

**Beyond the Classroom: Secondary School Agriscience Educator Perceptions of Secondary Administration**

by

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Agriscience, Education, Administration, Teacher Attrition

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## Abstract

Agriscience education teachers are supported in their duties as teachers by secondary school administrators. Though these administrators are often seen as the direct supervisors of agriscience education teachers, little research has been done to investigate the support that agriscience educators receive from administration. This study captures the perceptions of agriscience education teachers toward their administrators. Secondary agriscience educators from the state of Alabama served as the population (N=318) and sample (n=10) for this study. A qualitative study was conducted in which secondary school agriscience teachers stated their perceptions of what constituted a supportive administration as both an in-classroom teacher and less formal teaching environments (FFA, SAE, Livestock Shows, etc.). A constant comparative method yielded themes which supported that positive perceptions of administrative support of the teacher leads to career longevity.

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## Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

Supportive and reliable administration has been identified as a contributing factor in the satisfaction of teachers of secondary agricultural education (Clemons & Lindner, 2019).

Agricultural education is deeply intertwined with the foundations of vocational education. The relationship between agriculture and general education begins with the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. This bill provided the federal funding of vocational programs within high schools (Smith-Hughes Vocational Education Act of 1917). Vocational education was primarily provided as a way of creating skills within students to allow them to live and work within their communities. As agricultural education grew in popularity the versatility and complexity of the curriculum adapted to meet the needs of a changing citizenry. Phipps et al. (2008) defined agriculture education as:

“the systemic instruction in agriculture and natural resources at the elementary, middle school, secondary, postsecondary, or adult levels for the purpose of preparing people for entry or advancement in agricultural occupations and professions, job creation and entrepreneurship, and agricultural literacy”. p.8.

Supporting school-based agricultural education is a primary goal of the National FFA organization. The National FFA Organization was founded in 1928 by 33 students from 18 states with the intent of creating an organization by which to help empower young leaders within agriculture. The organization has grown to encompass over 700,000 middle school and secondary agricultural education students. These students, referred to as FFA members experience various career development events, personal growth, and career success. These goals are accomplished through the usage of multiple areas of competition as well as through the leadership structure of the organization. Each FFA chapter is comprised of a school or group of



schools which is managed by an FFA advisor who serves as the agriculture education instructor for the school.

Agriculture educators are also tasked with the management of Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAEs). Supervised agricultural experiences are typically work-based projects which instill skills such as record keeping, agriculture literacy, and instilling skills which may later help them in their chosen vocations. SAEs draw their roots in work-based learning practices which began in apprenticeship programs throughout history. The practices of the Storrs Agricultural School can be thought of as one of the precursors to this process. This school was given land on which they created a working farm at the local school in order for students to observe and test innovative practices that they can bring back to their family farm (Phipps et. al, 2008). Today, agriscience educators are given the unique responsibility of assisting students in developing their own Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE) where students gain classroom and on site work experience to develop their SAE project. This is accomplished through the teacher's implementation of Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) visits in which the teacher views the students' progress within their project.

Agricultural education teachers are supervised by administrators such as a building principal, superintendent, and/or career and technical (CTE) education director. These administrators oversee the classroom instruction of the teacher and are tasked with the oversight of informal educational duties. Informal educational duties such as the advisement of the FFA chapter and the teachers' supervision of Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE) are seen as an extension of classroom instruction and therefore just as vital to a successful program as traditional classroom instruction (Croom, 2008).

A supportive educational administration is an invaluable resource to teachers. Administrators manage the daily operations of school, oversee curricula development and implementation (Starrett, 2003), maintain a robust disciplinary program, evaluate certified and paraprofessional staff and foster a positive social environment. CTE directors are often described as the middle administrator which reports to upper administration and is able to assist teachers within their department with instructional or funding questions. These administrators are often more familiar with the different content areas which comprise their department. In many ways, teachers may see these individuals as their first line of support. Teachers ask questions or bring concerns to CTE directors which would then in turn bring those issues forward to upper-administration such as principals, superintendents, and school board members.

Administrators and agriscience educators encounter similar issues in many ways. Both operate within the confines of their positions while also keeping in mind the expectations of their stakeholders such as community members and school board officials to work toward other non-formal tasks within the school. Administrators may be sympathetic towards agriscience educators as they see the number of tasks which are thrust upon them as Smith & Myers, (2012) reported administrators hold an overall positive opinion of agriculture teachers and their program activities.

### **Statement of Problem**

Upon study of this issue, a gap in agricultural education research exists regarding agricultural education teachers' thoughts regarding their administrators. Research available within the field in regards to administration tend to be directed towards the administrators' perceptions rather than the teachers. Researching perceptions held by teachers of what constitutes an effective administration may yield a differing perception which will allow for a

more robust understanding of the dynamics between secondary agriscience education teachers and their principals.

There is also little in the way of research of agriscience teachers' perspective of principals' support of Supervised Agricultural Experience Programs, FFA, and other non-traditional forms of instruction. Considering the importance of these items in regards to teacher longevity and career satisfaction (Clemons & Lindner, 2019), it is necessary to understand teachers' perception of administrative support in those areas.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study sought to address secondary school agriscience teacher perceptions of supportive secondary administration. Identifying a deeper understanding of teacher perceptions toward their administrators will support the previous research in teacher longevity and classroom success. By creating a rich and coherent narrative of multiple teachers' lived experiences with administrators, a clearer picture of agricultural education within the context of these teachers' schools may occur.

### **Assumptions**

The following assumptions are made regarding the study:

1. The instrument will elicit responses which culminate in overarching themes of agreement.
2. The respondents will understand the statements they are presented.
3. The respondents will provide their honest opinions based on their knowledge

## **Limitations**

1. Qualitative studies should be seen as the feelings of the participants during that moment in time and as such the research cannot be assumed as in any way representative of the population.
2. The impact of COVID-19 may present challenges affecting participant response. The sample participants of this study are teaching remotely and not in their respective classrooms.
3. Teacher misconceptions and misunderstandings in regards to the purpose of qualitative research.

## **Scope and Population**

The scope of this study included secondary agriscience education teachers from Alabama ( $N = 318$ ). The population consisted of certified agriscience educators who are members of the National Association for Agricultural Educators (NAAE), taught secondary school agriscience education for a minimum of three years to be included within the sample. The sample was purposively stratified and selected in alignment with the principles of qualitative research.

## **Objectives of the Study**

Considering the purpose of the study to hear the perceptions of teachers toward their own administration, the following research questions and themes guided the study:

1. As a classroom teacher, describe teacher perceptions of a supportive administrator.
2. As an FFA Advisor, describe teacher perceptions of a supportive administrator.
3. Describe the tone of conversations regarding the agricultural education program with high school administrators

4. Describe the tone of conversations by agriscience teacher regarding the FFA program with high school administrators
5. Describe the personal and professional characteristics of secondary agriculture education teachers in Alabama.

## **Chapter 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The problem cannot be addressed without first understanding central problems facing the secondary school agricultural education community. As such, the review of literature below represents not only literature relative to teacher administration, but toward the broad swath of interests within agricultural education at this point.

### **Background**

This literature review is divided into the following areas: (1). Background, (2). Secondary School Agricultural Education Teacher Retention, (3). Agricultural Education Legislation, (4). National FFA Organization, (5). Experiential Learning, (6). Educational Administration, and (7). Methods.

### **Secondary School Agricultural Education Teacher Retention**

Agricultural education enrollment within the United States continues to grow and diversify within middle and high school education (Retallick & Martin, 2008). There remains a consistent shortage of agricultural education teachers within the middle and high school levels with teacher graduation rates being below replacement (Kantrovich, 2007). Secondary agricultural education within the state of Alabama is represented by 302 agriculture teachers who collectively encompass an enrollment of 37,627 students within agriculture, food, and natural resources courses (NAAE, n.d.).

Kantrovich, (2007) reported that 53% of students that completed an undergraduate agricultural education teacher preparation program entered secondary school agricultural education. Keigher (2010) indicated those who enter in the profession had a 25% percent chance of leaving within the first three years. Marx et al. (2017) showed that concerns of shortages within the field of agricultural education had been present since the beginnings of traditional

agricultural education in 1921. Contemporary research has shown there is a wide variety of reasons why these shortages occur.

Since 1965 there has been a consistent drop in the number of agricultural education teachers (Kantrovich, 2007). Teachers leaving the profession has been seen to be a large reason for this trend (Wirt et al., 2005). Sorenson et al. (2016) reported statistically significant correlation between work-family balance, time worked and teacher satisfaction. Murray et al. (2011) reported agriscience educators spent an average of 57 hours worked per week in relation to their duties as an agricultural educator. Hainline et al. (2015) described that while male and female teachers reported working a similar amount of hours, female agriculture teachers reported working an average of 7.5 more hours per week in the home. As such, teacher burnout has been shown to be a contributing factor in teacher dissatisfaction (Chenevey, Ewing, & Whittington, 2014). Lemons et al. (2005) reported that traditional metrics of teacher success are not adequate for discerning agriculture teacher success. Smith and Smalley (2018) found that agriculture teachers reported the most job stress with issues relating to experiential learning and program planning and evaluation.

Clemons and Lindner (2019) reported that enjoying agriculture and education was shown to be the most important factor in classroom success and longevity. Other strong measures outlined within the findings included “Assisting students to attain their individual goals”, finding their work interesting, feeling they are making a difference, family support, friendships with other FFA Advisors, secure employment, and reliable health benefits for their success in remaining within the classroom. Most pertinent to this study, the means indicated reliable administrative support as a strong factor for remaining in the classroom.

## **Morrill Land-Grant Acts**

The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 provided land in the amount of 30,000 acres per congressperson in the state for the creation of a college specializing in agriculture and mechanics. This act also provided funding for research within agriculture and mechanics. No states which were in rebellion were able to benefit from the act. Southern states were unable to benefit from the act until conclusion of the Civil War based on this provision within the act.

The Morrill Act revisions of 1890 provided funding for the creation of Land-Grant Colleges for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) within the Southern States. Rather than providing land, this act provided strictly funding for these institutions if the previously existing land-grant college refused to accept black students. Additional funding for Native American colleges were provided in 1994.

## **Hatch Act of 1887**

The Hatch Act of 1887 provided funding for land-grant institutions in order to create agriculture experiment stations. These experiment stations would specialize in agricultural research which was specific to their state. Experiment stations were used as teaching grounds for agricultural students (Talbert et al., 2014 p. 72). This has been cited as one of the original foundations of agricultural education (Moore, 1988 p. 164). In the spirit of this act, the University of Minnesota created a school for the teaching of agriculture to non-collegiate students as a part of their experiment station (Moore, 1988 p. 165). Alabama created schools at nine separate experiment stations in each of the state's districts which were all run under the direction of Alabama Polytechnic Institute, now Auburn University (Moore, 1988 p. 166).



