	Q5. Supported school initiatives through parent leadership and/or volunteer roles.	.731	.012
	Q6. Been open to communication with school staff and faculty.	.855	.015
	Q7. Been able to find common ground with you when challenges arise.	.870	.011
	Professional development: This school year, you have had...		
	Q1. Access to high-quality professional development relevant to school leadership.	.883	.009
	Q2. Sufficient time to participate meaningfully in professional development.	.870	.010
	Q3. Input into the topics or focus areas of your professional development.	.836	.011
	Q4. Access to professional development that supports your growth as a school or district leader.	.932	.009
	Q5. Access to professional development that supports your efforts to improve teaching and learning in the school.	.921	.009
	Q6. Access to professional development that helps you address challenges specific to the school's context.	.915	.007
	Accountability: In your job as an administrator this school year, how often have you experienced...		
	Q1. Facing pressure to demonstrate measurable school improvement.	.680	.012
	Q2. Addressing directives from district leadership about performance expectations.	.766	.012
	Q3. Tracking and reporting multiple school performance metrics.	.762	.018
	Q4. Responding to external accountability requirements from state or federal agencies.	.790	.015
	Q5. Managing complex performance evaluation processes for faculty and staff.	.733	.016
	Q6. Addressing accountability concerns raised by school board members and/or community stakeholders.	.749	.015
	Q7. Analyzing and interpreting data from student assessments and performance reports.	.626	.019
	Cognitive demands: In your job as an administrator this school year, how often have you experienced...		
	Q1. Switching between unrelated tasks that require different types of thinking.	.887	.011
	Q2. Managing competing priorities that require frequent shifting of attention and focus.	.910	.010
	Q3. Solving complex problems that do not have clear solutions.	.740	.017
	Q4. Juggling instructional, managerial, and/or interpersonal responsibilities throughout the day.	.747	.021
	Emotional and relational demands: In your job as an administrator this school year, how often have you experienced...		
	Q1. Managing the emotional needs of staff, students, and/or families.	.644	.018
	Q2. Mediating interpersonal conflict among faculty and/or staff.	.720	.018
	Q3. Responding to crises such as student trauma and/or family emergencies.	.776	.014

	Factors and items	Factor loadings	SE
	Organizational demands: In your job as an administrator this school year, how often have you experienced...		
	Q1. Managing operational challenges caused by inadequate staffing.	.669	.016
	Q2. Facing difficulty hiring or retaining qualified staff.	.670	.021
	Q3. Navigating shortages of key resources (e.g., materials, technology).	.729	.020
	Q4. Managing mandates from the district or state.	.681	.022
	Q5. Managing challenges caused by student transportation issues.	.584	.025
	Q6. Managing operational challenges caused by facilities (e.g., maintenance, repair).	.687	.021
	Q7. Managing challenges related to maintaining a safe school environment.	.709	.019
	Q8. Managing challenges related to the school budget or funding limitations.	.730	.016
	Student discipline management: In your job as an administrator this school year, how often have you experienced...		
	Q1. Managing teacher concerns about how student discipline is handled.	.755	.013
	Q2. Handling conflicts with parents regarding student disciplinary actions.	.843	.018
	Q3. Resolving disputes about student discipline decisions.	.831	.017
	Q4. Balancing district expectations and what is needed to address student behavior issues effectively.	.750	.016
	Q5. Explaining or defending student discipline policies to students, staff, and/or families.	.829	.013
	Q6. Managing student tardiness or absenteeism.	.457	.023
	Q7. Needing to address unsafe or threatening student behavior.	.629	.020
	Q8. Needing to address inappropriate student behavior.	.561	.022
	Q9. Investigating student behavior incidents on buses and/or on campus.	.542	.023
	Q10. Managing student misuse or abuse of technology.	.556	.024
	Workload: In your job as an administrator this school year, how often have you experienced...		
	Q1. A lack of time to observe and support instruction.	.774	.012
	Q2. Time constraints from required district meetings or off-campus work.	.669	.016
	Q3. Time constraints from paperwork and/or reporting tasks.	.800	.010
	Q4. A lack of time for strategic school improvement planning.	.791	.010
	Q5. Time constraints from needing to cover for absent teachers and/or staff.	.544	.023
	Q6. A lack of time to complete leadership responsibilities during the school day.	.784	.012
	Q7. Time constraints from attending school events held outside of the instructional day.	.601	.020
	Q8. Time constraints from addressing special education compliance.	.671	.017
	Q9. Time constraints from addressing a variety of student needs (e.g., needs of English language learners, students with disabilities, transient students).	.708	.011
	Q10. Time constraints from managing school-issued technology.	.587	.019
	Q11. Time constraints from supervising or monitoring students (e.g., hallways, lunch)	.624	.014

