“IT DIDN’T MATTER THAT I HAD NO ONE TO ASK, I KNEW THE BEST ANSWER”
THE CHARTER SCHOOL CEO: LONELY, OVERCONFIDENT, AND UNDERPREPARED

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ABSTRACT

The advent of charter schools has been one of the biggest reform initiatives in the history of schooling in the US: charters have significantly altered the landscape of many of our country's largest public-school systems (Bracey, 2002; Hassel, 2009; Hill, 2006). Recent studies have examined a number of aspects of charter school leadership; however, there has been little research on charter school chief executive officers (CEO). The CEO is a relatively new role that oversees the entire charter school or network and is almost always independent of the principal. This mixed-methods study examined the organizational dynamics of Philadelphia Charter School CEOs by using a survey, personal interviews, and quantitative data analysis to obtain information regarding all CEOs of Philadelphia. Interviews were focused on the CEO job role and day-to-day duties, CEO successes and struggles, and what prior experiences prepared CEOs for this role. The quantitative findings show two correlations: suggesting that male CEOs and CEOs of stand-alone schools are in charge of schools with higher school performance. Five common themes emerged across CEOs during interviews: loneliness, overconfidence, under preparedness, non-traditional career path, and having a prior work experience in the field of education was crucial to success. Lastly, it was discovered that certifications and prior education experience were not commonplace for current CEOs, 19 of the 64 CEOs in this study did not have prior education experience.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to some of my former colleagues that I have had the honor of working and learning with throughout my career as an educator in Philadelphia charter schools. They helped to shape me into the educator, and person, that I am today and for that I am forever grateful. Their brilliance, passion, and dedication to Philadelphia education is unmatched and they continue to inspire me every day.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Overview

As of 2016, Philadelphia had 86 charter schools serving over 60,000 students annually. All of these schools are authorized and periodically monitored by the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). Unlike district schools though, most charter schools have a different leadership structure consisting of not only a principal but also a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO of a charter school is a relatively new role in education. The CEO is directly responsible for every facet of the charter school or network of charter schools. Although CEOs have a significant role in the Philadelphia school system, to date there has been very little research conducted regarding their job roles, successes, positions, influence, or experiences. This mixed-methods study delves into the role of the CEO within the Philadelphia Charter School Network and deeply examines several aspects of who fulfills the role of CEO and how they fulfill this role. Specifically, I examine their background and prior work experiences before becoming CEOs, demographics, salaries, certifications, years of experience in the role, job responsibilities, characteristics of CEOs who lead successful schools, and their perceptions of their role. This was done by using a survey, interviews, and large national, state, and local data sets to develop a better understanding of the CEO role.

Background

My interest in this topic stems from my personal experiences as a teacher in the Philadelphia charter school world. When I first started teaching, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) was on a hiring freeze and thus my only options for employment were in the charter sector. Since my first job I have worked at three different charter

schools throughout Philadelphia and have had a wide range of experiences. Like all new teachers, I was naïve and couldn't have possibly predicted the challenges I would face throughout my first year of teaching. Something I was very underprepared for though was how to teach in a charter school organization and how these organizations were structured. My formal preparation for teaching really didn't touch on charter schools and so I was instantly intrigued by how different the organizations were run. The most surprising part about my new job though, was having to tell other people about it. One would assume that explaining you are a teacher would be easy, but when working in a charter school, I found this to be a challenge.

We all have them, the conversations and small talk about what we do for a living. You meet someone new or catch up with an old friend and the question of 'So what do you do?' inevitably is asked. At that point, you find yourself sharing a little quasi-rehearsed tidbit, attempting to sum up how you spend nearly a third of your time. For many, this might be easy. An elevator speech can deliver enough information to accurately depict one's occupation and may prompt only a few follow-up questions. For instance, 'I am a medical malpractice lawyer' and 'I am a pediatric nurse' offer enough information for an average listener to understand what it is that person does. After receiving my master's in bioinformatics and attempting to explain genomics and evolutionary DNA, I was excited to begin my teaching career and have a short and sweet answer to that inescapable question: 'I teach high school biology'. How naive.

It became clear almost immediately that I was never going to have an easy time explaining what it is I do. Saying I teach high school biology just did not cut it. While I think that all teachers could relate to this feeling and sympathize with the fact that

educators do so much more than our one title suggests, it became obvious that the main reason I was having an exorbitant amount of trouble was because I worked at a charter school in Philadelphia. The conversations I had about my teaching career often centered around the judgements and misconceptions held by the public about charter schools.

These conversations led to me inevitably correcting the various misconceptions that many people had regarding charter schools: “No, they are not private.” “Yes, we have to accept everyone or hold a lottery.” “No, we can’t be selective.” Most disturbing though, was that after explaining that I work in a Philadelphia charter school, most people breathed a sigh of relief and immediately said something along the lines of “how lucky” I was to be there, in a great charter school, a place so much better than a traditional Philadelphia public school. It upset me that so many people had strong opinions about public education, charter schools, and school choice; yet, at the same time, they lacked even a rudimentary understanding of those institutions.

I became better at explaining what I did and addressing the misconceptions early on, like any excellent educator would do. But I began to notice that, as I would explain the charter school landscape in Philadelphia people always got hung up on the same few facts. They were surprised to find out that most Pennsylvania charter schools performed the same as their district counterparts; some better, and some much worse (Public Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY), 2017). In Philadelphia, 61 percent of charter schools outperformed traditional public schools (TPS) in math and reading targets (The Center for Research on Educational Outcomes (CREDO), 2015) Without fail, however, the people I talked with were most surprised to learn about the role of the charter school CEO, because they believed that CEOs ran businesses, not schools. They were surprised

by CEO salaries, the fact there are no required certifications for becoming a CEO, and the lack of CEO oversight: only two people working in the charter office who were tasked with overseeing the 86 Philadelphia Charter schools.

All of the research, my personal experience in charter schools, and the media coverage of charter schools and school choice piqued my interest in charter school reform. My curiosity about the CEO role in the school also grew as I became more entrenched in the charter school world. In the past seven years as an educator, I have had the opportunity to work at three different Philadelphia charter schools. I worked under five very different CEOs with different leadership styles, different prior work experience, and who led very different schools. Two of the three charter schools I worked at are now closed. Both had a variety of reasons why they were forced to close but it pushed me to consider what could have been done differently to help the schools succeed.

My unique experience in the Philadelphia charter school world allowed me to see firsthand the inner workings of charter schools and made me question the current state of all charter schools in Philadelphia. I wanted to know if what I was experiencing regarding charter school teaching and charter school leadership was the norm. Furthermore, I wanted to learn more about charter school leadership and what the broader education community could do to promote positive change and growth in charter schools and avoid closing schools. In 2014, I made the decision to enroll in Temple University and begin the work to obtain my Doctor of Educational Leadership. While my experiences have shaped me as an educator and as a researcher, my schooling has taught me to address the biases that I had regarding charter schools. My research has focused on charter schools because these schools are now a permanent fixture in Philadelphia.

Currently there are 86 charter schools operating in Philadelphia that serve over one-third of the student population. Since the institution of Pennsylvania charter schools in 1997, there have been no amendments to the state law which established these institutions. What started as a small neighborhood alternative to typical public schools (TPS), Philadelphia charter schools have become the choice of education for over 60,000 students. Charter Schools have scaled up and expanded into both large charter management organizations (CMOs) governed by a single CEO and single schools governed by a CEO. Millions of tax dollars are being diverted from the SDP into various charter schools, the total accounts for roughly 30 percent of the SDP budget (Hardy, 2015). With so much changing and so much at stake, it is imperative that charter schools are studied more closely, and that leadership is examined in detail. And so, the heart of this dissertation attempts to discern, who are the CEOs of Philadelphia Charter Schools and what do they do?

Statement of Problem

Successful businesses and organizations all have at least one thing in common: strong leadership. Educational institutions are no exception (Peterson et al., 2003; Leithwood & Reihl, 2003). Since 1997, the charter school movement in Pennsylvania has greatly altered the educational landscape, especially in Philadelphia. The School District of Philadelphia (SDP) is the sixth largest district in the country serving over 200,000 students (philasd.org, 2018). Nearly one-third of these students choose to attend a charter school in lieu of their neighborhood school.

All charter schools in this study, and until recently, were initially approved and periodically monitored by the School Reform Commission (SRC). In June of 2018, the

SRC dissolved which put the Philadelphia School Board (PSB) back in charge of authorizing charter schools. With the exception of the required five-year renewal paperwork, they have very little oversight. The day-to-day operations, budget, and overall management decisions are left to the discretion of the CEO and the Charter School Board (CSB). This has lessened public control and entrusted private individuals and companies to educate our students. We, as educators and citizens, have a duty to ensure that tax dollars are being spent wisely and students are getting the best possible education.

Over the past 20 years, there has been a lot of research surrounding charter schools. Most research tends to compare charter schools to traditional public schools (TPS) by looking at student outcomes, test scores, and school safety. There has also been a lot of focus on charter school principals and teachers regarding pedagogical methods, turnover, and job satisfaction. The previous research on the principal as the charter school leader found that charter school principals had an extremely different focus than TPS principals that included over 40 tasks that were not commonly consistent with the TPS principal (Cummings & Coryn, 2009). This could have very well been a contributing reason to why the somewhat new role of CEO was first created. Since the principal is normally considered the instructional leader in the building, it is possible that the CEO role grew out of the fact that managing a charter school and being an instructional leader was not possible for one person. Thus, it is not surprising that research specifically naming the CEO as leader of the charter school is not as common. This is extremely problematic because CEOs have an immense amount of power in an organization. CEOs, formally called charter school leaders, are tasked with a wide variety of serious responsibilities that are crucial to running a successful school. Surprisingly, there is no

certification or credential required to become a CEO. Knowing more about this role is imperative to improving charter schools and strengthening the charter movement.

Significance of Study

This study examines the role of the charter school CEO in Philadelphia and contributes much needed information to the field of education, which currently has a general lack of literature regarding this topic. Those who will benefit from this study include: charter school authorizers, current and future CEOs, chart school boards (CSBs), and colleges of education throughout the country. All of these parties can stand to learn more about this crucial role of the charter school CEO within the school system. The more that is known about this role within schools and what is needed to better support CEOs, the more those parties listed can improve their CEOs experience, hiring process, and overall leadership of their school or network.