### **Smith-Lever Act of 1914**

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created the Cooperative Extension Service which would serve as a way by which federal funding could be used to disseminate research information to rural areas via the Land-Grant Colleges.

### **Vocational Education Act of 1917**

The Vocational Education Act of 1917 (more commonly known as the Smith-Hughes Act) provided federal funding for vocational education within schools. Included within vocational education at the time were the areas of agricultural education, home economics, and industrial arts. The act also created state boards of vocational education which would oversee the training of teachers and funding appropriations. Appropriations for a Federal Board of Vocational Education were additionally provided by the law.

### **Public Law 81-740 & Public Law 105-225**

Public Law 81-740 (1950) granted a federal charter to the National Future Farmers of America. The law stated that it was vital for there to be a relationship between vocational education and the student organization. This law was updated in 1998 via the passage of Public Law 105-225. This update provided updates to the outdated legislation including providing provisions for structure of the National FFA Organization and established purposes for the organization including cooperating with state boards of vocational education, developing a love of farm life and rural living, developing character, and developing quality rural leadership.

### **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001**

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was a measure created under the Bush administration which intended to improve schools by assessing students annually within the

areas of mathematics and English to monitor growth. The act also provided for bonuses for schools which were able to achieve above designated proficiency levels. This act created higher accountability for schools to the United States government (Dee et al. 2011). While some saw this as a credible way of monitoring student progress, others were concerned about the use of high-stakes testing due to the teachers possibly feeling the need to teach toward end of the year tests.

Dee et al. (2011) reported that since adoption of No Child Left Behind student achievement trended toward higher scores in mathematics at multiple grade levels, while it did not show a significant difference within English. This study also found that the scores of African-American students were particularly positively impacted by No Child Left Behind policies. Hanushek and Raymond (2005) reported that based on studies conducted before No Child Left Behind, school reports of progress without consequences is not effective.

### **Common Core**

The Common Core State Standards initiative was formed in 2009 with the purpose of creating a set of standardized objectives which would serve to ensure student proficiency in mathematics and English throughout the United States. The development of Common Core Standards was devised in order to regain top metrics within the field of education worldwide (Porter et al., 2011). While these standards are not federally mandated, they serve as a set of standards which have been adopted by many states as a baseline to measure student learning in a manner which can show inequalities between states and individual school districts. Porter et al. (2011) also reported:

Those who hope that the Common Core standards represent greater focus for U.S. education will be disappointed by our answers. Only one of our criteria for measuring

focus found that the Common Core standards are more focused than current state standards and only for mathematics, not for English Language Arts (ELAR). Further, some state standards are much more focused and some much less focused than is the Common Core, and this is true for both subjects. How much focus is desirable is unknown, but clearly the Common Core standards could have been more focused than they are.

### **Experiential Learning**

According to Smith and Rayfield (2016), project-based learning has been a method used within agricultural education since its beginnings in secondary school education. Stimson (1919) created a model by which home-project based learning would guide the students' use of knowledge. Smith et al. (2016) suggest that the current focus within the community of agricultural education towards SAEs is a "return to our roots, and Stimson's model". Agricultural education has been linked to the concept of project based learning since the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 (Smith et al., 2016).

The model commonly used by agricultural education in modern times, SAE, was created for the purpose of bringing agricultural skills home to the farm (Smith et al., 2016). Croom (2008) reported a change in the SAEs to meet a wider variety of students considering the declining number of students returning to full-time production agriculture. Talbert et al. (2014) reported that:

Work-based learning is a component of agricultural education that sets it apart from most other subjects. Students are able to explore areas of interest and then develop skills to a much greater depth than is possible within the regular school classroom. Tasks performed and problems encountered in SAE can be used in the classroom to provide real-world

examples of concepts being learned. Exploratory SAE can also be used to develop agricultural literacy. p.107

A lack of training in new and innovative SAEs for non-traditional agriculture students has been cited as a barrier to entry for these students (Graham & Birkholtz, 1999; Wilson & Moore, 2007). Bradford et al. (2019) reported that experiential learning as a “more effective method of increasing agriculture knowledge than direct instruction”. Retallick and Martin (2005) reported that teachers’ perceived benefits from SAEs included increased public relations, increased opportunities for students, and increased community support.

### **National FFA Organization**

The roots of the FFA can be drawn back to the founding of the New Farmers of Virginia (Hillison, 1993). The Future Farmers of America was founded in 1928 upon the suggestion of the Federal Board for Vocational Education (Talbert et al. P. 390). This organization was developed for the purpose of creating a complimentary student organization for agricultural education students. Hoover et al. (2007) reported that the foundations of the FFA remain not only in the creation of a student organization for agricultural education, but for rural development and rural leadership.

The National FFA describes itself in the organization’s most current student handbook: “FFA is a dynamic youth development organization within agricultural education that prepares students for premier leadership, personal growth and career success. Students whose lives are impacted by FFA and agricultural education will achieve academic and personal growth, strengthen American agriculture and provide leadership to build healthy local communities, a strong nation and a sustainable world. FFA was created in 1928 as the Future Farmers of America; however, the name was changed to the National FFA

Organization in 1988 to reflect the growing diversity of agriculture. Today, more than 653,000 student members are engaged in a wide range of agricultural education activities, leading to more than 250 unique career opportunities in the agricultural science, food, fiber and natural resources industry. Student success remains the primary mission of FFA.” p. 9-10

The National FFA Organization reported a membership of over 650,000 in the organization’s 2016-17 report (2018). Teacher responsibilities related to the management of these 650,000 members include but are not limited to: election of officers within chapter, general advisement of the chapter, training of Career Development Event teams, chaperoning students at state and national conferences, and also managing their teaching program. Crutchfield et al. (2013) reported these additional activities beyond the classroom can create a negative impact on teachers’ career commitment if not properly managed.

### **Educational Administration**

Greenfield et al. (1995 p. iv) reported that it is difficult to put forward a single definition of educational administration as the structure of responsibilities is so fractured and varies widely within schools. Teacher evaluation with a positive approach was cited by Rushing (1972) as a necessary and primary responsibility of educational administrators. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century researchers within administration attempted to create a series of scientific theories based on the concepts of effective management (Taylor, 1911; Cubberly, 1916; Simon, 1957).

Voorhis and Sheldon (2004) stated that strong schools cannot exist without effective principals. Kirby et al. (2001) reported that principal leadership was the largest predictor of success for school reform. Voorhis and Sheldon (2004) found a significant positive correlation between principal support of teachers on evaluations, program quality, and

parent/teacher/community support. Sanders et al. (2002) reported leadership from principals as one of their four factors in successful school-community partnerships.

According to Robinson et al. (2013) quoting Smith and Meyers (2012), “Understanding the perceptions of the principal regarding the agriculture program and its teacher is important because the “principal’s perceptions influence whether or not an agricultural education program exists”. Cantrell et al. (2004) reported that content area knowledge was reported to be the characteristic most preferred by administrators when hiring an agriculture teacher. Clemons et al. (2019) suggested that administrative support has also been related to teacher retention and attrition within agricultural education.

### **Theoretical Framework-Organizational Support Theory**

There are many theories which are rooted in the expectations of workers toward their administration. Eisenberger et al. (1986) set forth the theory of organizational support which will serve as the theoretical framework for the study. Organizational support theory (1986) suggests that the employee perceives the extent which the organization supports them and their work as an important marker within their work life. This concept is known as perceived organizational support. Eisenberger et al. (1986) reported that considering how employees tend to personify organizations (Levinson, 1965), the actions of the agents within the organization toward the employee tend to affect the affect of the employee.

This suggests that in order for employees to feel supported by the organization, they would anticipate the same support as they receive within social relationships. Those who are more social tend to respond higher in the amount of organizational support received. Kurtessis et al. (2017) reported that just as positive support from administrators is seen to positively correlate with perceived organizational support, the opposite is also true. Kurtessis et al. (2017) also

reported that there is a positive relationship between increased performance and perceived organizational support.

## **Summary**

Reviewing the literature in regards to the expectations held of agriscience educators, legislation as it relates to agriscience education, the importance of supportive administrators, and the current research being conducted in regards to recruitment and retention of agriscience educators provides the necessary knowledge to conduct the following study.

Legislation within the field of agriscience education has provided a background which allows teachers and administrators to understand the scope and depth of the content. The earliest agricultural education acts were specifically related to colleges providing educational opportunities within agriculture and extension education to the general public. Moving forward, educational acts created funding for agricultural education while providing a clearer expectation of items within the field such as experiential learning and FFA.

The National FFA Organization has provided opportunities for students since its founding in 1928. While the organization retains its original goals of promoting agricultural education, the organization has grown into an all-encompassing group of over 500,000 members. While the organization creates opportunities for the students, it represents another area of responsibility for agriscience education teachers.

Experiential learning is an area which sits agriscience education apart as a profession. Experiential learning allows for the teaching of skills which are difficult to replicate within the classroom. The experiential learning model has grown from its beginnings with apprenticeship programs and teaching farms into a program which allows for students to grow within their knowledge of the chosen area of knowledge.

The area of agriscience education teacher recruitment and retention has been a problem which has long caused issues for schools. Teachers choosing to leave the profession along with the long hours which are associated with teaching within an agriscience education setting have been shown to contribute to this issue. Additionally, these teachers have responsibilities to attend to once they return home as well.



### **Chapter 3. METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions of secondary school agriscience teachers towards their positive administration. This data was collected using a qualitative design. To accomplish the purposes of the study, questions were developed based on prior research, panel suggestions, and content expert analysis. Participant interviews were conducted, the data was analyzed, patterns were evaluated, and emerging themes.

Participants were identified from a publicly available list of practicing agriculture teachers in Alabama. Parameters for the study included being a member of NAAE and previous participation in previous studies conducted by the Auburn University Agriscience Education program. Purposive stratified sampling based on these parameters was outlined by Patton (2002) because members of these groups are “information rich and illuminative, that is, they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest”(P. 240). The researcher utilized the knowledge of content area experts as consultation for suggestion of participants. Experts suggested participants which would provide a wide range of differing views regarding administrators and their roles. The researcher utilized these suggestions to select a sample which provided for a difference of region, geography, age, and years of service within public schools.

Design and validation of the questions were confirmed through the use of content area experts. Content area experts represented current secondary agriculture educators, graduate students and university faculty. These experts were asked to review the instrument for relevance, grammar, syntax, content, bias, and ambiguity. Upon review from the experts, appropriate changes were made as outlined. The questions was piloted by secondary school agriscience educators in a focus group format which allowed for further feedback about the questions as they were written.

The participants ( $n = 10$ ) were then contacted electronically to explain the research and its purpose, their rights as potential participants, the risks associated with the research conducted, the time associated, the benefits associated, and the practices involved with ensuring the anonymity of the participants. Upon agreement to the terms above, the participants were assigned a date and time which was agreeable for both parties when interviews would be conducted via phone.