	Factors and items	Factor loadings	SE
Job satisfaction	Q1. You find joy in the work you do as a school leader.	.872	.011
	Q2. You feel proud of the work you do as a school leader.	.753	.021
	Q3. You feel energized by the work you do as a school leader.	.851	.012
	Q4. You feel fulfilled by your current role as a school administrator.	.904	.009
	Q5. The challenges you face in your role are intellectually stimulating and rewarding.	.798	.016
	Q6. You feel valued by your school district and educational community.	.684	.021
	Q7. You feel you make a meaningful difference through your leadership.	.750	.021
	Q8. You are satisfied with the balance between your professional responsibilities and personal life.	.630	.018
	Q9. Overall, you are happy with your job as a school administrator.	.903	.010

Note. All standardized factor loadings estimated are statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level; SE = standard error.

The values of the latent factor correlations among resources and demands are shown in Table A4. Latent factor correlations were largely consistent with theoretical expectations. Resource factors correlated positively with one another and negatively with demand factors. The exceptions involved accountability, which did not significantly correlate with district shared governance ($r = -.050$, $p = .176$) or community support ($r = -.045$, $p = .137$), suggesting that perceived accountability pressures may operate somewhat independently of these constructs.

Table A4. Latent Correlations Among Administrator Working Conditions

Subscale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Autonomy (1)												
Community support (2)	.396***											
District shared governance (3)	.593***	.477***										
District support (4)	.696***	.445***	.709***									
Faculty/staff support (5)	.573***	.528***	.415***	.499***								
Parent/family support (6)	.451***	.708***	.408***	.446***	.651***							
Professional development (7)	.608***	.431***	.630***	.684***	.459***	.427***						
Accountability (8)	-.073*	-.045	-.050	-.163***	-.092**	-.062*	-.097*					
Cognitive demands (9)	-.074*	-.094**	-.147***	-.133***	-.074**	-.079**	-.130***	.390***				
Emotional and relational demands (10)	-.174***	-.186***	-.155***	-.177***	-.211***	-.205***	-.162***	.495***	.440***			
Organizational demands (11)	-.223***	-.266***	-.212***	-.290***	-.246***	-.305***	-.234***	.569***	.337***	.679***		
Student discipline management (12)	-.253***	-.235***	-.246***	-.256***	-.291***	-.301***	-.221***	.482***	.347***	.716***	.632***	
Workload (13)	-.250***	-.258***	-.313***	-.324***	-.292***	-.290***	-.301***	.517***	.541***	.642***	.708***	.615***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Key Question Analysis and Results

KEY QUESTION 1: *How do school administrators across South Carolina perceive their working conditions, overall job satisfaction, and retention intentions?*

To address Key Question 1, descriptive comparisons of scale averages across the full sample were conducted to examine how administrators varied in their perceptions of different aspects of their working conditions and job satisfaction. The averages for the individual retention intention items were also calculated. Table A5 provides the number of responses, mean, and standard deviation for each scale or item.

Table A5. *Mean Scores of Working Conditions, Job Satisfaction, and Retention Intentions*

	Scale/item	Number of responses	Mean	Standard deviation
Resources	Autonomy	1,676	4.96	0.97
	Community support	1,588	4.60	1.18
	District shared governance	1,637	3.61	1.60
	District support	1,616	4.82	1.22
	Faculty/staff support	1,603	5.03	0.86
	Parent/family support	1,595	4.91	0.84
	Professional development	1,653	4.55	1.34
Demands	Accountability	1,537	2.79	1.38
	Cognitive demands	1,555	4.79	1.37
	Emotional and relational demands	1,515	2.92	1.32
	Organizational demands	1,520	1.80	1.24
	Student discipline management	1,529	2.94	1.27
	Workload	1,529	2.71	1.36
Job satisfaction		1,510	5.04	0.96
Retention intentions	Intent to remain in South Carolina public education	1,509	5.33	1.10
	Intent to remain in school administrator role	1,509	5.28	1.17
	Intent to remain in current district	1,509	5.12	1.32

KEY QUESTION 2: *How do school administrators' perceptions of working conditions vary by school organizational level?*

To address Key Question 2, administrators' perceptions of working conditions were compared across elementary, middle, and high schools. Administrators working in early childhood centers and CTE centers were excluded from these comparisons due to small sample sizes, and administrators at combined-level schools were excluded because of limited representation and variability in grade configurations (e.g., K–6, 7–12).