There are three major reasons why the findings of this study are an important contribution to the existing research regarding charter schools. First, there may be a need for more formalized education programs for those desiring to become a CEO. Currently there are so many programs that specialize in training individuals for all other roles within a school: e.g., principals, curriculum specialists, reading specialists. Yet, there is no specific program or set of classes that can prepare an individual for the unique role of charter school CEO. It may be possible as well that there is no formal education needed and that energy instead should continue to be spent educating school principals and teachers. Second, for CSBs and schools looking to hire a CEO, is it possible that there is a lack of consensus about what qualities a CEO should have and what skills and prior work experience might be the most useful. For example, should a CEO have a business

background? Is principal experience a must for a CEO? Lastly, charter school authorizers may benefit from knowing more about this role because many times the founder of a new charter school assumes the CEO role or handpicks someone to become the CEO. Therefore, charter school authorizers should have a good idea about what they are looking for in a CEO and what qualities and prior work experience are likely to contribute to a successful school. Authorizers may benefit from having baseline qualifications and requirements for a CEO candidate before authorizing a charter.

Research Questions

1. Who are the CEOs of Philadelphia Charter Schools?
    a. Is there an association between the characteristics of a CEO and charter school performance?
2. What are their major job roles and responsibilities of charter school CEOs?
3. How do CEOs describe their experiences in this role?

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

The History of Charter Schools

The United States is in a dynamic time right now regarding the future of education. The president, Donald Trump, and the controversial Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education, make clear that the federal government will focus more on privatization and school choice than in the past (Strauss, Douglas-Gabriel, & Balingit, 2018). Although it is true that the federal government cannot directly interfere with education, it does have the ability to use resource allocation to influence state policy and thus alter the education landscape. It is likely that charter schools are a permanent fixture of the education landscape and will continue to expand under the current administration (Hobbs, 2017). It is imperative that politicians and leaders in education make informed decisions regarding the expansion of charter schools. More education research is needed to deeply examine the elements of charter schools.

Since the first charter school was established in Minnesota in 1991, the number of charters has grown rapidly, and charter schools have arguably become one of the biggest change to public education in the past 100 years. In the 2013 – 2014 school year, there were over 6,500 charter schools in the United States, serving more than 2.5 million students (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2016). Charter schools have required changes at the local and state levels and governments have struggled to adapt and keep up with these changes (Hill, 2006). Even authorizing institutions such as the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) have been questioned for their inability to provide thorough oversight of their charter institutions (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, 2016). Charter schools have created an atmosphere of competition within the

education community that did not exist before (Bracey, 2002). This market-like approach to education is something that is highly controversial.

Over 5 percent of students in the United States now attend a charter school (NAPCS, 2015). While charter school legislation has been passed in 42 states, most charter schools are located in urban settings in California, Arizona, Colorado, Louisiana, and Pennsylvania (NAPCS, 2015). The highest enrollment percentage of public-school students include large cities such as New Orleans, Detroit, Flint, and Washington D.C. where there are 93%, 53%, 47%, and 44% of the eligible students enrolled respectively. Additionally, charter schools serve a higher percentage of students who receive free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) compared to TPS (NAPCS, 2015). For example, in 2013-14, charter schools had 37 percent of their students eligible for FRPL whereas TPS had only 24 percent eligible (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

The State of Pennsylvania legalized charter schools in 1997 (Charter School Law, 1997), since that time charter schools have evolved mainly in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The School District of Philadelphia (SDP) has the 7th highest student enrollment percentage nationally with 33% of their students enrolled in a charter school as of 2015. This is a large increase from 2006 when just 13% of students were enrolled in a charter school in Philadelphia (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2015). According to the most recent data from the SDP (2016) there are over 65,000 students who attend a one of 86 charter schools. While charter schools are a popular topic in the political and academic worlds, there are many aspects that have yet to be examined thoroughly. There has been a substantial amount of research around the effectiveness of charter schools versus traditional public schools, though this research has yielded few

clear conclusions (Knaak & Knaak, 2013; Strauss, 2013; Fritz, 2016). This is in part because charter school studies can choose from a variety of ways to judge and compare charter school success to traditional public schools.

The Push for Charter Schools

To best understand the charter school movement, how it has evolved, and then further understand the role and development of the charter school CEO, one must first recognize what stimulated the push for charter schools and the motivations behind the movement. Although the first charter law was passed in 1991, the notion of charter schools and the idea of school choice existed well before that (Nathan, 2002; Hassel, 1999). In the late 1980s and early 1990s there was a growing fear in the United States that the public education system was inadequate and failing (Bracey, 2002). Some school districts began experimenting with 'charter schools' well before official legislation was passed. Philadelphia was one of the first to do so, in 1988 Philadelphia created 'charter schools' within the school district (Fine, 1994). Charter schools grew out of a variety of education reform efforts including the demand for parent choice, teacher autonomy, local control, and community involvement (Bracey, 2002). The idea that parents could have a choice in where they chose to educate their students and that this alternative may be more suitable for their child was extremely appealing. It caught on quickly and received bipartisan support (Fine, 1994). Charter schools have been endorsed by Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barak Obama, and the current president Donald Trump.

Currently, proponents of charter schools make several claims to support the idea of school choice that still echo the early beginnings of charter schools. For instance, proponents believe that students should have a choice where they attend school,

especially if their local school is deemed inadequate and in need of reform (Garrison & Holifield, 2005). Charter schools were first proposed by Albert Shanker, the leader of the American Federation of Teachers, who thought that schools were only serving a fraction of their students because the teaching methods used in the classroom were not able to reach all students. He envisioned a school where teachers and administrators had more freedom to be innovative and try out nontraditional teaching methods in an attempt to reach more students (Kahlenburg & Potter, 2014). In addition to innovation and school choice, proponents believe charter schools are more efficient than TPSs because they operate with a smaller budget (Weber & Baker, 2018). For example, in states such as California and Georgia charter schools spent $3000 less per pupil than TPSs in the 2002-03 school year (Osberg, 2006; Pennsylvania Dept. of Education, 2018). Lastly, proponents feel that charter schools motivate TPSs to do a better job of educating students and that this competition is healthy and improves the overall system (Garrison & Holifield, 2005).

The idea that charter schools can offer students in poor-performing school districts an alternative to attending their neighborhood school has been controversial. Some experts believe that charter schools weaken the central district and even increase segregation (Frankenberg, Kotok, Schafft, & Mann, 2017; Knaak & Knaak, 2013). While other experts believe that charter schools can be more successful at increasing student achievement and are also more cost effective and fiscally sound (Buckley & Schneider, 2009; Hanushek, 2010). However, studying charter schools is complex. They are not one-dimensional and thus have many facets and layers to examine. Much of the research has focused on attempting to measure charter school achievement and efficiency and

compare it to the surrounding district school. There is no doubt that research of this type is meaningful, but it is clear that there are many other aspects of charters that have yet to be explored. Furthermore, the findings of any study regarding charter schools can have complex and nuanced findings based on the variables being examined.

Effectiveness of Charter Schools Versus Public Schools

While the number of charter schools is growing rapidly, this has not happened without controversy. There are strong and conflicting opinions regarding charter schools and their effectiveness. Proponents of charter schools claim that they provide students and parents with a choice and create a free-market for schools that pushes school to compete to offer the best product (Garrison & Holifield, 2005). Furthermore, though charter schools are public entities, they are subject to fewer regulations and thus offer autonomy and freedom to teachers and administrators to educate students as they see fit (Hanushek, 2010). Opponents of charter schools think that a free-market is no way to treat a child's education and education should be controlled by the State government and not run like a business (Bracey, 2002).

The most recent finding regarding charter schools, which is becoming more and more prevalent among researchers, authorizers, and government agencies is the notion that charter schools have an extreme amount of variability, therefore, they are not simply good or bad but are exist on a spectrum (CREDO, 2017). Researchers and government audits have suggested that charter schools receive more oversight and, in some cases, increased accountability to their authorizer compared to TPSs (Davis & Raymond, 2012; Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, 2016). Additionally, while charter schools offer teachers and students more autonomy and are free from

abiding by some of the policies of the authorizing district, they have been in some instances rife with corruption (Davis & Raymond, 2013; DeJarnatt, 2012; Hanushek, 2010; Strauss, 2013). To complicate this dilemma further, proponents and opponents of charters tend to pick and choose the studies that support their view and use this to shape their narratives of charter schools (Hanushek, 2010). Even the general public when given a series of facts, either supporting or condemning charter schools, still prefer to believe a narrative over actual scientific evidence (Ertas, 2015).

Although it may seem peculiar that a large-scale national reform affecting public education would have such conflicting research, researchers have pointed out that many studies have flawed methodology when looking at the achievement of charter school students (Betts & Atkinson, 2012). For example, studies have measured student success based on students' current scores without considering their educational history. Betts and Atkinson (2012), suggest that studies on student achievement in charter schools need to be utilize randomization and have commended recent attempts to use higher quality methodology. For example, research conducted on charter schools with waiting lists of students who applied but did not get accepted through the lottery, has given researchers a chance to compare the group of students who did get in, to the group that did not (Robelen, 2009). This allows for a better and more fair comparison of student achievement.

Another reason for conflicting results on charters is because each study examines different aspects of a charter in an attempt to determine their effectiveness (Farrell, 2015; Ford & Ihrke, 2015; Vickers, 2014). For instance, one common way to determine a charter's effectiveness is to compare the performance of actual students in a charter

school to a virtual student who would hypothetically attend the local TPS in order to determine the variation between both (CREDO, 2015; Hanushek, 2010). Whereas other studies compare overall school performance or graduation rate between charters and TPS. All of these studies provide valuable information and need to be considered when forming opinions of charters and writing policy; however, this is not always the case. It is far more common to hone in on the literature that aligns with your idea or one's political agenda (Ertas, 2015; Hanushek, 2010).

Most research regarding charter schools has focused on comparing them to TPSs. There is much variation regarding charter school performance (Hassel, 1999). After an extensive review of the literature it is clear that while some charter schools do outperform their neighboring TPSs, others have been closed due to poor performance. In addition, charter schools have also been forced to close due to financial mismanagement of funds and inflated salaries, and other various scandals (Casey, 2015). On average, though, the majority of charter schools perform similarly to their neighborhood TPS when many variables are accounted for (Fritz, 2016). Therefore, while comparing charters to TPS allows for valuable information, it is also imperative to compare charters to each other.