The instrument consisted of five semi-structured questions for the telephone interviews and analysis of themes.

**Table 1**

*Interview Questions*

Question Number	Interview Question
1	Describe how your experiences with high school administrators have influenced your decision to remain in the classroom.
2	Describe your experiences with supportive high school level administration.
3	Describe your perceptions of a supportive administrator as an agriculture education teacher.
4	Describe the tone of your conversations regarding the agricultural education program with high school administrators.
5	Describe your perceptions of ideal out-of-classroom program support (FFA, SAE, Livestock Shows, etc.) from your high school administration.

The interviews lasted between 25 and 30 minutes and were conducted via phone due to the lack of effective means by which to meet directly with the participants as a result of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic. Grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1998) serves as the form of data analysis for the study. The recorded interviews were transcribed and evaluated for content and emergent themes. Grounded theory methodology is characterized by constant adjustment based on analysis of the data in order to construct a theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Grounded theory is useful when attempting to understand novel issues which have not been

investigated thoroughly (Saldaña, 2013). To benefit trustworthiness, the participants represented diversity among certification (Traditionally Certified, Alternatively Certified, and Class A Certification via Masters), years of employment, age, geographic location, and number of administrators throughout their career. The data was viewed using a positivistic approach.

Auburn University Internal Review Board documents were obtained by the primary investigator as required by state and federal law to ensure the safety of the project. The Auburn University Internal Review Board approved the protocol under the #19-434 EP 2001.

## **Chapter 4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

Data collection and analysis were constantly being completed throughout the study as outlined by constant-comparative theory and grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Constant comparative theory involves the comparison of the previous pieces of data collected against new data collected in order to show similarities and differences between the respondents (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Holistic coding was utilized initially to begin to group basic thoughts and themes within the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

It is essential to express the factors which may contribute to the researcher's decision in regards to the coding of these items. The researcher is a young aspiring teacher within the State of Alabama. The researcher is influenced by their own preconceived notions about the profession of agriscience education. The researcher has experienced the benefit of having observed agriculture teachers in multiple states which benefits their understanding of the field. The views of the professors and staff which the researcher has worked in conjunction with throughout their career also contributes to their view of agricultural education. Given the nature of the data collection and coding, the researcher is considered a part of the instrument which serves as a frame for the study. This creates the lens by which the researcher views the data. Personal characteristics of the participants are reported in the Table below (Table 2).

**Table 2***Personal Characteristics of Participants*

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Years Teaching	Certification	Number of Admin	Student Population in Agriculture	Number of Teachers in Program
Eunice	Female	43	Caucasian	12	Alternate Certification	5	165	2
Jeff	Male	23	Caucasian	1	Traditional Certification	1	250	1
Kevin	Male	26	Caucasian	4	Traditional Certification with MS and Ed.S.	1	240	1
Larry	Male	24	Caucasian	2	Alternate Certification	1	150	1
Rick	Male	29	Caucasian	6	Traditional Certification	1	250	1
Rosie	Female	36	Caucasian	12	Traditional Certification	5	300	2
Rusty	Male	29	Caucasian	7	Traditional Certification	4	100	1
Ruth	Female	24	Caucasian	2	Traditional Certification	2	328	2
Tim	Male	23	Caucasian	1	Traditional Certification	1	210	1
Janice	Female	33	Caucasian	9	Class A Certification (Masters)	4	100	1

**Findings**

During the interviews the following themes emerged which helped define the feelings of teachers in regards to supportive administration: administrative awareness of local agricultural education program, agriscience education teacher relationships with administration, teacher perceptions of in-classroom administrative support, teacher perceptions of out-of-classroom program support, and perceptions of measured administrative involvement. The participants presented a positive affect during the interview in regards to their role as a teacher as evaluated

via the tone and dimension of their voice. The majority of participants also presented a positive affect towards their current administration. The positive nature and tenor of the conversations is best summarized in the following quote by [Janice], an agriscience education teacher with 9 years of experience “[A supportive administrator is] someone who will say good morning. Someone who will come into your classroom just to see what you have going on. Not to necessarily critique or say “hey, what are you doing?” or “you’re not doing this correctly”, just to see what you’re doing and what cool projects your kids have going on. They’re the ones who recognize you when you do things well.” Analysis of data resulted in the following themes (Table 3).

**Table 3**

*Themes of Data Analysis*

Theme Number	Theme
1	Administrative Awareness of the Local Agriscience Education Program
2	Agriscience Education Teacher Relationships with Administration
3	Teacher Perceptions of In-Classroom Administrative Support
4	Teacher Perceptions of Out of Classroom Program Support
5	Teacher Perceptions of Measured Administrative Involvement

**Administrative Awareness of the Local Agriscience Education Program**

When the participants discussed their perceptions of administrative support the level of awareness which their administrators had in regards to the local agriscience education program was discussed. Teachers noted that an understanding of what differentiates agriscience education from other content areas is important for an administrator. This is captured perfectly by [Rusty], a seventh year agriculture teacher “I believe a supportive administrator would be one who understands and at least has a basic understanding of career and technical education but especially agriculture education.” The idea of having an understanding of the differences

between agriculture education is further explored by [Eunice], who is an alternatively certified teacher entering her 12<sup>th</sup> year. She stated, “It’s important for our administration to know how we work and to understand first and foremost that an agricultural program is an entity unto itself.” Eunice further stated, “There will be tons of hands-on work and time for out of the box thinking.” Since her school is very large and she has a large amount of students per class, she indicated “The ag teacher will have to delegate things out [to students]. It’s important for the administration to understand that and not just think that I let my kids off by themselves.” [Ruth], a traditionally certified agriculture teacher who has been teaching for two years backs up this point by stating “Thankfully, I have an administrator that knows about agriculture education and FFA. They had a child that was involved so they know about it which was really helpful.” She continues to describe by stating “I’m lucky to have someone that I can have conversations with”.

The administrator having an awareness of the agricultural education program and its place within the community creates a zone which allows teachers to be able to discuss items with administrators without the having to explain superfluous pieces. This is further explained by [Rusty], who stated “I know that some schools have had at least three or four career and tech directors have been former ag teachers. Our current Career and Tech Ed Director is a former ag teacher. So they understand [agriculture education]. The principal or assistant may not be as familiar.”

It was a belief of many of the participants that the principal should put forward the effort to become more aware of the happenings within the agriscience education program. [Rusty] states that “My first-year teaching, I had a new administrator who had never worked at a high school that had agriculture. I had a learning curve being a first year agriculture teacher and she having never worked with agriculture before made it really difficult.” [Rusty] then states that

administrators should attempt to educate themselves in regards to agriscience education. “an administrator needs to be supportive of [the agriscience education program] and I believe that if a principal doesn’t come from a school with a strong agriculture program or a high quality CTE program that it will be better for them and better for their community to learn about what an effective agriculture program requires.”

The lack of having worked directly with agriscience education gives creates a likelihood of administrator misunderstanding. [Rick], who is a 29 year old agriculture educator in his 6<sup>th</sup> year, stated that “My administrator a lot of times is confused about career and technical education (CTE) and the type of programs we have so when we do discuss it it’s to clear up any confusion he may have in regards to classes, class codes, what classes pair with other classes, what classes I’m required to teach.” [Rick], who has had the same school principal throughout his entire career, goes on to state that this need for clearing up confusion for the administrator “makes sense because every time you get the hand of the Career and Technical Education System in our state, it changes; [so] a lot of times they just come to me when they need to be cleared up on a subject.” [Rick], whose administration has limited his out of classroom absences to 20 days stated that he would feel more supported if by the principal “understanding that the professional development that I sign up to attend or trips that I’m going to take kids on are directly related to our organization and our program. [Rusty] stated when discussing certain misunderstandings that his administrators have expressed “The teacher may be responsible [for equipment maintenance] but ultimately, if there’s an issue, that needs to be fixed by having the maintenance department come out.” This is similar in regards to the time which an agriculture teacher spends working in the summer. [Rusty] states that “A lot of principals don’t see the need for career and technical education teachers, or especially ag teachers to be working during the



summer when they have a greenhouse. I have a greenhouse and an agriculture mechanics facility and all those things require maintenance.” Participants indicated that the administrator’s lack of understanding of their program led to an interesting relationship between themselves and the administrator.

**Table 4**

*Administrative Awareness of the Local Agricultural Education Program*

Subtheme	Example Quote(s)
Administrative Knowledge of Agriscience Education	<p>“I believe a supportive administrator would be one who understands. At least has a basic understanding of career and tech education but especially agriculture education.” (Rusty, Nine years of experience)</p> <p>“Thankfully, I have an administrator that knows about agriculture education and FFA. They had a child that was involved so they know about it which was really helpful.” (Ruth, Two years of experience”</p>
Administrative Misunderstandings	<p>“My administrator a lot of times is confused about career and technical education and the type of programs we have so when we do discuss it it’s to clear up any confusion he may have in regards to classes, class codes, what classes pair with other classes, what classes I’m required to teach.” (Rick, Six years of experience)</p>

**Agriscience Education Teacher Relationships with Administration**

Secondary school agriscience education teachers relationships with school administration emerged as a vital theme of these findings. When teachers commented on the relationship which they had with their administrator, they were by and large very positive. After listening to more participants, the researcher noticed a difference in the conversation in regards to the administrator as an individual rather than the position of principal. The findings support that teachers may view their principal as a high-quality administrator while not enjoying their personality as an individual. The converse of this may also be true. The following subthemes

were found within the theme: positive administrative tenor, teacher trust and teacher expectations of administrators.

The positive tenor of conversations between agriscience education teachers and administrators were discussed by a majority of the study participants. The teacher-administrator relationship was described by [Rick] when discussing his experiences with administrators, “I’m always told I’m doing a great job and to keep up what I was doing.” This is echoed by [Eunice] who said “The tone that we’ve [the administrator and I] had is always very positive. He really supports us and he allows us to do our job and so we’ve always had a good tone” [Larry], a second year agriscience teacher, stated “My administrator is good to me, I can’t say anything bad about him. Can’t say anything bad about my assistants, they’re pretty good.” [Eunice] further expounds on this by stating “I mean there’s always been a good tone when we’re talking about the program. He’s proud of our program and just wants us to continue doing what we’re doing.” The concept of program pride by administrators was something which was found to excite the teacher. When discussing program pride [Kevin] expressed, “[The tone has] always been very laid back in our one-on-one conversations with them. I’ve always been approached with “whatever you need, we’ll make sure you have it” mentality.” Feeling that his program was a point of pride for the school seemed to invigorate [Kevin]. He went on further to say “They use our ag program as a model for other programs, Career and Tech Ed programs, how programs are set up how programs are ran. So a tone that you knew the administrators were always available for whatever you needed to discuss.”