The analysis employed multilevel modeling to account for the nested nature of the data. All analyses were conducted using a robust maximum likelihood estimator (MLR), which adjusts standard errors for deviations from multivariate normality. First, 13 unconditional two-level models were estimated to obtain intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs) for each working condition variable. ICC values ranged from the lowest (.023) for faculty/staff support to the highest (.079) for accountability. These models were then extended to include organizational level as two dummy-coded independent variables, which were tested jointly to examine whether organizational level was associated with working condition outcomes. To control the familywise Type I error rate across the 13 omnibus tests, the Holm-Bonferroni correction was applied to the significance thresholds. After applying this correction, omnibus Wald tests indicated that organizational level was statistically significantly associated with parent/family support ($\chi^2(2) = 17.41, p < .01$) and district shared governance ($\chi^2(2) = 13.90, p < .05$). These results are shown in Table A6.

Post hoc contrasts revealed that high school administrators reported significantly lower perceptions of parent/family support than elementary school administrators ($\beta = -0.250, p < .001$), corresponding to a difference of 0.30 standard deviations. Additionally, high school administrators reported lower perceptions of district shared governance compared to both elementary ($\beta = -0.258, p < .01$) and middle school administrators ($\beta = -0.279, p < .05$). However, these differences were small, corresponding to approximately 0.16 and 0.17 standard deviations, respectively. Finally, after applying the Holm-Bonferroni correction, no statistically significant differences in perceptions of demands were observed across the three organizational levels.

Table A6. Comparison of Administrator Working Conditions Across School Organizational Levels

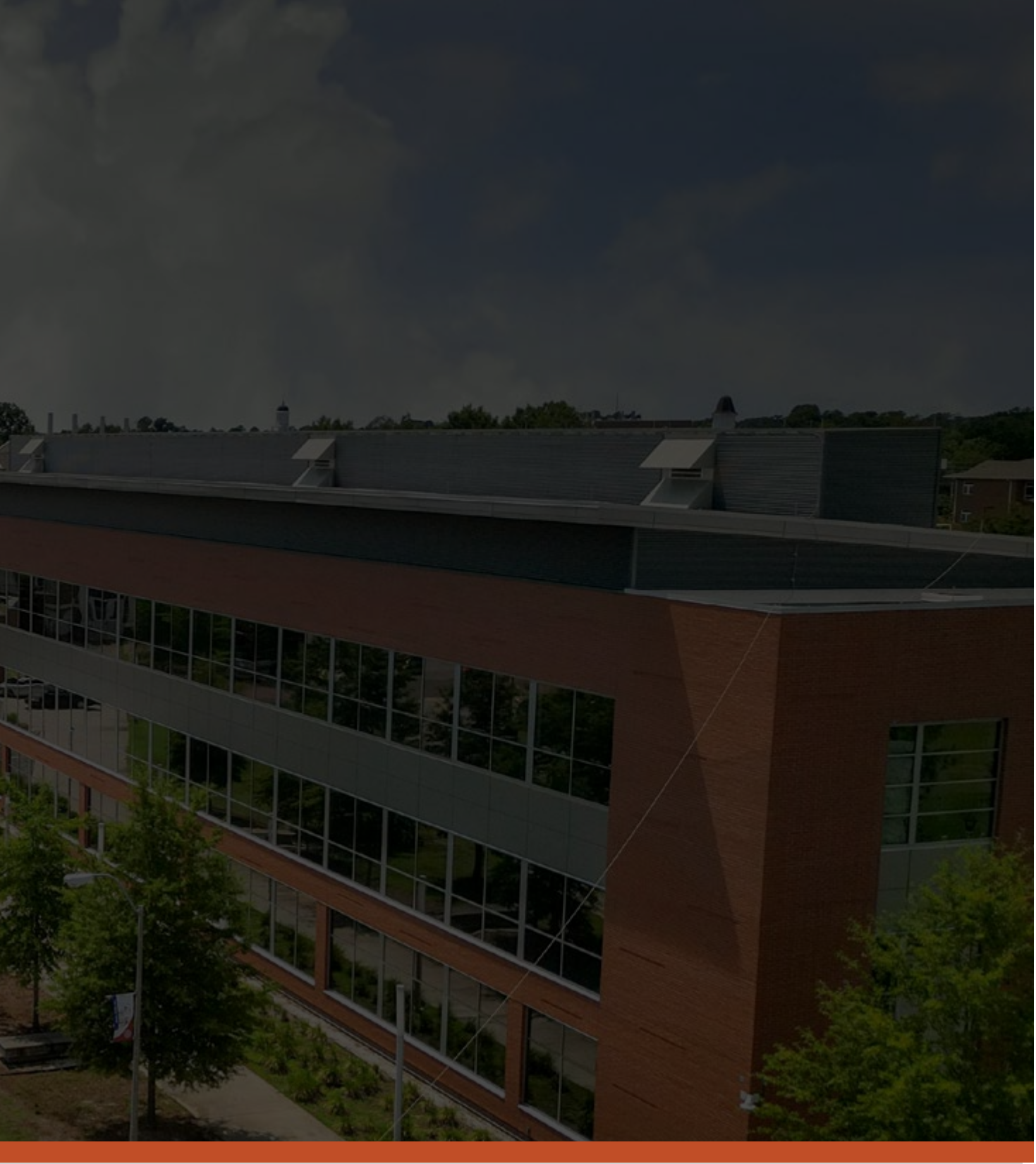
Administrator working condition	Sample size	Organizational level	Estimated mean (SE)	Omnibus Wald Test ($\chi^2, df = 2$)
Autonomy	1,479	Elementary school	4.96 (0.05)	$\chi^2(2) = 1.57$ $p = .457$
		Middle school	5.01 (0.07)	
		High school	4.92 (0.07)	
Community support	1,400	Elementary school	4.65 (0.08)	$\chi^2(2) = 5.07$ $p = .079$
		Middle school	4.54 (0.10)	
		High school	4.45 (0.09)	
District shared governance	1,443	Elementary school	3.76 (0.08)	$\chi^2(2) = 13.90$ $p = .012^*$
		Middle school	3.78 (0.11)	
		High school	3.51 (0.08)	
District support	1,423	Elementary school	4.85 (0.07)	$\chi^2(2) = 0.06$ $p = .968$
		Middle school	4.84 (0.12)	
		High school	4.85 (0.08)	
Faculty/staff support	1,412	Elementary school	5.07 (0.04)	$\chi^2(2) = 1.56$ $p = .459$
		Middle school	5.03 (0.05)	
		High school	4.99 (0.06)	
Parent/family support	1,404	Elementary school	4.99 (0.04)	$\chi^2(2) = 17.41$ $p = .003^{**}$
		Middle school	4.86 (0.07)	
		High school	4.74 (0.06)	
Professional development	1,457	Elementary school	4.54 (0.07)	$\chi^2(2) = 3.55$ $p = .170$
		Middle school	4.66 (0.09)	
		High school	4.50 (0.07)	
Accountability	1,354	Elementary school	2.73 (0.08)	$\chi^2(2) = 0.20$ $p = .907$
		Middle school	2.71 (0.10)	
		High school	2.75 (0.08)	