Charters: Not a One-Size-Fits-All

Too frequently charters are viewed as a single group, but over the past 26 years, charters have evolved immensely, therefore, it is not sufficient to group them and study them as a single entity. Instead they need to be evaluated not only against the TPSs within the district they exist but also against the other charters within their region as well. With so much autonomy given to charters, it is not surprising that an extreme amount of

variation exists. Knowing what characteristics or processes charters in a region do well can be used to improve all charters within a given area.

There are extreme variations in charter schools. In a study that looked at a variety of charter schools from different regions of the country, researchers found that there is an extreme amount of variability in the quality of charter schools and that overall roughly 19 percent of charters outperform their neighborhood school (Davis & Raymond, 2012). A recent CREDO study found that urban charter schools vary in quality, but they have a higher level of performance than the surrounding TPS (CREDO, 2015). This suggests that charter schools are in fact very different and need to be studied as such (Table 1). For example, many charter schools have a central mission or focus in an attempt to make them stand out in comparison to TPSs. In Philadelphia, for example, there are charter schools that focus on technology, robotics, and computer science. In addition to having a theme or mission that is unique, charter schools also can operate in a single building, referred to as a stand-alone charter, or a large network, referred to as a central management organization (CMO). The differences between a CMO and stand-alone can be vast especially regarding number of students served and leadership structure within the organization. In Philadelphia for example, a large CMO, Mastery Charter, is comprised of 16 schools.

Table 1

Common Areas of Variance Across Charter Schools

Area of Variance	Examples
Charter School Focus	Many charter schools have a theme or vision which is meant to serve and attract a specific type of student. Some examples include: STEM, Fine Arts, PBL, Culturally Specific

Table 1, continued

Authorizing Agency	State laws allows for a variety of charter school authorizers such as colleges/universities, the city school board, and other non-profits.
Student Population and Demographics	Charter school enrollment can range from less than 200 to greater than 5,000 students. Additionally, the demographics of the students served do not always mirror the regional norms.
Grades Served	Charter schools can serve elementary, middle, high school, or a combination of the three.
Differences in Local and State Laws	Of the 50 states, 42 have charter school legislation passed. This legislation varies greatly from state to state. Furthermore, local authorities and authorizers can have added laws or requirements for charter schools.
Stand-Alone v. Central Management Office	Historically charter schools started as single entities but as some gain success they chose to scale up and create networks. The current landscape for charter schools contains a mix of both.
For- Profit v. Non-Profit	Certain states allow for-profit charters, while others such as Pennsylvania, do not. There is a loop-hole in most legislation though that allows for a non-profit to lease out the management to a business which in turn allows non-profit charter school to have certain protections normally only granted to for-profit entities.

Some charter schools in the US are for-profit whereas others are non-profit. However, some states, including Pennsylvania, do not allow for-profit charters. There is, however, a small loophole in the law that allows charter schools to hire private companies to manage their school. In Philadelphia, Universal Companies is an example of a charter school CMO that is being managed through a private company. This has led to much controversy because the management companies are not required to disclose

information such as budget or any information regarding spending, making it difficult to 'follow the money' (Wang, 2014).

Another major difference among charter schools is scale. Initially when charter schools were instituted it was to create small schools that were part of the community and run by and for the community. They started small and both in number of students served and number of schools in most states (Hoxby, 2006). However, within the past ten years there has been a push to create charter networks or CMOs. In 2006 78% of charter schools were stand-alone, by 2010 that number decreased to 61% (NAPCS). The goal was to expand the charter model by replicating successful charter schools. This is now very common and also referred to as scaling up. Organizations such as KIPP and Mastery are national examples of scaling up and currently exist in several cities across the nation (Farrell, Nayfack, Smith, & Wohlstetter, 2014). Charters were originally conceptualized to be small stand-alone schools that did not have to answer to a central district and deal with all the red tape. However, once a school becomes successful it is no surprise that one would want to duplicate that success. Thus, the creation of CMOs (Wohlstetter et al., 2013).

There are several reasons for the expansion of CMOs over stand-alone charter schools including money, simplicity in processes, duplicating a successful model, sharing responsibility, and duties (Farrell et al., 2014). CMOs offer opportunities for collaboration, more educational opportunities for students, and increased market share (Farrell et al., 2014). Thus, it is no surprise that some charter schools shifted from a stand-alone mindset and eventually made the decision to scale up and expand. This phenomenon happened in Philadelphia (Figure 1). When the Pennsylvania charter school

law was passed in 1997, three schools were able to secure a charter in the first year. This is mainly because they had already been operating in some capacity as a contracted school through the district. Therefore, they already had everything in place to apply for a charter. The following year there were 8 more charters granted and in 1999, the first CMO charter opened its doors.

Since 2010 there have been 25 new charters authorized by the SDP. Coincidently, 24 of them were for an additional school within an already established CMO whereas, only a single stand-alone charter has been approved. This is a major shift since the charter school law took effect in 1997, when nearly every charter granted, up until 2007, was for a stand-alone school. There are several possible reasons for this shift. One, is that CMOs already have an established partnership with the authorizing board and the SDP, thus they are familiar with the process and procedures for obtaining a charter. Another explanation could be that because it is political in many ways to be granted a charter CMOs tend to have a lot more connections and backing (both political and financial) making it easier to obtain a charter. The third possibility is that the CMOs have a track record of success and therefore, can be trusted to run and open a successful institution. This third option though, does not seem to necessarily be always true because several CMOs in the city operate schools that perform below that of the TPS.

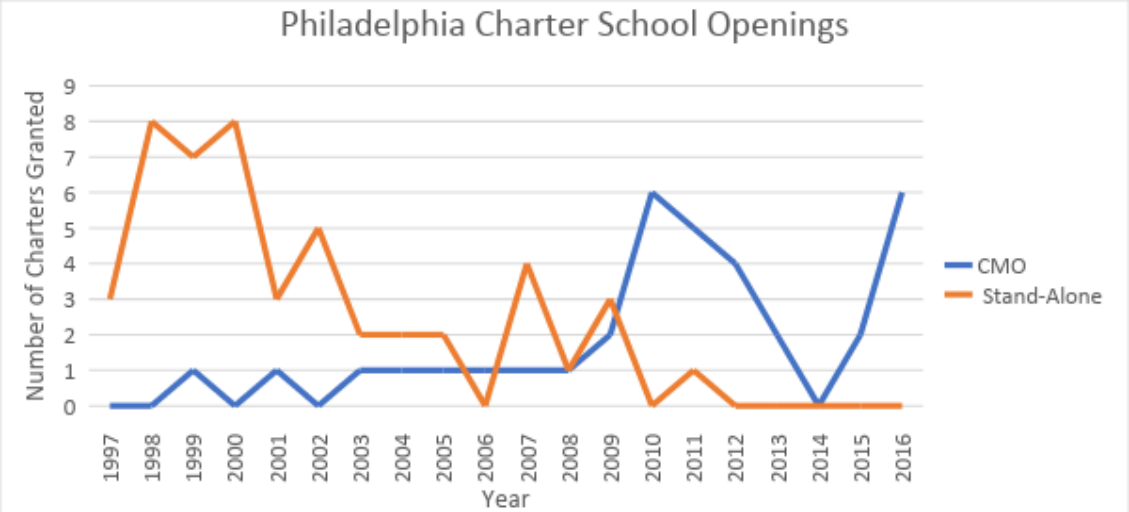

Figure 1 – Charters approved by the School District of Philadelphia

When schools do make the choice to expand it is generally referred to as scaling up. This was done in Philadelphia for several CMOs including: Freire, Mastery, KIPP, and Universal Charter. There are several struggles associated with scaling up (Zehr, 2011). Commonly cited as issues include not meeting scaling up goals and not having adequate leadership or being able to replicate the success of the pilot school. Many CMOs do not hit their goal of scaling up for several reasons which include lack of capable leaders, central office and their inability to keep up, loss of vision with new leaders, lack of strong leadership in new schools (Farrell et al., 2014).

Governance, Oversight, and Leadership in Charter Schools

Charter School Boards v. Traditional School Boards. Most traditional public schools are governed by an elected school board. This board consists of members of the community who are required to run for election every few years. They are accountable to the community they serve and the state and local school laws. Charter schools however are governed by a charter school board (CSB), sometimes referred to as a Board of Trustees (BOT) which is not elected but ideally is representative of the community the

charter school serves. The number of members varies and there is no set term or required election (Ford & Ihrke, 2015). Many boards are self-sustaining, dictate their own term length, and vote on elections internally. According to Pennsylvania State Law, "The Board of Trustees of a charter school shall have the authority to decide matters related to the operation of the school, including, but not limited to, budgeting, curriculum, and operating procedures subject to the school charter..." (Section 1716, Act 22, Pennsylvania Charter School Law). This grants a substantial amount of autonomy to charter school boards.

Several studies have examined the role of the CSB within charter schools and found that they make decisions much differently than traditional public school boards (Ford & Irhke 2015, 2017; Garn & Cobb, 2001). For example, a recent study examined traditional elected school board members compared to nonprofit charter school boards and found that nonprofit boards are much less likely to emphasize interactions with the public and are much more homogenous in their makeup (Ford & Irhke, 2015). This would seem to be a complete contradiction of why charter schools were established in the first place because they were meant to be more serving and sensitive to the needs and wants of the community. In addition, it is still unknown how the different methods of governing might affect the charter organization.

Prior research suggests that the CSB has a lot of influence over CEOs and whether this influence allows for autonomy or extreme oversight many times depends on the board's relationship with the CEO (Graham, 2004). These differences in leadership norms, role, and responsibilities are important because the uniqueness of charter schools may require new leadership skills and capabilities for CEO's. Furthermore, educational

leadership programs may need to be revamped in order to better meet the needs of future educational leaders. Understanding the role or varying roles of charter school CEOs can be useful in providing professional development or counseling to charter school leaders.