Similarly, the participants expressed that they keep a positive tone when talking to their administrators as well. When discussing the tone of her conversations with administrators, [Janice] stated that “The tone you take with them is very important because if you are not

excited, if it's just another day in the life of you, they are going to take that tone as well. So if you are excited and you are like, "this is exciting, this is what's happening" They will see that, and they will get excited as well. Not only are you producing an outcome, you're producing a feeling and if you can invoke that in them, that'll help for sure."

Teachers who have had both negative and positive administrators over their careers tended to contrast them. [Janice] expressed that "My current administration is probably the best support I've ever had. I've had administration that just didn't care. They saw value in other programs more so than mine monetarily and supportively. It was hard to deal with that bias." She went on to further explain that upon moving to a position with a supportive administration "your program is very valued, that is great." This is echoed by [Ruth], a second year teacher, who stated "My first year I had a really good relationship with my administrator. I loved being in the classroom and everything that was going on and I had a lot of say in what was happening." Her following year her relationship with the administrator waned, but she attempted to keep positive. "I think everybody has ups and downs with the people that they work with, no matter what profession you're in."

The majority of participants felt that they were supported adequately by their administrator, [Jeff] stated "they don't necessarily care about agriculture. It's not very important at the school. There's other Career and Tech Programs that they value more than mine, so they leave me alone." This is echoed by [Rosie], who says she wishes her administrators would "prioritize our competitions just as much as they prioritize athletics, because I feel that more times than not is more beneficial and more important frankly than athletics." [Janice] also recalled having similar feelings in her dealings with former administrators. She stated "My current administration is probably the best support I've ever had. I've had administration that just

didn't care. They saw value in other programs more so than mine. They supported them more both monetarily and supportively. It was hard to deal with that bias."

Another facet of interpersonal relationships between teachers and their administrators which was found to benefit the teacher was the concept of trust. When discussing his administrator, [Larry] stated "I've got a good working relationship with my principal. As long as nothing bad happens, he doesn't come bother me." This sense of trust between the administrator and the teacher is also seen to be reciprocated by [Rosie], a 12<sup>th</sup> year teacher who stated that "My first school I had administrators that were very hands-off. They kind of let me do what I wanted to do and of course especially when I was just getting started that was easier than to have somebody kind of breathing on my neck and barking directions." This trust does not simply lie in allowing the teacher to do as they please. It also lies in faith in what the teacher is doing. When describing a supportive administrator, [Jeff], a first year teacher, stated a supportive administrator is "Somebody that values you and what you think, It's like they want to see you do well. They're interested in your subject areas that you teach." One issue that was brought up by participants was not feeling prioritized by the administrators.

Another area which was outlined by the researcher was the expectations that teachers have for principals. When discussing the tone of her conversations with her administrator, [Rosie] stated that "I have high expectations of them as an administrator to also value my program." She continues by stating "I want them to be present." And "So out of five principals, I've only had one attend and he attended a lot (of out of classroom events), and I wish other administrators would do the same." [Janice] echoed this when asked what positive support outside of the classroom looked like "Show up to things. Just like how you're going to be seen at a football game, show up to our contests as well. Let the kids know you are invested in what they

are doing as well and it's not just sports that are important." [Janice] continued by stating "Another thing would be showing up to your advisory committee meetings. Saying "Hey, this is something that we are putting an emphasis on here. We think it is going to create a holistic child and we're here, thank you for being here." So really just showing your face and showing up for stuff is worth it's weight in gold." In this regard, teachers stated that there was a need for administrators to show interest in the teacher both as an in-classroom teacher and also outside the classroom.

**Table 5**

*Agriscience Education Teacher Relationships with Administration*

Subthemes	Example Quote
Positive Administrative Tenor	"I mean there's always been a good tone when we're talking about the program. He's proud of our program and just wants us to continue doing what we're doing." (Eunice, 12 years of experience)
Teacher Trust	"I've got a good working relationship with my principal. As long as nothing bad happens, he doesn't come bother me." (Larry, Two years of experience)
Teacher Expectations of Administrators	"I have high expectations of them as an administrator to also value my program."

The interpersonal relationships between administrators and teachers are commonly carried into how the principal supports the teacher inside the classroom.

**Teacher Perceptions of In-Classroom Administrative Support**

Teacher support within the classroom was a theme which was highlighted numerous times by the participants. The majority of the teachers which participated highlighted this portion as a major area which allowed them to do their jobs to the best of their ability. While there were many different views in regards to the best practices for supporting teachers in the classroom, the

concept of in-classroom support was most robustly discussed by the administrators. Considering that agriscience educators are primarily hired for their ability to teach in the classroom, the principals appear to consider that the area where they should provide the most support. Upon further coding of the data, the following subthemes emerged: support from administration within the classroom, support for classroom discipline, and support through curriculum and facilities management.

Participants were inclined to discuss that a supportive administration was one which allowed them to do their job well. [Tim] stated that “My administrators have been good so far. They pretty much have left me to my own and let me prepare my classroom the way I want.” This sense of control over their classroom was echoed by [Kevin], who stated that his support occurred in the sense of “Supporting the teacher with whatever the goals of the program are. For example, one of the goals of our program is credentialing and getting students set up so that they’re moving into a Co-op program their senior year, working for businesses that are in our program area.” This was echoed by [Rusty], who stated “I am fortunate that I have a supportive administrator over my school at this point. One who gives me the flexibility to teach what I need to teach and do what I need to do.” The participants within the study were largely grateful for the opportunity to be able to work with their administrators, while still being able to handle the majority of things on their own. [Rosie] stated “going back to the principal that I had that was extremely supportive of me. In the classroom he was he was pretty hands off he knew that I was handling what I needed to handle.” When asked about his administration effecting his decision to remain in the classroom, [Kevin] stated that “It’s had a large impact on it. I’ve had great support from my administration with everything that I’ve done for both my program as well as my class and so there’s a very high correlation between my staying in the classroom and my

administration.” When asked about her perceptions of ideal classroom support, [Rosie] stated “Something that I would like to see from an administrator that I may or may not have seen before would be a little more hands-on when I ask them.” She expounded upon this and explained “So if we're doing something cool and I wanted them to come see it then I want to prioritize that because I don't bother him too much with that kind of thing.” When asked about his perceptions of supportive administration as a teacher, [Rick] stated that an administrator would “understand that in an agriculture classroom the lessons are better presented hands-on. When you have too many students in a classroom with just one teacher it ends up in problems.” He went further by stating a remedy which the administration can practice to help alleviate this issue. “A supportive administrator would make sure the class size was not too overbearing for the teacher and that the teacher had everything that he or she needed to make sure that they could complete their projects without anyone being hurt.”

Discipline was seen as a primary area where the administrator was able to provide support to the participants. [Eunice] posits “they support [the teacher] in the classroom, if you have discipline problems, or something like that they kind of handle it for you”. She also stated “I have a lot of support from administration. They support us not only with our program needs they support us with discipline issues and it's just made it really easy to stay in the classroom and until it's unbearable then I'll be there”. When asked about her administration affecting her decision to remain in the classroom, [Janice] stated that “They also support me with discipline and behavior issues. They deal with those issues at the time they happen so they are no longer issues in my classroom.” Some teachers felt that they preferred more control of their environment when it came to discipline. [Eunice], a veteran teacher, stated that “I stay in my lane and the only time that really I have to go to them is if I might have a slight problem. I try to

handle all of my discipline myself and its just extreme cases that I have to go to the administration with.” [Larry], an alternatively certified teacher, stated that “As far as for me, directly impacting the school, I could say my administration is fairly poor. Just as far as with me, I’d like to see a little more discipline, but I come from a high school which was very disciplined. We had a former military guy as our principal, so that’s how I think a principal should be…”

Administrative support of facilities and curriculum was expressed by [Rusty], who said “I believe that an administrator, one that wants make a positive impact on their school will be flexible, will be aware of the requirements, or at least of the needs that an ag teacher needs to perform.” [Kevin] stated that “They’re supportive of me, they support the students that want to be involved as well. As far as curriculum, as far as adding new equipment, new technology they’ve supported. You know, just overall, they’re supportive.” This support was expressed powerfully by once again by [Kevin]. “I’ve purchased multiple different curriculums for credentialing. They’ve allowed me to have job shadowing days where we take out students to different businesses and jobs.” He continued “I mean, everything that we’ve done, has allowed the students, or allowed me as a teacher to be successful in getting these students through three years or four years of instruction here and then moving right into the workforce once they leave our program.” [Rick] stated “Anything I’ve asked for, I’ve gotten. So I really don’t have any complaints on that.” [Ruth] said “Supportive administration is awesome because you feel like you can really step out of your comfort zone step out of the box a little bit and try a little bit of everything.” This was interpreted to mean the ability to try different educational strategies within the classroom, which leads to a general feeling of positive organizational support. This can also come in the way of breaking down barriers to entry, as expressed by [Kevin] “With our SAEs we would have it where students would take an SAE class their senior year where they would



actually receive credit as an elective for the school. So there's a lot of things here to where the student doesn't feel like we jump over hurdles in order to be involved in things." [Rusty] stated that a supportive administrator for a classroom agriscience teacher would be "One that understands that with in-classroom instruction and with most in-classroom agriculture teachers that they have more than just a classroom, but they will have other facilities such as the ag mechanics facility, the greenhouse, at least in most cases in most schools they will have at least one or the other and that those facilities, they require a lot of maintenance." He goes further to state that agriscience teachers may perform some of this maintenance, but it should not strictly be their responsibility. "The teacher may be responsible [for equipment maintenance] but ultimately, if there's an issue, that needs to be fixed by having the maintenance department come out."

**Table 6**

*Teacher Perceptions of In-Classroom Administrative Support*

Subthemes	Example Quote
Support from Administration	"I am fortunate that I have a supportive administrator over my school at this point. One who gives me the flexibility to teach what I need to teach and do what I need to do." (Rusty, Nine years of experience)
Discipline	"I have a lot of support from administration. They support us not only with our program needs they support us with discipline issues and it's just made it really easy to stay in the classroom and until it's unbearable then I'll be there". (Eunice, 12 years of experience)
Curriculum and Maintenance of Facilities	"I've purchased multiple different curriculums for credentialing. They've allowed me to have job shadowing days where we take out students to different businesses and jobs." (Kevin, Four years of experience)

## **Teacher Perceptions of Out-of-Classroom Administrative Support**

Teachers were quick to express the differences between the support they receive in the classroom as opposed to the support which they received in regards to their out of classroom activities. These out of classroom activities were seen as equally important to classroom instruction by the majority of the teachers. The following areas were discussed relating to out of classroom support: support of the teacher in regards to out of classroom activities, support of FFA, and support of other out of classroom activities.