Administrator working condition	Sample size	Organizational level	Estimated mean (SE)	Omnibus Wald Test (χ^2 , $df = 2$)
Cognitive demands	1,369	Elementary school	4.80 (0.10)	$\chi^2(2) = 1.01$ $p = .602$
		Middle school	4.70 (0.08)	
		High school	4.75 (0.08)	
Emotional and relational demands	1,334	Elementary school	2.90 (0.08)	$\chi^2(2) = 1.66$ $p = .435$
		Middle school	2.86 (0.11)	
		High school	2.76 (0.11)	
Organizational demands	1,337	Elementary school	1.66 (0.06)	$\chi^2(2) = 3.39$ $p = .184$
		Middle school	1.84 (0.11)	
		High school	1.81 (0.09)	
Student discipline management	1,345	Elementary school	2.83 (0.06)	$\chi^2(2) = 5.16$ $p = .08$
		Middle school	3.01 (0.08)	
		High school	2.98 (0.10)	
Workload	1,346	Elementary school	2.65 (0.08)	$\chi^2(2) = 0.83$ $p = .661$
		Middle school	2.62 (0.09)	
		High school	2.71 (0.09)	

Note. The sample size listed is the total sample size for all three organizational levels for a particular scale.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

KEY QUESTION 3: *How do administrators' perceptions of working conditions relate to job satisfaction and retention intentions?*

For Key Question 3, Spearman correlations were used to examine associations between administrators' perceptions of working conditions and the outcome variables of job satisfaction and the three retention intention items. Spearman correlations were selected due to their robustness to nonnormality. Although the working condition composite scores were calculated as averages of Likert-type items, Spearman correlation was selected due to its robustness to nonnormality. Correlation coefficients range from -1 to 1, with the sign indicating the direction of the relationship. Full correlation coefficients are provided in Table 2 of the report.



EDUCATOR WORKING CONDITIONS