The ironic aspect of this organizational difference between charter and traditional public schools is that charter schools were first established to create more accountability and oversight within schools. They were created in an era where the idea of accountability was at the forefront of educational policy in the country. Laws like No Child Left behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top (RTT) were put into action to ensure tax dollars were not being wasted and teachers and principals were being held accountable for student outcomes. Yet with all of this focus regarding accountability, charter schools in many ways are granted much more autonomy and are under much less public supervision than a traditional public school.

Studies show that nonprofit charter school boards place less emphasis on the public interest compared to elected school boards and have lower levels on conflict and higher levels of collaboration (Ford & Ihrke, 2015). Ford and Ihrke (2015), point out that while this may mean they can get more accomplished, it also suggests that because they do not need to be concerned with being elected and have substantially less accountability than TPS, opponents of charter schools can claim that the board is not as concerned with the public as they should be. This finding is contrary to one of the reasons charter schools were first created. They were invented to offer a neighborhood friendly and locally controlled school that suited the community. Thus, one would think that they owe it to the community to be more concerned than a traditional school board.

The Chief Executive Officer. One area that has limited literature available is leadership roles and the job duties of charter school administrators. A search of 'charter school CEO' in Google Scholar reveals less than 33 scholarly articles regarding the topic. Some recent studies have looked at the roles of principals and teachers in charter schools and compared them to TPS principals or teachers. However, there has been little research on leader of charter schools – CEOs. It is important to note that with the exception of very few charter schools in Philadelphia, each charter school has a principal and a CEO. In some rare cases, the CEO acts as both the principal and the CEO but this is not the norm. CEOs in charters have an immense amount of power and autonomy due to the fact they do not always have to answer to the central school district (Dressler, 2001; Ford & Ihrke, 2015). CEOs directly answer to their charter school board. One study suggested the relationship of the Board and the CEO, can impact the decision-making ability of the CEO (Graham, 2004). Furthermore, in a report done by the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices (2008), a major finding suggested that there is not a clear role for the CEO and not surprisingly CEOs or directors of startup charter schools admitted being overwhelmed by the amount of processes and procedures that needed to be setup. This is in part due to the fact that traditional principal or school leadership programs do not prepare future CEOs for the scope and breadth of the position (Hess & Kelly, 2005).

The emergence of the charter school CEO as a school leader is a relatively new development. Previously, the more commonly used term was school leader or head teacher (Blitz, 2011). For reasons unclear, there was a shift in the typical name of the leader but also the role of the school leader. The term CEO, borrowed from the business

world, and now applied to school leadership has emerged, potentially due to the varying job roles that being a CEO entails and the shift from the typical roles of a school leader to what is now required for charter school leadership (Berman, 2008; Lashley, 2014). While this new role may share some characteristics of the business world it is unclear how similar these two are or even if a school leader should be called a CEO. This transition has arguably created a situation where school leaders are making-up the job description as they lead.

There are two other issues regarding this role that deserve attention. First, unlike all other school leadership and teaching personnel in Pennsylvania, CEOs are not required to have any formal certification, or even a college degree. In essence there are no requirements to lead an entire school or network of schools. Due to lack of requirements, the qualities, career trajectories, background, and qualifications of CEOs are varied. Secondly, CEOs have extremely high salaries (Casey, 2015). For example, in Philadelphia the average CEO salary is $151,000, with some over $200,000 per year. These large salaries rival that of district superintendents. For comparison, the current superintendent Dr. William Hite has a salary of $311,760. Hite oversees nearly 200,000 students in one of the largest school district in the country; whereas, CEOs of a stand-alone school might oversee roughly 1000 students and make well over $200,000 (philasd.org, 2018). With such responsibility and hefty salaries, it is imperative that more research is geared toward understanding this role and how it impacts the overall charter school or network. As with any position of power there is always an opportunity for abuse. In just Philadelphia alone there has been 19 charter schools investigated for fraud, which led to five convictions of charter school administrators including the CEO role,

two indictments, and a suicide (DeJarnatt, 2012). It is clear that knowing more about this critical leadership position in schools is necessary.

Statement of Problem

Currently in Philadelphia, there are 86 charter schools and over one third of Philadelphia students attend a charter school as opposed to TPS (Philadelphia School District, 2016). This number has increased at a significant rate since the early 2000s (Figure 2). This growth has significantly altered education in the city of Philadelphia. Before 1997 when the first charter law was passed students had two options, attend your neighborhood school or pay for a private education, but now they have nearly 50 additional high school charter school options. Couple that with the policy in Philadelphia that allows students to apply for different public schools not located in the catchment area, it is easy to see how this can be very overwhelming. So much so that each year the city of Philadelphia holds a high school fair at the convention center which is aimed at showcasing all the options the students have for high school.

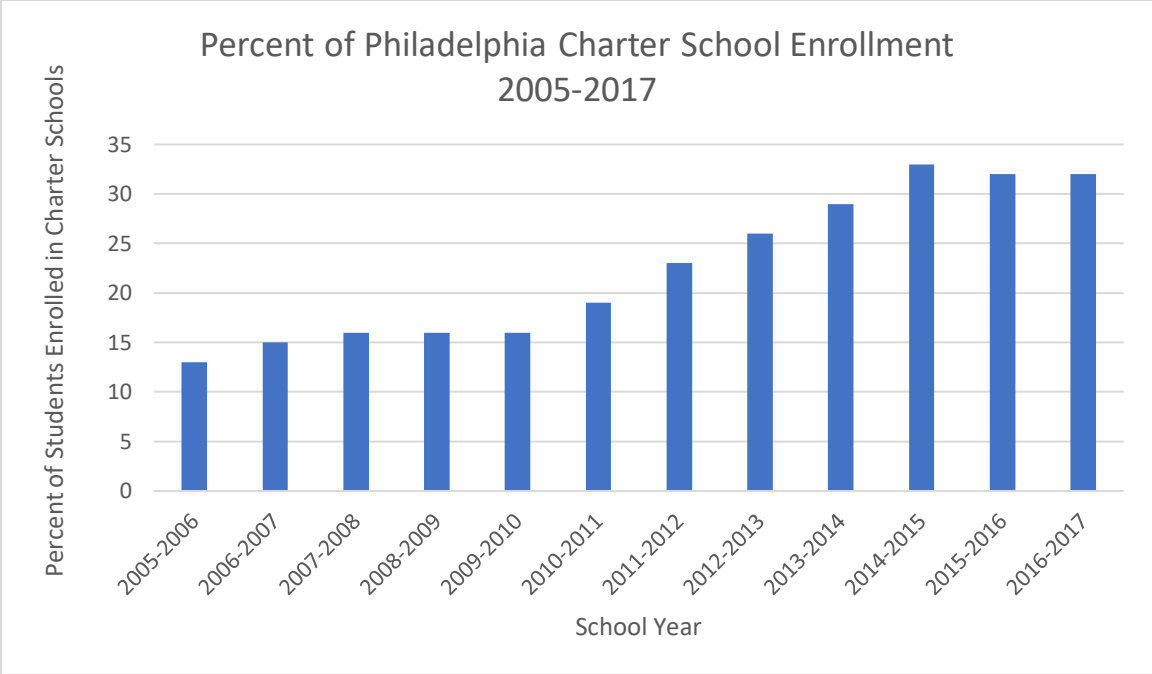

Figure 2 – Growth of student population in Philadelphia charter schools from 2005-2015 school years.

In the past ten years, the number of students that attend a charter school has nearly tripled. Since their inception in the late 1990s, they have been granted varying degrees of autonomy when compared to traditional public schools regarding: hiring teachers, curriculum choices, school policy, admission and retention practices, and methods of pedagogy. This begs the question of how the role of CEO compares to that of a district superintendent or school principal. Do they have more freedom in leading their school or CMO than a TPS leader? If so, does this freedom translate to better schools and higher student achievement? More importantly, does this level of autonomy vary within charter schools throughout a given region? When considering these questions, the research has generally compared charter schools to TPS and looked specifically at the principal or Board of Trustees versus the traditional elected school board (Bryk et al., 2010; Dressler, 2001; Ford & Ihrke, 2015; Graham, 2004; Leithwood et al., 2004). Shifting the focus to more deeply research the roles, responsibilities, and influences of charter school CEOs

can allow researchers, authorizers of charter schools, and universities to better understand how this major role impacts charter schools and ultimately student achievement.

The charter school movement was fueled, in part, by the fear that public schools were failing. The people who were running these schools, educators, were therefore deemed inadequate and a change needed to be made. This led to the creation of charter schools and the appointment of the school leader, the CEO. According to Pennsylvania Charter School Law (1997), charter schools were tasked were to, "Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods." This could have encouraged the hiring of innovative and outside school leaders who did not fit the traditional school leader mold. Throughout this dissertation it is important to remember why the charter movement started and how what exists today is largely a product of these beginnings.

Purpose of Study

School leadership has been studied from a range of perspectives (Blase & Blase, 2004; Hallinger, 2008), though the bulk of the literature focuses on describing principals' practice (Blank, 1987; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008; Spillane & Hunt, 2008) or analyzing the impact of principals on student achievement (Bryk et al., 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Although the title of the charter school leader does vary from school to school, CEO is now among the common titles. Whereas, previously there were many different titles used much more frequently than CEO such as "Dean," "Chief Administrator", and "Principal" (Blitz, 2011; Dressler, 2001; Murphy & Shiffman, 2002). The position of CEO was created to oversee multiple schools; this makes their job more similar to a superintendent of a larger school district or a leader of a private school (Bloomberg, Nathan, & Berman, 2008). Recently though,

CEOs are not limited to CMOs but also now exist in many stand-alone charters in addition to the charter school principal. CEOs of charter schools operate in many cases with less oversight compared to a typical TPS leader, needing only to consult the Board of Trustees regarding few matters (Dressler, 2001; Ford & Ihrke, 2015). Due to their higher level of autonomy and ability to make changes at a much faster pace than that of a traditional school leader means they can exert a large influence over the institutions they govern.

For my dissertation, I am first going to examine the role of Philadelphia Charter School CEOs, specifically looking at the differences between the qualities of charter schools' CEOs (demographics, work experience, education, founder v. hired CEO, stand-alone v. CMO etc.) and how this is correlated with school performance. In addition, this study will explore what CEOs see as their major responsibilities and role in their school.