[Rusty] stated that “High school administrators should be aware that there is a 3 component model that you know we teach. That for a career and technical education program, that in addition to being a classroom teacher you’re going to have some out of school experiences such SAE and FFA to fully meet the needs of that program.” In another area, he says “Compared to a normal classroom teacher, most agriscience teachers are going to be going on numerous trips. Whether it be leadership conferences, or contests they’re taking their students to career development events, leadership events.” He goes on to further state “Those things occur outside off the normal school year so we’re used to spending a whole lot of time during the summer dealing with FFA events whereas an administrator who is not familiar with that may be thinking “Why’s he going to take students to a weeklong convention in the middle of June when the other teachers are winding down for the year?”” This feeling of an administrator needing to understand how to support an agriscience teacher is supported by [Rick], who said “I think that an ideal support would be understanding that the professional development I sign up to attend or trips I’m going to take kids on are directly related to our organization and our program.” He expounds further “It’s not like an extra thing we do. Competitions, whether it’s workshops, whether it’s taking students to state and district officer interviews, it all goes hand-in-hand, it’s

not just an extra “let’s take a day out of school and do this”. It’s very important the things that have to be done when we can all get together.” [Rusty] states that he believes administrators should “be supportive of that ag teacher during the summer, that they’ll be supportive of at least having some type of an extended contract. So that may be through a 10 or 11 or 12 month contract through the school, or whether that be through an extended-year grant from the state to help cover for those extra activities.” [Rick] shares the same problem as he expressed “The only problem that I’ve had with my administration that was a big deal was this past year when he told me I was only allowed to miss 20 day in the school year for FFA trips or workshops or other things even if they’re required.” Other areas of support which the teachers expressed interest in from the administration was having them physically present at events. [Jeff] stated that a supportive administrator would “make a presence as far as a principal goes. Making a presence at any events that I have. Just being there says a lot to the community as well.” When speaking about who she described as the most supportive of her five administrators she has had over her career, [Rosie] stated that “I have had one principal in particular that really went out of his way to support my program. He attended state convention multiple times and other contests. He drove kids to contests. Overall, he was like I said extremely supportive of the program and fought for us to get to go places and do things and so that was that was one really great experience.”

Support of FFA was cited as an area of interest. [Jeff] stated that “With my high school administrators, they want me to do things, and they want me to succeed as far as FFA and other things in my classroom. “But if I don't do FFA they're completely fine with that as well. So they'll back me if I do it, but if I don't do it that's just fine to them as well. So they're supportive if I'm going to do it but if I'm not going to do it they don't really care.” When discussing the concept of out of classroom activities being integral to teaching agriscience education, [Eunice]

stated “And FFA as a whole is, so any positive support that we would get, that's what we need.” [Kevin] said of his administrators “I have no issues with taking students out of campus. Whether it be for classroom, for field trips, or for FFA events they've always worked with me as well as with other teachers on allowing the students to go to these particular events to be involved outside and above the school level.” He further states “They have been very supportive with FFA week activities and other things that we have done during the school day or to raise support for the program.” [Ruth] stated “As far as outside of classroom specifically with FFA it's important that the administration trust the teacher and trust their judgment calls which I know that's important in classroom as well but outside of classroom for example at a livestock show we're in charge of the student and student safety as well as watch their livestock.” In a story about attempting to take a team to a competition in central Alabama despite having no bus reserved, [Tim] stated that the administrator responded “Yeah, whatever you need to do. Just get a permission slip from the student's parents saying they can ride with you in your vehicle, and have fun and be safe.” He said “So I would say he's very supportive in my experiences with him and he's always willing to help me out and do whatever is best for my chapter it seems anytime I ask him.”

Support of other activities were acknowledged as well. [Tim] stated that “We had plans to go to the peanut festival but the student who were going to support had a family matter come up and backed out. [Administration] was in support of me going to the peanut festival.” [Rusty] stated “So far, in the years I've been at my school, in the three years that I've been at this school I have never been denied a field trip. I've never had any problem with that really. Every field trip request that I have put in has been approved.” [Jeff] stated that effective out of classroom support by administration would be “Someone who would back you on any kind of event in the

community.” [Jeff] further stated “with fundraisers, when I’m doing any kind of a fundraiser they announce it to the community and those kind of activities.” Later in the conversation, he said “I did a plant sale and my principal was very supportive in the plant sale. Other fundraisers that we did not so much.”

**Table 7**

*Teacher Perceptions of Out-of-Classroom Administrative Support*

Subthemes	Example Quote
Support teacher in out of classroom activities	“Compared to a normal classroom teacher, most agriscience teachers are going to be going on numerous trips. Whether it be leadership conferences, or contests they’re taking their students to career development events, leadership events.” (Rusty, Nine years of experience)
Support of FFA	“[Administrators] have been very supportive with FFA week activities and other things that we have done during the school day or to raise support for the program.” (Kevin, Four years of experience)
Support of other out of classroom activities	“So far, in the years I’ve been at my school, in the three years that I’ve been at this school I have never been denied a field trip. I’ve never had any problem with that really. Every field trip request that I have put in has been approved.” (Rusty, Nine years of experience)

**Teacher Perceptions of Measured Administrative Involvement**

Teachers were aware of the amount of time which their administrators spent working with them. The amount of time and effort which an administrator put toward working with the agricultural education program was termed by the researcher as measured administrative involvement. This Measured administrative involvement was considered by the researcher to be

the amount of time and or energy which the administrator put towards the good of the program. The following tones were observed the theme: positive, neutral, and negative.

Positive measured administrative involvement is involvement which is seen as positive or effective by the teacher. [Tim] stated that “My administrators have been good so far. They pretty much have left me to my own and let me prepare my classroom the way I want. I haven’t really been observed a whole lot. I guess if you will, they understand that agriculture is a different world from the world they live in or teach in. So they kind of see that as my area of specialty and let me be.” He further states that “they told me that once I got the position it would be my program and for me to do with it when I wanted to and ever since then you know that they haven’t questioned anything I did or I really even you know ask what’s going on.” [Rusty] stated that “Before I started teaching, I was told that an administrator can help or hurt an ag program. I have found that to be true. I am fortunate that I have a supportive administrator over my school at this point. One who gives me the flexibility to teach what I need to teach and do what I need to do.” [Rick] stated that “I was very lucky to come into a program that was being worked on really hard and the teacher there before me was really going in the right direction with lot of speed in so conversation with the principal let him know you know to let me teach and trust me to keep on doing it and that’s pretty much what happened.” [Rosie] stated “Going back to the principal that I had that was extremely supportive of me, in the classroom he was he was pretty hands off. He knew that I was handling what I needed to handle. He didn’t spend a lot of time in my room. He would pass through occasionally, and by that I mean maybe once every couple months.”

More neutral measured administrative involvement included this quote by [Eunice] “In my experience, you’re not as watched over. We don’t have someone looking over our shoulder and so that just allows us to do our job.” [Larry] stated “They allow me kind of free range. As

long as it's in the course of study they do not sit on top of me or tell me much to do. They're pretty well supportive of about everything you do." "My first school I had administrators that were very hands-off. They kind of let me do what I wanted to do and of course especially when I was just getting started that was easier than to have somebody kind of breathing on my neck and barking directions."

Negative organizational support is feeling left out of the system in some way. Upon continuing, [Rosie] stated that "Since then I've had some more strict principals but now I feel like I kind of know what I'm doing a little bit better. [Larry] states that "At some times you'd like to have your administrator there, but I guess the old saying is "no news is good news". It does make it harder to communicate and become part of the family so to speak." [Rusty] stated "I would say that the tone is positive with my administrator. He's a hard one to figure out. I don't mean that necessarily in a bad way but I'm a quarter mile from the main office so I don't see my administrator very often. Usually, if he comes over here it's because he needs a tire filled up or something like that." While some do not see their administration failing to observe, assist, and support them as a problem; other participants such as [Jeff] create a much more somber tone. "So my administrators, they pretty much leave me alone. Within reason I do whatever I want to because they don't necessarily care about agriculture. It's not very important at the school. There's other Career and Tech Programs that they value more than mine so they leave me alone." [Larry] states "They don't come to you unless you need something out of them. That's the one thing I'd say is that I'd like to see a little more communication." When describing what ideal support would be for her, [Rosie] stated that "if we're doing something cool and I wanted them to come see it then I want to prioritize that because I don't bother him too much with that kind of thing. She further stated "I know that being an elective they have bigger fish to fry

sometimes with the requirements that are put on them for Gen Ed courses and that they're spending a lot of time at least in my experience in those other classrooms so when I invite them to come up I want them to prioritize that. Because it won't happen often, you know, because I value their time and so when I ask to come see me I want him to prioritize that.”

**Table 8**

*Teacher Perceptions of Measured Administrative Involvement*

Subthemes	Example Quote
Positive	“My administrators have been good so far. They pretty much have left me to my own and let me prepare my classroom the way I want.” (Tim, Two years of experience)
Neutral	“You're not in my experience as watched over. We don't have someone looking over our shoulder and so that just allows us to do our job.” (Eunice, Two years of experience)
Negative	“At some times you’d like to have your administrator there, but I guess the old saying is “no news is good news”. It does make it harder to communicate and become part of the family so to speak. (Larry, Two years of experience)

The researcher acknowledges that a majority of the participants expressed that the administrators were very hands-off. The primary reason expressed by the teacher was that the administrators do not understand agriscience education.



## **Chapter 5. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusions**

Objective one addressed teachers' perceptions of their administration as an agriscience education teacher. Findings indicated that agriscience teachers who remained in the classroom felt supported by their administration. The perception of support is in agreement with the theoretical framework of this study. Organizational Support Theory (OST) (Eisenberger et al. 1982) which states that workers who feel supported by their management are more likely reflect positively about their position. Administration support in the secondary agriscience education classroom enables the participants of this study the opportunity to teach the content necessary. Administrative support was vital to the teacher's perception of classroom instructional objectives. This finding support Clemons and Lindner (2019) which found teachers were likely to feel satisfied within their position so long as they felt secure in their position and supported by their employer. Participants largely reported feelings of support and security in their profession while others were more apprehensive when discussing their feelings of administrative interactions.

Participant's experiences with less supportive administration were more likely to feel less satisfied in their position as an agricultural education instructor. This is similar to Kurtessis' (2017) finding that negative organizational support was likely to negatively affect workers. The results indicated there were multiple ways in which teachers measured support from their administration. This finding supports the implication reported by Clemons and Lindner (2019) regarding the dynamic between teachers and administrators and their recommendation for similar studies which address this need.

Participants indicated that disciplinary and classroom management of student behavior were representative of instances where administration involvement and support was needed. Maintaining disciplinary policies and classroom expectations offered a divisive portrayal of teachers' juxtaposition of autonomy and administrative involvement. Veteran secondary school agriscience teachers with five years or more of experience were more likely to suggest that it is the responsibility of the teacher to manage their classroom. Teachers which were less experienced were more likely to request more support from administration. This observation also speaks to the teacher's and administration's mutual sense of trust as outlined by Clemons and Lindner (2019).

Objective two investigated the participants' perceptions of supportive administrators as an out of classroom teacher. Teachers once again set forward that feeling supported in such areas contributed to them choosing to remain in the classroom. Clemons (2019) outlined the possibility of teachers feeling support from administrators in multiple ways, namely "availability, trust, willingness to participate and be present during agricultural education activities, support for professional organizations, etc." All of these were found to be contributing factors within the study. Lack of FFA support was found to be detrimental to the satisfaction of agriculture teachers. This is supported by Smith and Smalley (2018) who reported that that agriculture teachers reported the most job stress with issues relating to experiential learning and program planning and evaluation. If administrators do not feel that the programmatic experiences and SAE are the most important areas of an agriscience education program, why is this the area that the teachers appear to care equally about? This is similarly backed by Crutchfield (2013) who reported that if not managed properly, FFA can lead to unneeded stress by the teacher due to long hours.

Objective three sought to describe the tone of the teacher in-classroom when discussing with administrators. The positive tone which was used with administrators was supported by the frame of the study within organizational support theory (Eisenberger 1982). The positivity which is set forward by the teacher is more likely to be responded to in kind by the administrator. A note was made by the researcher that teachers were quick to discuss the shortcomings of their programs more with myself than they claimed they were willing to with their administrator. This is backed by Clemons and Lindner (2019) who reported that agriscience education teachers were more likely to discuss issues with their peers rather than administrators. As assigned above, teachers were likely to discuss disciplinary issues with administrators, but otherwise attempted to keep the tenor of all conversations with their administrators as positive as possible.

Objective four sought to describe the tone regarding out of classroom activities when discussing with administrators. Tone with administration in regards to classroom is more likely to be overwhelmingly positive in regards to FFA as well. This is in conjunction with findings by Clemons and Lindner (2019) who found that agriscience education teachers are likely to feel more likely to seek career satisfaction through the lens of being an agriculture teacher.

Objective five sought to describe the personal and professional characteristics of the teachers which participated in the study. The teachers within the study represented a variety of educational experiences related to the profession of agriscience education and the number of administrators which they have had. Administrator turnover was seen as a negative by the teachers which is supported by Kurtessis (2017) who stated that administrative turnover contributed to job dissatisfaction.

Agriscience education teachers were found in the emergent theme of Measured Administrative Involvement to by and large have little to no oversight by the administration.

This was noted by nearly every teacher which was interviewed. Possible reasons which contribute to the lack of oversight put forward by the teachers include the principal not understanding agriscience education as a content area, the principal not perceiving agriscience education as an important content area, or the principal feeling that they need to spend the precious time that they have during a school day working with general education teachers.

### **Recommendations**

Further studies should be conducted as to the role of administrators in secondary agriscience education teacher longevity. Further research is suggested to measure the emergent theme put forward by the researcher of Measured Administrative Involvement. Additionally, it is suggested that research should be extended beyond the field of agriscience education into other content areas to contrast the similarities and differences. Further research within the transferability of the experiences of other content area teachers in regards to administration are important to show the differences between content area teachers. A survey of administrators should be conducted as to their perceptions of agriscience educators within their district and their local agriscience education program. This study will allow researchers to evaluate the perceptions of the teachers in conjunction with feelings of administrators. Further research may yield invaluable knowledge as to how agriscience educators are viewed by their administration. This research would benefit the field by presenting a more thorough understanding of the interplay between the contrasting views of the administrator and the secondary agriscience education teacher.

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## Appendix 1

## List of relevant definitions

**Agriscience Education-** the systemic instruction in agriculture and natural resources at the elementary, middle school, secondary, postsecondary, or adult levels for the purpose of preparing people for entry or advancement in agricultural occupations and professions, job creation and entrepreneurship, and agricultural literacy

**Educational Administration-** those who directly oversee the day to day activities of the teacher (principal, assistant principal career and technical education director)

**Experiential Learning-** A model commonly used by educators created for the purpose of bringing relatable skills into the home or workforce for use.

**Institutional Review Board (IRB)-** The committee which ensures compliance of research ethics at a university

**National FFA Organization (FFA)-** A youth leadership organization created for the purpose of enabling the nation's youth through the use of agriculture.

**Organizational Support Theory (OST)-** a theory which suggests that the employee perceives the extent which the organization supports them and their work as an important marker within their work life.

## Appendix 2

Primary Interview Questions
Describe how your experiences with high school administrators have influenced your decision to remain in the classroom.
Describe your experiences with supportive high school level administration.
Describe your perceptions of a supportive administrator as an agriculture education teacher.
Describe the tone of your conversations regarding the agricultural education program with high school administrators.
Describe your perceptions of ideal out-of-classroom program support (FFA, SAE, Livestock Shows, etc.) from your high school administration.
Describe your personal and professional characteristics

### Personal Characteristics

What is your age?

What is your gender?

What was your teacher preparation? (Traditionally Certified, Alternatively Certified, Certified Via a Master's Program, etc.)

How many years have you been teaching agriscience education at the secondary level?

What is the number of principals you have had during your career?

## Appendix 3

# RESEARCH PROTOCOL REVIEW FORM FULL BOARD or EXPEDITED

For information or help contact THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE (ORC), 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University  
Phone: 334-844-5966 e-mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu Web Address: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/index.htm>

Revised 2.1.2014 Submit completed form to [IRBsubmit@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBsubmit@auburn.edu) or 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University 36849.

Form must be populated using Adobe Acrobat / Pro 9 or greater standalone program (do not fill out in browser). Hand written forms will not be accepted.

1. PROPOSED START DATE of STUDY: 09/01/2019

PROPOSED REVIEW CATEGORY (Check one):  FULL BOARD  EXPEDITED

SUBMISSION STATUS (Check one):  NEW  REVISIONS (to address IRB Review Comments)

2. PROJECT TITLE: Beyond the Classroom, Secondary Agriculture Teacher-Perceptions of Secondary Administration: A Qualitative Study.

3. Christian Stanley Graduate Assistant Curr & Teach cls0120@auburn.edu  
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR TITLE DEPT AU E-MAIL

5060 Haley Center, Auburn, AL 36849 618-841-2015 ALTERNATE E-MAIL  
MAILING ADDRESS PHONE

4. FUNDING SUPPORT:  N/A  Internal  External Agency: \_\_\_\_\_  Pending  Received

For federal funding, list agency and grant number (if available). N/A

5a. List any contractors, sub-contractors, other entities associated with this project:  
N/A

b. List any other IRBs associated with this project (including Reviewed, Deferred, Determination, etc.):  
N/A

## PROTOCOL PACKET CHECKLIST

All protocols must include the following items:

- Research Protocol Review Form (All signatures included and all sections completed)  
(Examples of appended documents are found on the OHSR website: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>)
- CITI Training Certificates for all Key Personnel.
- Consent Form or information Letter and any Releases (audio, video or photo) that the participant will sign.
- Appendix A, "Reference List"
- Appendix B if e-mails, flyers, advertisements, generalized announcements or scripts, etc., are used to recruit participants.
- Appendix C if data collection sheets, surveys, tests, other recording instruments, interview scripts, etc. will be used for data collection. Be sure to attach them in the order in which they are listed in # 13c.
- Appendix D if you will be using a debriefing form or include emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists  
(A referral list may be attached to the consent document).
- Appendix E if research is being conducted at sites other than Auburn University or in cooperation with other entities. A permission letter from the site / program director must be included indicating their cooperation or involvement in the project.  
NOTE: If the proposed research is a multi-site project, involving investigators or participants at other academic institutions, hospitals or private research organizations, a letter of IRB approval from each entity is required prior to initiating the project.
- Appendix F - Written evidence of acceptance by the host country if research is conducted outside the United States.

### FOR ORC OFFICE USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED IN ORC: \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ PROTOCOL # \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF IRB REVIEW: \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ APPROVAL CATEGORY: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF IRB APPROVAL: \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ INTERVAL FOR CONTINUING REV \_\_\_\_\_  
COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this Document for use from 01/27/2020 to \_\_\_\_\_  
Protocol # 19-434 EP 2001

6 A. Research Methodology

Please check all descriptors that best apply to the research methodology.

Data Source(s):  New Data  Existing Data

Will recorded data directly or indirectly identify participants?  
 Yes  No

Data collection will involve the use of:

Educational Tests (cognitive diagnostic, aptitude, etc.)  
 Interview  
 Observation  
 Location or Tracking Measures  
 Physical / Physiological Measures or Specimens (see Section 6E.)  
 Surveys / Questionnaires  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Internet / Electronic  
 Audio  
 Video  
 Photos  
 Digital Images  
 Private records or files

6 B. Participant Information

Please check all descriptors that apply to the target population.  
 Males  Females  AU students

Vulnerable Populations  
 Pregnant Women/Fetuses  Prisoners  Institutionalized  
 Children and/or Adolescents (under age 19 in AL)

Persons with:  
 Economic Disadvantages  Physical Disabilities  
 Educational Disadvantages  Intellectual Disabilities

Do you plan to compensate your participants?  Yes  No

6 C. Risks to Participants

Please identify all risks that participants might encounter in this research.

Breach of Confidentiality\*  Coercion  
 Deception  Physical  
 Psychological  Social  
 None  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Note that if the Investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.

6 D. Corresponding Approval/Oversight

- Do you need IBC Approval for this study?  
 Yes  No  
 If yes, BUA # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you need IACUC Approval for this study?  
 Yes  No  
 If yes, PRN # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_
- Does this study involve the Auburn University MRI Center?  
 Yes  No  
 Which MRI(s) will be used for this project? (Check all that apply)  
 3T  7T  
 Does any portion of this project require review by the MRI Safety Advisory Council?  
 Yes  No  
 Signature of MRI Center Representative: \_\_\_\_\_  
Required for all projects involving the AU MRI Center  
 Appropriate MRI Center Representatives:  
 Dr. Thomas S. Denney, Director AU MRI Center  
 Dr. Ron Beyers, MR Safety Officer

7. PROJECT ASSURANCES Beyond the Classroom, Secondary Agriculture Teacher Perceptions of Secondary Administration: A Qualitative Study.

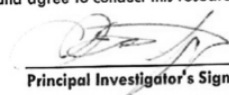
**A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSURANCES**

1. I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
2. I understand that, as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the Auburn University IRB.
3. I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with Auburn University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
4. I agree to comply with all Auburn policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following:
  - a. Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol
  - b. Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the Office of Research Compliance
  - c. Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form
  - d. Promptly reporting significant adverse events and/or effects to the Office of Research Compliance in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise ORC, by letter, in advance of such arrangements.
6. I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
7. I will prepare and submit a renewal request and supply all supporting documents to the Office of Research Compliance before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
8. I will prepare and submit a final report upon completion of this research project.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand and agree to conduct this research project in accordance with the assurances listed above.