Lastly, it will shed light on how they perceive their role within their school or network and what they feel lead them to and prepared them for this role. I will begin by examining the background and demographics of charter school CEOs and then probe deeper into these differences with a survey and personal interviews to shed light on their role, main responsibilities and how they influence their institutions.

Research Questions

1. Who are the CEOs of Philadelphia Charter Schools?
    a. Is there an association between the characteristics of a CEO and charter school performance?
2. What are charter school CEOs major job roles and responsibilities?
3. How do CEOs describe their experiences in this role?

Significance of Study

Learning more about how CEOs make decisions and what influences their decisions can be beneficial in a plethora of ways. First, knowing how they make decisions can help universities and colleges better tailor their curricula to the actual needs of a CEOs and other aspiring school leaders. Second, knowing more about who CEOs are and how they make decisions is useful for those who are interested and involved in providing support to them and influencing them. Thirdly, understanding the decision-making process of high-ranking school administrators is imperative to understand how the overall charter schools in Philadelphia operate. This study takes a deeper look into the job role and decision-making power granted to CEO's in varying Philadelphia charter schools.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This mixed methods study was completed in three parts. First, I gathered data from existing local, state, and federal publicly available data sets on all of the CEOs of Philadelphia charter schools for the 2015-2016 school year (n=64). I conducted statistical analyses, specifically pair-wise correlations and regression analyses, to determine if there were relationships between specific CEO characteristics and school performance. The data obtained were then used to inform the second and third parts of the study.

In the second part of the study, I contacted all Philadelphia CEOs and asked them to complete an online survey. The online survey was emailed after CEOs received a welcome email explaining the study as well as a follow-up email with the study link. They were also sent a reminder email after two weeks. I made a third attempt to improve CEO participation by contacting CEOs via Linkedin. In total, 20 CEOs completed the survey. In the third and final part of the study, I asked CEOs who had previously completed the survey to participate in a personal interview. Of the 20 CEOs who took the survey, 12 agreed to the personal interview. The personal interviews allowed an opportunity to more deeply understand the data from the first and second part of the study.

Context of Charter Schools in Philadelphia

Charter schools have existed in Philadelphia since 1997 when Pennsylvania passed the Charter School Law. During that first year, only three charters were granted. They were granted to schools that had been currently serving students through a contract with the school district and now fell under the charter umbrella. In 2001, the State of

Pennsylvania took over the School District of Philadelphia due to the district being in financial crisis and instituted the School Reform Commission (SRC) (Dent, 2017). The SRC was an appointed school board that included five members. Of the five members three were appointed by the State and two were appointed by the mayor (2017).

From the creation of the SRC until very recently, the SRC has acted as the authorizer for all Philadelphia charter schools. However, in November of 2017, the SRC voted to dissolve itself and allow Philadelphia to regain local control of the school district. This change came to fruition the in June of 2018 (Graham & Hanna, 2017). While conducting this study, all schools were overseen by the SRC. It is important to note though that these changes within the SDP have the potential to impact the current charter school landscape.

Sample Population

In this study there were a total of three sample groups that corresponded to each part of the study. Descriptions of each of these samples can be found in Table 2. The first sample, which was used for the quantitative portion of this study, included all 64 CEOs of charter schools for 2015-2016 school year. From that group, 20 CEOs participated in an online survey. The 20 CEOs who participated in the survey portion of the study were then contacted to complete a personal interview. Of the 20 who participated, 12 CEOs agreed to the personal interview. Important to note was that the data is shown not only for mean but also for range. In many categories there was a significant range. For example, the average CEO salary was about $151,00, however, the salaries ranged from $48,000 to $225,000. This was also the case for years of experience which was vary polarized in that CEOs tended to have less than 9 or more than 25. There were few in the mid-career level.

Also important to note in Table 2 is the comparison regarding the entire sample and the samples for the survey and the interviews. In some ways the survey and interview sample group are representative of the whole. For example, years in the role, percent PA certified, degrees obtained, and SPP score are similar for all groups.

Table 2

Descriptors for Each of the Three Sample Groups

	Sample 1 (n=64)		Sample 2 (n=20)		Sample 3 (n=12)	
Characteristic	Mean	Range	Mean	Range	Mean	Range
% Male	49	--	90	--	92	--
Annual Salary (1000s)	151	48 - 225	175	110 - 225	177	110 - 225
Years Prior Edu. Exp.	9	0-25	12.7	0-25	16	0-25
Years in CEO role	7	1-17	7	1-17	8	1-17
% PA State Edu. Certified	54	--	40	--	50	--
School SPP Score (1-100)	67	35-95	62	49-79	69	52-79
% Founder	17	--	25	--	42	--
% Stand-Alone	91	--	95	--	92	--
% Above BA/BS Degree	86	--	71	--	76	--

In order to be eligible for the study CEOs needed to meet three requirements.

1. Currently work at, or recently retired from the role of Philadelphia Charter School CEO within the past five school years (2013 - Present).
2. The school/central office must be located in Philadelphia city limits.
3. CEOs need to have at least six full months in this leadership role.

The eligible criteria were decided on for several reasons. First, because this study attempts to look at the role of the CEO in Philadelphia charter schools specifically, it is imperative that the participant was active within the past five years at a charter school within the city limits. The CEO participants were asked questions about how they viewed their job role and their major responsibilities and for this reason, it is important that they had been in that particular job role for over six months.

Data Collection

Data From National, State, and Local Databases

The descriptive data on CEO and charter school characteristics was from the 2015-2016 school year and was obtained through a variety of local and state datasets including: Great Philly Schools (GPS), School Performance Profile (SPP), Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), The School District of Philadelphia (SDP) – Charter School Office, The Annual Charter Evaluation Report (ACE), and opengov.org, LinkedIn searches, and the charter school websites. (Table 3). The ten variables collected included:

Table 3

Datasets and Information Gathered

Variable	Data Source
Gender	LinkedIn, school websites, phone call to schools
Salary	opengov.org
Years' experience in education	opengov.org, LinkedIn, school websites
Years' experience in the CEO role	Opengov.org, ACE report, LinkedIn, charter school websites
Percent Pennsylvania Certified	PDE lookup tool

Table 3, continued

School Performance Profile Score	paschoolperformance.org
Founder	School website, phone calls to the schools
Stand-alone	SDP.org
Highest Degree Obtained	opengov.org, LinkedIn

Gender. The gender of the CEO was available in most cases from the LinkedIn bio and on opengov.org.

Salary. The annual salary for the 2015-2016 school year was collected from opengov.org

Years of experience in education. This was obtained using opengov.org and was defined as years of experience within a public-school district in Pennsylvania. This information was also verified as much as possible using LinkedIn and charter school websites.

Years in the CEO role. This was defined as the CEO's total years being a charter school CEO. Some CEOs in this study were CEOs of more than one school throughout their career, the years were combined for total years in the role. This information was obtained from opengov.org and also verified as much as possible with the ACE report, LinkedIn, and charter school websites.

Pennsylvania State Certification Status. Certification status was determined using the Department of Education Website. This website which allows for a search using an individual's first and last name. Certification was defined as having an active teaching certification, principal certification, supervisory certification or all three.

SPP Score. This score was used to measure and compare school success. An SPP score is given to every public school in Pennsylvania and ranges from 1-100. It takes numerous variables into consideration including cohort graduation rate, Keystone scores, indicators of school success, school improvement, and much more. For more detailed information please see the link in Appendix A.

GPS Score. The Great Philly School Score was a secondary measure of school success that was used to compare charter school performance. The GPS Score is on a scale of 1-10. This score is assigned yearly by the GPS organization and their methodology considers a multitude of variables such as: academics, attendance, standardized test scores, and school incidents. It also calculates scores differently for elementary schools and high schools by factoring in a 'college bound' variable for high schools. This was used solely to verify the SPP score.

Founder. A founder of a charter school was the initial person who started or 'founded' the charter school. This variable was not readily available in any current dataset. In order to determine the founder, the school website was used. In cases where the website did not list the founder, the school was called to confirm their identity.

Stand-Alone. A stand-alone charter school is defined by having only one school. In some cases, a charter school may have two building locations but would still be considered stand-alone if they are operated K-12 by the same leadership team. For example, some charter schools have a K-6 building and a 7-12 building, although this is two schools, it would still be considered a stand-alone charter school. To be considered a Central Management Organization (CMO), there must be two or more schools serving

the same grade levels that are part of a network of schools. For example, Mastery Charter is a CMO. This was determined by using the SDP website.

Above a BA/BS Degree. The highest degree obtained by a CEO is available on opengov.org. This information was also verified using LinkedIn bios and charter school websites.

In addition to collecting publicly available data from datasets, the list of job duties was generated by looking through CEO job postings and descriptions and slightly modifying the SASS Principal Survey (Appendix B).

When data were missing from a database, every attempt was made to determine and insert missing values from another available dataset. When this was not possible, the school and/or CEO was contacted for this information via phone and email. In some rare instances, data from the previous or later school year was supplemented. In order to maintain validity of the data, the data analysis was done with and without the missing data to ensure there was no major changes in the findings.

Data from Survey and Interviews

Initial Survey. The initial survey (Appendix B), was created using and completed through Survey Monkey. It has been adapted from Konrad (2014) and the SASS Principal Survey (2011). Before reaching out to the entire study sample, a pilot study was conducted first with three current CEOs to ensure clarity and reliability of the survey questions. Some changes were made to questions and formatting, and then the study link and introduction was emailed to all CEOs in the sample (n = 64). CEOs who had email addresses available received an email, however, CEOs who did not have an available

email address were contacted via LinkedIn. Of the 64 contacted, 20 CEOs completed the survey for a 31 percent response rate.

This part of the study served two purposes. First, it provided verification that the data collected in the first part of the survey from public databases was accurate. This was done by using the self-reported answers regarding salary, degrees obtained, years of experience, and Pennsylvania certifications and comparing it to the information found prior. The second reason for this portion of the study was to probe deeper into the role and experience of the CEO by asking questions that allowed for more feedback and information. The findings from this was then used to improve the interview questions completed in part three.

Interviews. Interviews were semi-structured and last roughly 30-45 minutes. Each of the twelve CEOs were interviewed and asked the same series of questions. Questions have been adapted from Richardson, Beck, LaFrance, & McLeod (2016) and Konrad (2014).