Christian Stanley

Printed name of Principal Investigator



Principal Investigator's Signature

1/22/20

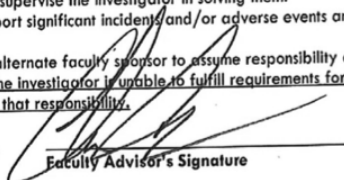
Date

**B. FACULTY ADVISOR/SPONSOR'S ASSURANCES**

1. I have read the protocol submitted for this project for content, clarity, and methodology.
2. By my signature as faculty advisor/sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol.
3. I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress. Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
4. I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant incidents and/or adverse events and/or effects to the ORC in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the ORC by letter of such arrangements. If the investigator is unable to fulfill requirements for submission of renewals, modifications or the final report, I will assume that responsibility.

Chris Clemens

Printed name of Faculty Advisor / Sponsor



Faculty Advisor's Signature

1-22-20

Date

**C. DEPARTMENT HEAD'S ASSURANCE**

By my signature as department head, I certify that I will cooperate with the administration in the application and enforcement of all Auburn University policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection and ethical treatment of human participants by researchers in my department.

Printed name of Department Head

Department Head's Signature

1/22/2020

Date



**8. PROJECT OVERVIEW: Prepare an abstract that includes:**

(350 word maximum, in language understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study):

**a) A summary of relevant research findings leading to this research proposal:**

(Cite sources; include a "Reference List" as Appendix A.)

**b) A brief description of the methodology, including design, population, and variables of interest**

a. The question of teacher perceptions of their needs from administration has long been a point of contention. With American Education rankings falling behind, many educational policies have been put forward to assist in the execution of effective teaching practices. Educational research has shown that effective teaching has a greater impact than other factors (environmental, demographic, or otherwise) on a student's achievement (Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). Additionally, principals and similar forms of administration are the evaluators for these teachers in most cases. Instructional dialog between teachers and administrators has been shown to be of high importance (Sullivan & Glanz, 1984). Using questions as adapted from Paulsen and Martin (2014) and Clemons and Lindner (2019), secondary agricultural educators will be interviewed to assess perceptions of supportive administration for secondary agriculture programs.

b. The purposes of this qualitative study is to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of quality administrative support within the department. Research will use semistructured interviews as prescribed by Merriam (2009) to collect data for the study. An interview guide (in appendix) will and advisors be used to guide data collection. Participants will be contacted by the PI and a pseudonym provided. Only the PI will have access to any identifiable information for the duration of the research collection process. At the conclusion of the study the PI will destroy codes potentially linking individuals and pseudonyms. This is coding is needed for proper organization of participants. Participants respond in person (telephone interview) will have their responses captured in audio form by the investigators. Audio data files will be stored securely (sd card encrypted) with only the pseudonym associated with the participant. These audio files will be saved as mp.3 in Haley Center 5060 on an encrypted laptop. Audio files will be saved by pseudonym only. This audio data will be transcribed by the PI and placed into transcription format for analysis with no identifiable information. The investigators will use trustworthiness techniques as prescribed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Participants identities will be protected and pseudonyms or coding will be used in reporting of the data.

**9. PURPOSE.**

**a. Clearly state the purpose of this project and all research questions, or aims.**

In keeping with the motivation of discerning what factors contribute to attrition of secondary agriculture teachers, this project will research agriculture educators' perceptions of the importance of administration to their program. The objectives of this study are to 1) Better understand and describe characteristics of agricultural educators' relationships with their administrator; 2) Determine teachers' perceptions of the strengths and needs associated with their administrations' work within their Agriculture Education department; and 3) Identifying what effect the relationship between administration and the teacher has on the teacher's program.

**b. How will the results of this project be used? (e.g., Presentation? Publication? Thesis? Dissertation?)**

The purpose of this project will be for publication within appropriate journals as well as for writing my thesis.

10. **KEY PERSONNEL.** Describe responsibilities. Include information on research training or certifications related to this project. **CITI is required.** Be as specific as possible. (Include additional personnel in an attachment.) *All key personnel must attach CITI certificates of completion.*

Principle Investigator Christian Stanley Title: Graduate Assistant E-mail address cls0120@auburn.edu  
Dept / Affiliation: Curr & Teach

Roles / Responsibilities:

Data Collection, Interviewing, Data Discernment, Evaluation of results, thesis development, journal article development, recruitment, consent

Individual: Dr. Christopher Clemons Title: Asst. Professor E-mail address cac0132@auburn.edu  
Dept / Affiliation: Curr & Teach

Roles / Responsibilities:

Supervision, Evaluation of results, journal article development

Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
Dept / Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
Dept / Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
Dept / Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
Dept / Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Roles / Responsibilities:

11. **LOCATION OF RESEARCH.** List all locations where data collection will take place. (School systems, organizations, businesses, buildings and room numbers, servers for web surveys, etc.) Be as specific as possible. Attach permission letters in Appendix E. (See sample letters at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>)

Data collection will take place in Haley Center, office 5060 using internet audio software (zoom, skype, etc.)

12. PARTICIPANTS.

- a. Describe the participant population you have chosen for this project including inclusion or exclusion criteria for participant selection.

Check here if using existing data, describe the population from whom data was collected, & include the # of data files.

The participant population in this study (n=50) consists of practicing secondary agricultural education teachers in the states of Alabama and Illinois (n=50). Participants must have a teaching certificate in agricultural education, have taught for a minimum of three years, and be a member of the National Association of Agricultural Educators.

- b. Describe, step-by-step, in layman's terms, all procedures you will use to recruit participants. Include in Appendix B a copy of all e-mails, flyers, advertisements, recruiting scripts, invitations, etc., that will be used to invite people to participate. (See sample documents at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>.)

1. 50 Random participants will be chosen from lists of Alabama and Illinois agriculture educators
2. Potential subjects will be contacted via email
3. Email will explain purpose of the study
4. Participants will be asked to reply to the email if they are interested in participating
5. The internet audio will be arranged with the arranged with the participant and will discuss the consent process, expectations, and participant questions.
6. Participants will read and sign the consent letter and return via email to the P.I.

c. What is the minimum number of participants you need to validate the study?  $\frac{15}{50}$

How many participants do you expect to recruit?

Is there a limit on the number of participants you will include in the study?  No  Yes - the # is \_\_\_\_\_

- d. Describe the type, amount and method of compensation and/or incentives for participants.

(If no compensation will be given, check here: )

Select the type of compensation:  Monetary  Incentives  
 Raffle or Drawing incentive (Include the chances of winning.)  
 Extra Credit (State the value)  
 Other

Description:

13. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS.

- a. Describe, step-by-step, all procedures and methods that will be used to consent participants. If a waiver is being requested, check each waiver you are requesting, describe how the project meets the criteria for the waiver.
- Waiver of Consent (including using existing data)
  - Waiver of Documentation of Consent (use of Information Letter)
  - Waiver of Parental Permission (for college students)

After a participant agrees to participate through email, a consent form will be emailed to them asking for signature and to be returned to the P.I. Upon receipt of the consent email a time will be arranged for each participant where the P.I. will explain on the phone the consent process, expectations of the research, and participant questions. After the first call and if the participant agrees both verbally and with the signed consent, a second phone call will be scheduled to conduct the interview.

- b. Describe the research design and methods you will use to address your purpose. Include a clear description of when, where and how you will collect all data for this project. Include specific information about the participants' time and effort commitment. *(NOTE: Use language that would be understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study. Without a complete description of all procedures, the Auburn University IRB will not be able to review this protocol. If additional space is needed for this section, save the information as a .PDF file and insert after page 7 of this form.)*

The population for this study will consist of 50 agriscience educators, grades 6-12 in the states of Alabama and Illinois. A random stratified sample of the population will be conducted. The randomization will yield a sample of 50 participants who will be contacted through email. Participation will require 30 minutes of interview. This project will begin September 1, 2019 and conclude on March 30, 2020 and will require 30 minutes of the participants time. Procedures followed for consent as described in #13A. Participants will return the signed consent form. There will be no link between data and participants. A coded list containing pseudonyms and legal names is necessary for scheduling interviews only. At the completion of each recorded audio session legal names will be deleted for the corresponding participant and only listed by pseudonyms. After the interview there is no need to be able to identify the participant therefore at the conclusion of the study no identifiable information will be maintained. The P.I. will transcribe the audio files into text based files for analysis and axial coding between Stanley and Clemons. No identifiable information will link participant responses to participant names.

13. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS. *Continued*

- c. List all data collection instruments used in this project, in the order they appear in Appendix C. (e.g., surveys and questionnaires in the format that will be presented to participants, educational tests, data collection sheets, interview questions, audio/video taping methods etc.)

1. Consent Form
2. Audio recording description
3. Interview script

- d. Data analysis: Explain how the data will be analyzed.

Audio files containing only the pseudonyms of the participants will be analyzed using axial coding and framed within grounded theory. A neo-positivist approach is optimal for qualitative design when investigating the rationale of decisions made by respondents. Only the PI will have access to audio files and will be responsible for all transcription of interviews.

14. RISKS & DISCOMFORTS: List and describe all of the risks that participants might encounter in this research. *If you are using deception in this study, please justify the use of deception and be sure to attach a copy of the debriefing form you plan to use in Appendix D. (Examples of possible risks are in section #6D on page 2)*

breach of confidentiality

15. **PRECAUTIONS.** Identify and describe all precautions you have taken to eliminate or reduce risks as listed in #14. If the participants can be classified as a "vulnerable" population, please describe additional safeguards that you will use to assure the ethical treatment of these individuals. Provide a copy of any emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists in Appendix D. (Samples can be found online at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm#precautions>)

This risk is mitigated through storage of the audio files on a secure and encrypted sd card, laptop and stored in my office. Pseudonyms are used to remove identifiable information between the respondent and their interview. At the conclusion of each interview, legal names are deleted leaving only the pseudonym. At the conclusion of the study all audio files will be deleted and the sd card reformatted thereby removing any link between participants and their responses. The transfer of the audio file to text will be completed by the researcher using Microsoft Word. After a quality transcript has been produced, the recordings will be destroyed.

If using the Internet or other electronic means to collect data, what confidentiality or security precautions are in place to protect (or not collect) identifiable data? Include protections used during both the collection and transfer of data.

Participants will be provided pseudonyms for the purposes of recording interviews. The recordings will be maintained in my office, Haley 5060 in a locked file cabinet on an SD card where only the faculty advisor and the Primary Investigator will have access. The researcher will transcribe the audio to text and at the conclusion of the study all audio files will be destroyed thereby removing any direct link between participants and their pseudonym.

16. **BENEFITS.**

- a. List all realistic direct benefits participants can expect by participating in this specific study.  
(Do not include "compensation" listed in #12d.) Check here if there are no direct benefits to participants.

They will be facilitating in the understanding of continued agricultural educator teacher success. They will be adding to the wealth of knowledge within their field.

- b. List all realistic benefits for the general population that may be generated from this study.

The general population can expect benefits from understanding the teacher's mindset in regards to what effect administrators are have on thier agriculture education programs. This may allow educators and administrators to understand what expectations and perceptions might be had of thier programs.