INTERVIEW QUESTION 1 – How does a person become a CEO of a Philadelphia charter school and what main character or leadership traits and skills are needed to be a successful charter school leader?

1. How did you come into this position?
2. Were you always in the field of education or did you have a career in a different field previously?

a. If you have worked outside of education do you feel that the previous skills you developed in that field have helped you in this current position?

INTERVIEW QUESTION 2 – What differences are there between the job duties of a charter school CEO and the job duties of a traditional superintendent?

INTERVIEW QUESTION 3 – What differences exist between the job duties of a charter school CEO and that of a charter school principal?

1. For instance, does PD play a large role in the school? Who is in charge of PD?
2. Who evaluates teachers? Do you have a part in this?
3. Who is in charge of hiring new teachers? What is your role in this?
4. Do you take part in developing staff? If so, who are you responsible for developing?

INTERVIEW QUESTION 4 – When you need to make large-scale school-wide decisions who do you consult?

1. How are initiatives developed within this charter and who are the primary decision makers?
2. Can you describe how communication flows within your school? How are teachers and other staff members made aware of changes within the school both big and small?
3. Can you take me through your school's organizational flow chart? Do you have an organizational map or instructions for an employee

to use when regarding whom they should report to?

INTERVIEW QUESTION 5 – What aspects of running a school do you feel you have the most influence over? The least?

1. Is this charter school expanding in the future or has it expanded in the past?
    a. If so, were you involved in this expansion? To what degree?

INTERVIEW QUESTION 6 – If you were to hire a CEO to replace you what qualities and characteristics would you look for?

1. What past experiences have you had that you feel has made you successful in this role?
2. Are there courses or experiences that you wish you would have had before taking on this role?

Data Analysis

Quantitative. The quantitative portion of the study was done with the data from the first sample set containing data for the entire set of Philadelphia charter school CEOs for the 2015-2016 school year. The information gathered from various datasets for each of the 64 CEOs was first analyzed with pairwise correlations and regressions. The analyses were run using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. Findings were deemed significant only if at the $p < .05$ range.

Qualitative. The data gathered for sample two (n=20) and three (n=12) was then used for the qualitative analysis. First, the survey data was examined for possible

noteworthy trends. The survey data was then used in developing the questions for the interview portion of the study with the third sample set.

All interviews were recorded and then later transcribed. Each interview was read afterwards and coded for themes. As new themes emerged, the transcribed interviews were then read again to potentially code for new themes. Dedoose was also used to organize and identify themes, sort data, identify repetitive words used, and look for trends in the data.

Conventional content analysis coding was used (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Four coding cycles were carried out and four types of coding methods were used (Table 4). Emergent coding was used to identify themes within the data. After the interviews were transcribed the first coding cycle, initial coding was used to derive themes. The data were then coded again in a second coding cycle which used descriptive coding to look deeper for similar themes throughout the transcriptions. Thirdly, thematic coding was used to further identify themes. Lastly, the themes were organized into broader categories.

Table 4

Description and Explanation of Coding Used Throughout the Study

Cycle	Type of Coding Used	Reasoning
1	Initial Coding	Allowed for emergent codes to surface from the raw transcription data
2	Descriptive Coding	Used to summarize each paragraph of the text
3	Pattern Coding	Used to determine the frequency and the similarity of events

Table 4, continued

4	Codes to Categories	Codes found were then organized into larger categories with a broader theme.

Ethical Concerns

All questionnaire and interview data were reviewed by myself as well as my advisor and shared anonymously and internally with my advisor. Before each interview a verbal consent was obtained. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and after the data analysis the recorded tapes were destroyed. Approval from the IRB was obtained prior to all research starting. The persons involved in the survey did not belong to any protected groups and thus obtaining verbal consent from them to interview, record, and use their data to generate my dissertation posed no serious concerns. Pseudonyms have been used to maintain confidentiality and all members involved have access to the results of this study.

Aside from the study participants, it is important to consider my own bias as both a researcher and a teacher who currently works within a charter school in Philadelphia. Many of my opinions, ideas, and assumptions have been formed throughout my six years in three different Philadelphia Charter Schools. Therefore, many of the questions I pose and the topics they cover come from my own interest and curiosity from the various events I have witnessed within charter schools. In order to reduce the effect of my biases on this research I have carefully considered the questions I choose to ask. Additionally, I have asked a personal mentor to assist me in reducing bias by reading through my surveys, research questions, and eventually transcribed interviews.

Strengths

This study provides useful information not only for charter schools in Philadelphia but also charters throughout the country. Additionally, educational institutions can benefit from getting a better understanding of the educational needs of charter school leaders. The insight into the job roles and duties of charter school leaders and the variation that exists can help to improve charter school leadership dynamics and share what is working.

The first part of this study gathered publicly available information for all of the charter school CEOs in Philadelphia for the 2015-2016 school year. Once the data was collected it was important to verify the data to ensure that the information provided was reliable and accurate. In order to verify this information, the second part of the study utilized the survey to gather self-reported answers regarding salary, years of experience, degrees obtained and certifications which in all 20 responses reasonably matched the data that was previously gathered.

This research addresses a gap in the literature which exists around CEOs of charter schools. Currently, there is not much attention given to this important position. Instead, the focus tends to be on charter school principals. This will illuminate the relatively new role of CEOs and help researchers and school leaders better understand the necessary qualities and characteristics that successful CEOs exhibit. It will also provide descriptive information about the current charter school CEOs in Philadelphia including salary, experience, and demographics which could be useful for a future study or as a baseline for a comparison study in a different region. Lastly, it provides a deeper look into the organizational dynamics of the charter schools within Philadelphia by looking

into how these leaders make decisions, who they consult for advice, and in what ways do they influence their institution.

CHAPTER 4 – RESULTS

Overview of Findings

This mixed-methods study used a three-pronged approach to gain a deeper understanding of the characteristics, roles, and responsibilities of Philadelphia Charter School CEOs. The first part of the study gathered data on the 64 charter school CEOs for the 2015-2016 school year. From this first sample set the characteristics of CEOs were determined. Furthermore, simple bivariate correlations and regressions were run to determine if there were correlations between CEO characteristics as well as the schools they lead.

The second layer of this study was done for two main reasons. First, to verify that the data gathered and the findings from the quantitative analysis were accurate. Second, the survey had more in-depth questions regarding CEO job roles, responsibilities, experiences, and perception of their influence. In the third and final part of the study, the 20 CEOs who completed the survey were invited to take partake in a personal interview. Twelve participants agreed to the interview where they were asked a series of questions about their job role, prior experiences, skills required, and how they came to the position they were in.

The interviews from the twelve participants were transcribed and then coded. Themes that emerged throughout data analysis were further organized into four major categories. These were ranked from most common to least common (Table 5). Below is a summary of the top four categories that emerged. CEOs shared that in their role they felt lonely and underprepared but also felt confident in their decision making.

Table 5

Themes Generated and Four Overarching Categories Identified

Category	Code	Example Supporting Data
Loneliness	Job Satisfaction	Sometimes as a CEO you just need to download to someone but there is no one
	Not what I expected	There is no natural network
	Atypical School Leader	I had been a principal for years, but this was very different
Under preparedness	Learning curve	There's a lot of learning on the fly and trying to understand things because it really does not match, you know, the budget classes that I took in school getting my principal cert does not match
	Large Scope of Skills	This was never what I thought I would be doing
	Learning done on-the-job	
	Not a career trajectory	
Overconfidence	Stubbornness	I had all the answers
	Tunnel Vision	No one knew better than me
	All-Knowing	The blessing and the curse of the CEO is that they are strong-willed and push forwards, sometimes to a fault
Strong Education Background Required	Prior Knowledge	I could not imagine being the CEO of a school having never taught before.
	Experience Matters	Hire the right people to fill in the areas that you are not familiar with.
	Hiring Matters	Being a principal and a teacher gave me great insight and I always keep that in mind.

Characteristics of Philadelphia Charter School CEOs

The first research question sought to describe CEOs of Philadelphia charter schools and their common characteristics. In the first part of the study, data for 64 CEOs was compiled using a variety of publicly available datasets as well as examining their LinkedIn profiles and calling their schools. The data from this is summarized in Table 6. It is important to note the range for salary and average years of experience in education, where the mean is not representative of the entire sample. For example, regarding salary CEOs were paid anywhere from $48,000 to $225,000 annually. The average years of experience in education, found in Table 6, refers to the years of experience they had prior to the CEO role. This ranged from 0 to over 25 with most CEOs closer to one end or the other.

Table 6

Characteristics of Philadelphia Charter School CEOs for the 2015-2016 School Year (N=64)

Characteristic	Mean	Range
% Male	49	----
Annual Salary	151,941	48,000 – 225,000
Years of Education Experience Prior to CEO role	9	0 - 25
Years in CEO role	7	1 - 17
Found of Charter School	11	----
% Active Pennsylvania State Education Certification	54	----
% Above a BS/BA Degree	86	----
Number of leaders of CMOs	5	----

Another research question in this study was whether specific CEO characteristics were correlated with charter school performance (SPP score). Using the descriptive data gathered for the CEOs, pairwise correlations were run to determine if there were certain relationships found between CEOs as well as their institutions (Table 7). Correlations were exploratory in nature but run where one might expect to see a correlation or relationship. The first variable that was run for correlations was CEO salary. As

mentioned previously, CEOs have salaries similar to that of district superintendents, yet in many cases only oversee a single school. It was found that CEO salary was not correlated with years of experience in the field of education or years in the CEO role. Furthermore, when salary was compared the SPP score, a measure of school success, there was also no correlation (Table 7).

In Philadelphia there are nearly an equal number of male and female CEOs. There were 33 females and 31 males for a total of 64 CEOs. When considering CEO gender, it was found that there was a correlation between gender and SPP score. Being a male CEO was slightly correlated with higher SPP scores (Table 7).

I also examined the correlation between CEO certification status and charter school SPP score. Certification status referred to current and active teaching or principal certification for CEOs. There was no correlation between certification status and school SPP score. I examined the correlation between the types of schools CEOs worked at (stand-alone vs. CMOs) and SPP scores. CEOs of stand-alone schools worked at schools with higher SPP scores (Table 7).

Table 7

Regressions for Each of the Following Variables as Correlated to SPP Score

	1	2	3	4
Female	-6.57*			
Years of Prior Edu. Exp.		-0.01		
Stand-Alone Charter			-6.38	
PA State Certified				-0.004
Constant	60.23*	2.76*	59.96*	2.34*

*Significant at the $p < .05$ range

CEOs Interviewed Reported Vastly Different Job Roles and Responsibilities

The second research question looked at the specific job roles and responsibilities of charter school CEOs. Questions about the job role and responsibilities were present in both the survey as well as the personal interviews. CEOs in both parts of the study reported vastly different job roles and responsibilities within their school or network. CEOs in the survey were given a list of typical job duties required of school leaders and asked to break down by percentage how much time was spent with each task (Figure 3).

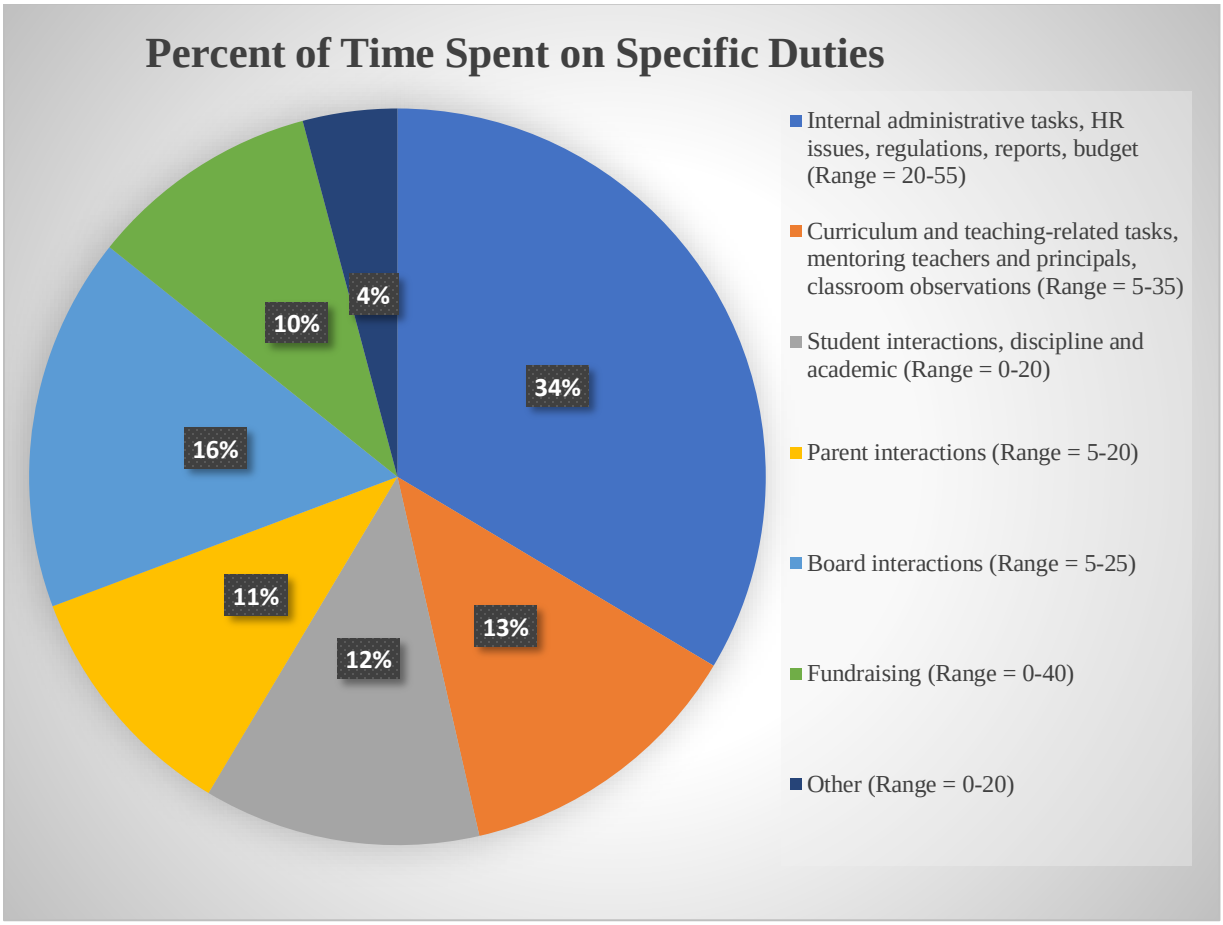

Figure 3. Percent of time spent on specific CEO duties. This figure illustrates the average time CEOs report spending in a given week on the specific tasks as well as the range of responses (n=20).

In Figure 3 is important to note the range of answers when regarding the percent of time spent on a particular task. For example, on average CEOs reported spending around 10 percent of their time on fundraising; however, two CEOs reported that this task takes up nearly 40 percent of their time while three reported that they spent zero percent of their time on this job duty. This large disparity was also the case when asked about how much time they spend observing classes, mentoring teachers, and working with curriculum where some CEOs claimed to spend a large majority of their time doing this and others less than ten percent of their day.

According to the survey results, exactly half of a CEOs time was spend on administrative tasks and board interactions. When CEOs who were interviewed answered this question, they too claimed to spend a significant amount of time in these two areas. CEOs during their interviews often spoke of such tasks when asked to describe their day-to-day. One CEO said, "I would love to spend more time being able to observe teachers and walk the building, but much of my time is spent on compliance and making sure reports are done correctly and on time." The reports he was referring to included city, state, and internal reports.

In contrast to the survey in which CEOs shared that they spent over half their time on administrative tasks, reports, and board interactions, CEOs interviewed reported a variety of significant time spent elsewhere. For example, one CEO stated that a large portion of their job was fundraising, "I spend a lot of my time meeting with potential donors." He went on to say, "Part of my yearly evaluation is based on the partnerships and funding I can bring into the school." Though some CEOs mentioned fundraising in

the interviews as part of their job, no other CEO was evaluated on this or named it as a large portion of their role.

Another area of stark contrast regarding the CEO role within the school was when it came to student interactions and discipline. In the survey, CEOs had an average of 12 percent on their time spent on this role. However, individual responses were very different, with answers ranging from 0% to 25% of their time depending on the CEO. In personal interviews, this was also the case. Two CEOs said that they rarely interact with students or get involved with matters of student discipline stating, "In this role there is little to no interaction with the students, my principals are in charge of student behavior." On the other-hand, three CEOs stated that they spend a lot of time with students in and out of the classroom. For example, one said, "I try to get into classrooms and the lunchroom every day, I know most of my students here, that is important."

When asked about their role of working with teachers regarding teacher coaching, hiring, and evaluation, they also had a variety of answers. For example, nine CEOs interviewed said they had a direct hand in hiring teachers, whereas, the other three said they were barely involved in the process. Regarding evaluation and coaching, only three CEOs said they are part of the evaluation process, the others said teacher evaluations were done by the principals or teacher coaches within the institution.

The Path to CEO is Atypical

Part of answering the first research question, who are the current CEOs of Philadelphia charter schools, required learning about who they were before they took the role of CEO. In order to best learn more about their previous work prior to this school leadership role CEOs were asked about their prior work in both the survey as well as the

interviews. In addition, the background information for the 64 CEOs in the first sample, was gathered by using datasets to determine their years of experience in education. Also, their school websites and LinkedIn profiles oftentimes provided information regarding their prior work experiences. There was no typical career path for a charter school CEO, meaning they did not share specific certifications, degrees, or common work backgrounds.

Of all of the participants interviewed, none started their career with the goal of becoming a CEO. Though there was not much commonalty between the participants, the most common situation was an individual was first a teacher and then became a school leader, usually a principal, and at some point, transitioned into their current CEO role. Six participants described the experience as one that fell into their lap, they were known in Philadelphia education or had worked with someone and were approached by a person looking to open a charter school or an existing school in need of a CEO. One stated, "I had been working as a principal in the suburbs and one of my former coworkers came to me and asked if I would be interested in starting a charter school in city." Another participant had a similar story, "I was the superintendent of [sic] and was approached by a former colleague about the CEO position." Outside of the participants interviewed this storyline is also common with the current CEOs in Philadelphia. Many CEOs shared their story on their school websites.

In order to gain deeper insight into what prior schooling could be beneficial to those aspiring to become a CEO, the participants were asked to name a class they took that best prepared them for their current role. Many CEOs referenced classes they took to obtain their principal certification. For example, one CEO specifically spoke about the

Educational Law class he was required to take. He said, “One of the biggest fears you have as a CEO is getting sued because school lawsuits can have a big hit on a small charter school.” He went on to say, “When I first started, we were dealing with two lawsuits regarding special education, we had to settle both and lost over $150,000, after that I learned quickly that I needed to hire someone to help me better oversee the special education department to prevent this from happening in the future.”

CEOs were also asked what classes they did not have in their program or what they felt was lacking in their knowledge base when they started. Many CEOs spoke about the budget and financial aspect having a steep learning curve. One CEO stated, “The budget is overwhelming because instead of being a principal and having to allot a certain amount to each department or problem, you have to look at the whole picture, maintenance, benefits and medical, and so much more.” They also said that board interactions and the soft skills required for some of the more delicate matters was something that they had to learn on the job.

CEOs Felt Underprepared and Lonely

In order to better understand the role of the charter school CEO, the question was asked regarding how they perceive their role within the school. CEOs interviewed were asked generally about their experience in their current role. In addition they were asked how this role with different than any prior leadership role they may have had. Most commonly, CEOs responded by saying that their current role was much more isolated, and they felt lonely in comparison to prior leadership roles. Second most common was that they felt as though there was a steep learning curve and they were in many ways underprepared for specific aspects of the job.

Many CEOs expressed the feeling of isolation when they started their new role. This was true even for those who had previously held leadership positions. One CEO interviewed had recently left his role and when asked why he stated, "My whole life I had been working in education, as a teacher you have so many colleagues to turn to, and even as a principal I had a strong team, but as a CEO, there is no one to vent to." The feeling that a CEO could not let his or her guard down was stated by three different interviewees. One saying, "Each day I come to work, and I have to be on point, there is not room for a slip up or someone to bring the big problems you are the one who has to deal with these issues and many times, there is not a team to help you."