**17. PROTECTION OF DATA.**

**a. Data are collected:**

- Anonymously with no direct or indirect coding, link, or awareness of who participated in the study (Skip to e)
- Confidentially, but without a link of participant's data to any identifying information (collected as "confidential" but recorded and analyzed as "anonymous") (Skip to e)
- Confidentially with collection and protection of linkages to identifiable information

**b. If data are collected with identifiers or as coded or linked to identifying information, describe the identifiers collected and how they are linked to the participant's data.**

Personal characteristic data will be collected during the interview and the participant assigned a pseudonym. At the conclusion of the study all direct links between participants and responses will be destroyed.

**c. Justify your need to code participants' data or link the data with identifying information.**

Coding is needed to maintain records of completion and contact information until they have completed the interview. Once a participant is completed, all identifiable information will be deleted.

**d. Describe how and where identifying data and/or code lists will be stored. (Building, room number?) Describe how the location where data is stored will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security. If applicable, state specifically where any IRB-approved and participant-signed consent documents will be kept on campus for 3 years after the study ends.**

Audio files, transcribed interviews, and consent forms will be stored in Haley 5060. Triangulated data analysis will be stored in Haley 5060. Signed consent forms for this study will be emailed to the P.I. and securely stored using Box software. Security protocols will be used as described (Page 9, #15).

**e. Describe how and where the data will be stored (e.g., hard copy, audio cassette, electronic data, etc.), and how the location where data is stored is separated from identifying data and will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security**

Recorded audio will be stored on an sd card in Haley 5060. Coding lists will be stored separately in a locked file cabinet in Haley 5060. At the conclusion of each interview, legal names will be removed from the participant list leaving only the pseudonym. At the conclusion of all interviews, all audio data files will be deleted and the sd card reformatted

**f. Who will have access to participants' data?**

*(The faculty advisor should have full access and be able to produce the data in the case of a federal or institutional audit.)*

The primary investigator and the faculty advisor will have access to the participants' data.

**g. When is the latest date that identifying information or links will be retained and how will that information or links be destroyed? (Check here if only anonymous data will be retained )**

Identifying information or links will be destroyed upon completion of the interviews once transcription is complete.

## References

- Clemons, C. A., & Lindner, J. R. (2019). Teacher longevity and career satisfaction in the secondary agricultural education classroom. *Journal of Agricultural Education, 60*(1), 186-201. doi: 10.5032/jae.2019.01186
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Paulsen T. H., & Martin, R. A. (2014). Supervision of agricultural educators in secondary schools: What do teachers want from their principals? *Journal of Agricultural Education, 55*(2), 136-153. doi: 10.5032/jae.2014.02136
- Sullivan, S., & Glanz, J. (2000). *Supervision that improves teaching: Strategies and techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Wright, P. S., Horn, S. P., & Sanders, W. L. (1997). Teacher and classroom context effects on student achievement: Implications for teacher evaluation. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 11*(1), 57-67. doi: 10.1023/A:1007999204543



## Appendix 4

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)**  
**COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2**  
**COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS\***

\* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Christian Stanley (ID: 7745646)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
- **Institution Email:** cls0120@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Curriculum and Teaching
- **Phone:** 334-844-4411
  
- **Curriculum Group:** IRB Additional Modules
- **Course Learner Group:** Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
  
- **Record ID:** 29999359
- **Completion Date:** 10-Jan-2019
- **Expiration Date:** 09-Jan-2022
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score\*:** 80

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	10-Jan-2019	4/5 (80%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)**  
**COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2**  
**COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT\*\***

\*\* NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- Name: Christian Stanley (ID: 7745646)
- Institution Affiliation: Auburn University (ID: 964)
- Institution Email: cls0120@auburn.edu
- Institution Unit: Curriculum and Teaching
- Phone: 334-844-4411
  
- Curriculum Group: IRB Additional Modules
- Course Learner Group: Research In Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE
- Stage: Stage 1 - Basic Course
  
- Record ID: 29999359
- Report Date: 16-Sep-2019
- Current Score\*\*: 80

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Research In Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	10-Jan-2019	4/5 (80%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)**  
**COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2**  
**COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS\***

\* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- Name: Christian Stanley (ID: 7745646)
- Institution Affiliation: Auburn University (ID: 964)
- Institution Email: cls0120@auburn.edu
- Institution Unit: Curriculum and Teaching
- Phone: 334-844-4411
  
- Curriculum Group: IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel - Basic/Refresher
- Course Learner Group: IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel
- Stage: Stage 1 - Basic Course
- Description: Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Key Personnel (including AU Faculty, Staff and Students) and Faculty Advisors Involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.
  
- Record ID: 29999361
- Completion Date: 11-Jan-2019
- Expiration Date: 10-Jan-2022
- Minimum Passing: 80
- Reported Score\*: 85

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127)	10-Jan-2019	3/3 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	10-Jan-2019	4/5 (80%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	10-Jan-2019	4/5 (80%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	10-Jan-2019	4/5 (80%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	10-Jan-2019	5/5 (100%)
Students in Research (ID: 1321)	10-Jan-2019	5/5 (100%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928)	11-Jan-2019	3/5 (60%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing Institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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## COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

### COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2 COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT\*\*

\*\* NOTE: Scores on this [Transcript Report](#) reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Christian Stanley (ID: 7745646)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
- **Institution Email:** cls0120@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Curriculum and Teaching
- **Phone:** 334-844-4411
  
- **Curriculum Group:** IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Key Personnel (including AU Faculty, Staff and Students) and Faculty Advisors involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.
  
- **Record ID:** 29999361
- **Report Date:** 16-Sep-2019
- **Current Score\*\*:** 85

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Students in Research (ID: 1321)	10-Jan-2019	5/5 (100%)
Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127)	10-Jan-2019	3/3 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	10-Jan-2019	4/5 (80%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	10-Jan-2019	4/5 (80%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	10-Jan-2019	4/5 (80%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	10-Jan-2019	5/5 (100%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928)	11-Jan-2019	3/5 (60%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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## COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

### COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2 COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT\*\*

\*\* NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Christian Stanley (ID: 7745646)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
- **Institution Email:** cls0120@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Curriculum and Teaching
- **Phone:** 334-844-4411
  
- **Curriculum Group:** IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Key Personnel (including AU Faculty, Staff and Students) and Faculty Advisors involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.
  
- **Record ID:** 29999361
- **Report Date:** 16-Sep-2019
- **Current Score\*\*:** 85

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Students in Research (ID: 1321)	10-Jan-2019	5/5 (100%)
Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127)	10-Jan-2019	3/3 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	10-Jan-2019	4/5 (80%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	10-Jan-2019	4/5 (80%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	10-Jan-2019	4/5 (80%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	10-Jan-2019	5/5 (100%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928)	11-Jan-2019	3/5 (60%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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### COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2 COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT\*\*

\*\* NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Christian Stanley (ID: 7745646)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
- **Institution Email:** cls0120@auburn.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Curriculum and Teaching
- **Phone:** 334-844-4411
  
- **Curriculum Group:** Responsible Conduct of Research for Social and Behavioral
- **Course Learner Group:** Social, Behavioral and Education Sciences RCR
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - RCR
- **Description:** This course is for investigators, staff and students with an interest or focus in **Social and Behavioral** research. This course contains text, embedded case studies AND quizzes.
  
- **Record ID:** 29999360
- **Report Date:** 16-Sep-2019
- **Current Score\*\*:** 91

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Research Involving Human Subjects (RCR-Basic) (ID: 13566)	11-Jan-2019	5/5 (100%)
Plagiarism (RCR-Basic) (ID: 15156)	11-Jan-2019	5/5 (100%)
Authorship (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16597)	11-Jan-2019	4/5 (80%)
Collaborative Research (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16598)	11-Jan-2019	4/5 (80%)
Conflicts of Interest (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16599)	11-Jan-2019	5/5 (100%)
Data Management (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16600)	11-Jan-2019	4/5 (80%)
Mentoring (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16602)	11-Jan-2019	5/5 (100%)
Peer Review (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16603)	11-Jan-2019	5/5 (100%)
Research Misconduct (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16604)	11-Jan-2019	4/5 (80%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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## Appendix 5





COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

INFORMATION LETTER

For a Research Study entitled

***Beyond the Classroom: Secondary Agriculture Teacher Perceptions of Secondary Administration: A Qualitative Study***

You are invited to participate in a qualitative research study on your perceptions of secondary administration and its effect on your job performance. The objectives of this study are to understand the role of administrators within the context of agriscience education and to attempt to explore any bearing this may have on teacher attrition or longevity. The study is being conducted by Graduate Student Christian Stanley under the direction of Assistant Professor Christopher Clemons in the Auburn University Department of Curriculum and Teaching's Agriscience Education Program. You are invited to participate because you are an agriscience education teacher, have taught a minimum of three years, are a member of NAAE and are age 22 years or older.

What will be involved if you participate? Your participation is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked a series of questions using an interview guide and your responses will be recorded using audio capture software. Your total time commitment will be approximately 30 minutes.

Are there any risks or discomforts? The risks associated with participating in this study are minimal and no more than encountered in everyday life. To minimize these risks, data will be collected confidentially using pseudonyms in place of legal names.

Are there any benefits to yourself or others? There are no direct benefits to your participation in this study. Benefits within the field of agriscience education will aid practicing teachers in developing skill sets that are transferrable for successful careers to new or mid-career agriscience teachers.

Will you receive compensation for participating? You will not receive any compensation for your participation.

Participant Initials \_\_\_\_\_

5040 Haley Center  
Auburn University,  
AL 36849-5212

Telephone:  
334-844-4434

Fax:  
334-844-6789

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

Are there any costs? Other than your time there are no costs associated with your participation

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time by not responding or not returning the distributed consent form. If you choose to withdraw, your name will be removed and any data collected. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the College of Education, Curriculum and Teaching, and the Agriscience Education program.

Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous. We will protect your privacy and the data you provide by maintaining your confidential responses. At the conclusion of each interview all identifiable information will be deleted leaving only the pseudonym. Information collected through your participation may be used presentation at academic conferences, journals, population publications and for thesis writing.

If you have any questions about this study please ask them now or contact Christian Stanley at [cls0120@auburn.edu](mailto:cls0120@auburn.edu) or Dr. Christopher Clemons at [cac0132@auburn.edu](mailto:cac0132@auburn.edu).

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at [IRBadmin@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBadmin@auburn.edu) or [IRBChair@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBChair@auburn.edu).

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, THE DATA YOU PROVIDE WILL SERVE AS YOUR AGREEMENT TO DO SO. THIS LETTER IS YOURS TO KEEP.

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator Obtaining Consent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Christopher Clemons, Ph.D. \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

5040 Haley Center  
Auburn University,  
AL 36849-5212

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