Another reason for feeling isolated in this role shared by the CEOs was that as they moved up the organizational chart, they had less direct reports. One CEO spoke about his move from principal to CEO, "As a principal I have nearly 35 direct reports, all my teachers, my assistant principal, head of special education, and then when I became CEO, it was just one person that reported to me." The move to CEO was often found to have a decrease in direct reports which is also then a decrease in conversation and less of a team decision making.

Another common theme that emerged when speaking with the CEOs was that no matter their prior education or work experience, they were in one way or another underprepared for the position. There were two areas where the participants repeatedly stated they felt underprepared and this was board interactions as well as school finance. The majority of the participants said that board interactions were difficult because prior to this role they had little to no interaction with the CSB or any structure similar. One CEO stated, "As a CEO, I think the pieces that were new to me that I would have in the

past handed off to someone else were sort of updating the Board of what was happening, notifying the insurance company, getting the attorneys involved." He went on to say, "All that side of it was new to me and my mistakes were that I brought the Board in way too late in the process, I just sort of, I figured I handle it like a principal." He had to reshape the way he viewed the entire school compared to when he was a principal because, "As a principal I would deal a major issue and then hand it off if it was extremely serious. The problem with this approach as a CEO though is that there is no one to hand it off to and you need to be sure to let the board know about problems very early." Lastly, he said, "At the same time though, you need to pick and choose what you share with them because you don't have the luxury of speaking with them each and every day."

Another participant said that they were very limited by the CSB regarding school-wide decisions and did not anticipate the difficulty of making systemic school changes. This was similar to another participant who explained a situation where they were hired by a CSB that was overbearing and political. The CSB had been established for nearly a decade and although there were board elections they were held quietly in meetings and no one ever ran contested. Participants also pointed out that the majority of the hiring decisions for top level positions were done by the CSB and in some cases with little input from the CEO. This was true even for hiring the school principal. In one school the CSB interviewed and decided who the principal would be without much consultation from the CEO. Many participants assumed that in this role they would have much more hiring power and influence.

CEOs interviewed also pointed out that the role came with a steep learning curve, most specifically, in two areas: board interactions and school finances. Nine CEOs

discussed the issues they ran into when trying to navigate the finances for the school. Many said that they had no idea how much the finances encompassed and what was required in order oversee and manage such an endeavor. One stated, "As a CEO had to oversee my finance committee, and oversee a development office, and come up with a strategy and keep the Board updated. So that was a piece that was really brand new to me in terms of managing the finances and the balance sheet and all that. Supervising people was already in my wheelhouse though."

Financial planning and fiscal responsibility were also an area of weakness for many CEOs, not only their first year but even after several years. One CEO said that principals work within a budget but what they need to purchase and what they have to spend is very limited. Whereas, as a CEO there is a substantial amount of school, building, and staffing expenses. In one situation a CEO described what he referred to as the worst year of his life. He was forced to lay off several teachers in 2014 when the state of Pennsylvania passed legislation that required charter schools to pay into the teacher's state pension plan. He recounted this event and expressed how difficult the decisions he had to make were saying, "There was nothing that prepared me for having to cut teacher's pay, loyal teachers whom I had known and worked with for years, it was heartbreaking."

CEOs Interviewed Agreed Prior Education Experience Important

Although many acting CEOs did not have an active certification, teacher or principal, or a background in education, all twelve of the participants interviewed had prior experience working in education. Not surprisingly all twelve were adamant that they could not do this job without the prior education experience and knowledge obtained

from being in the field of education at some capacity prior to this role. One CEO said, "Without my prior experience teaching, I would not be equipped to make any decisions in this position. It is so important to know what your teachers, the backbone of the school, are going through and what they experience each day." Of note, 68 CEOs were contacted for the initial survey and interview questions and only those with education background were receptive to the research process even though multiple attempts were made to interview those who did not have an education background.

Many of the CEOs interviewed went into great detail about specific experiences that helped them be successful in their current role as CEO. For example, one participant said, "Yes, you have specialists that you put in place but at the end of the day, everyone answers to you. You need to be sure that you know what you want out of that position [employee], and how could you know that in depth if you were never in the classroom or an administrator in a school building, you just couldn't." Another participant said, "You need to know what items to cut out the budget or keep, someone who is purely financial, even my Chief Financial Officer (CFO), does not always know what the best is, to cut and keep."

When the participating CEOs were asked what traits, they would look for when hiring a CEO, they mentioned many similar qualities, most notably educational leadership experience (Table 8). All of the participants stated that prior experience in education administration was absolutely necessary. This coupled with prior principal experience was the most commonly mentioned requirement for an ideal CEO candidate. One CEO stated that he was successful in his role because, "I had the ability to be a principal at a great school in [sic], it was there that I learned what a great school should

run like. I took that knowledge and relied on it heavily when I started here at [sic]". The third most commonly desired trait was prior teaching experience. One CEO said, "You cannot be respected by your teachers and staff if you weren't at one time in their shoes, it gives you credibility with your staff that you need when in this role." Other desired traits centered around business and financial knowledge. Eight CEOs said that it was something that they desired in a potential candidate. However, it was important to note that some CEOs felt that this was a bonus characteristic or trait and did not mean that they would not find someone without this to be unqualified stating, "Although you don't have to have financial knowledge, the learning curve is steep, and it is a huge plus to have." This was also similarly stated by a CEO who runs a small network of charter schools, "Having an understanding beyond the traditional school budget and finance is something that would be really helpful to have, but it is rare because most CEOs are former principals, and as a principal you do not need to delve into the financials to the extent you would in this role."

Table 8

The Top 10 Common Qualities CEOs Look for in Potential CEO Candidates

Qualities of Potential Candidates	Number of CEOs who stated desired quality (n=12)
Educational Leadership Experience	12
Former Principal/Vice Principal	10
Former Teacher	10
Business/Finance Knowledge	8
Human Resources Experience	6
Understanding of Special Edu. Law	5
Grant Writing	5

Table 8, continued

Developing and Maintaining Partnerships	4
MBA or Business Degree	2
Marketing Experience	1

CEOs Possess a Strong Sense of Self and Confidence in Decision Making

During each interview CEOs were asked a series of questions to determine how they make large-scale decisions. One question asked CEOs whom they consult when making important decisions. Six CEOs, half of the participants, all had a similar answer which was they did not consult anyone because they knew the best answer. For example, one CEO stated, "I didn't ask anyone because in my opinion there was no one to ask and at the end of the day, I knew best." Another participant said, "I just go with my gut, I have been doing this long enough and have seen a lot, enough to know what to do." Other participants discussed their leadership team and explained how they worked with them to make decisions. One stated, "Usually the big decisions I sit with my leadership team for weekly meetings and we come to a conclusion, it is good to hear what each person thinks and have them weigh in on big decisions before any change is made." One participant talked about reaching out to their network outside of their school, "You need to have a mentor on the outside that you can trust, I have one and I go to him all the time."

Aside from asking CEOs specifically about whom they consult when they do need to make a big decision, I also had the unique opportunity to interview a CEO who has coached 3 different CEOs in the past. She was hired in each of the three cases to help CEOs in struggling schools. She had a lot of insight into how they make decisions and

whom they consult due to her coaching role. When asked about she share a major frustration of hers,

> The one downfall and I'm going to tell you this as a CEO and I will tell you that every CEO suffers from this. The one downfall is this, to be a CEO of a charter school you have to have that entrepreneurial spirit. I'm sure people have told you that, right? So, when you have that that means you feel you have the answer to whatever the problem is, that your way is the way. And every CEO feels that, and that is both a blessing and a curse. Because when things need to change I am telling you they can't do it. They cannot do it. And so that why I'm doing the job I am now because I was tired of schools closing and families being disrupted, and you know the schools going to close because you have a leader that cannot move past themselves.

Summary

The findings in this study can be grouped into several categories in order to produce a more holistic understanding of the findings from each of the three parts of the study. One way to group the findings is by looking at similar findings throughout each part of the study. For example, CEOs interviewed and surveyed had many areas of overlap regarding certain aspects of their job such as spending a majority of their time completing administrative tasks and on board-interactions. They also shared a feeling of under-preparedness, specifically around finances and board interactions. At the same time, there are also areas of contrast. For example, CEOs interviewed were adamant that prior education experience was important, yet, in the quantitative portion of the study, experience in education and educational certifications were not correlated with higher

school performance. Another example of contrasting information was the fact that CEOs reported feeling both lonely and underprepared for their role and yet, displayed a strong confidence in their decision-making. Chapter 5 takes a deep dive into these similarities and differences and attempts to explain the findings by connecting it to prior research. In addition, the implications for research and practice are discussed.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

In conducting this research, I discovered several characteristics that CEOs of charter schools were likely to share as, well as areas where there was a lot of variety regarding their role. Broadly, I was able to learn about the entire population of charter school CEOs in Philadelphia during the 2015-2016 school year using publicly available information and found several noteworthy characteristics. Using the data obtained from the survey as well as the personal interviews, I was able to delve deeper into the role, experiences, responsibilities, and perceptions of the Philadelphia charter school CEO. The most notable findings were that CEOs in Philadelphia charter schools have no typical prototype or career path and they have varying backgrounds in both education and professional experience. Additionally, CEOs were found to have a variety of job roles that differed in many cases from school to school. Regarding the characteristics of successful charter schools, male CEOs and CEOs of stand-alone schools worked in schools with higher SPP scores. Lastly, CEOs interviewed reported a strong sense of loneliness and feeling underprepared for the role but at the same time expressed a confidence in their decision making. In this discussion, these major findings will be explained and combined with current research to develop a more in-depth understanding of the charter school CEO.

Characteristics of Philadelphia Charter School CEOs

The first research question examined the specific traits and characteristics for Philadelphia charter school CEOs. In order to best answer this, the characteristics were looked at broadly by including the entire population of Philadelphia charter school CEOs

from the 2015-2016 school year. Publicly available information on LinkedIn profiles and school websites as well as local and state datasets were used to gather information for all the CEOs and several notable characteristics were found. In addition to examining purely descriptive data regarding CEOs, pairwise correlations were run for variables collected to determine if relationships between characteristics existed.

One major finding was that CEOs did not have a typical prototype or profile. They were almost equally male and female, possessed a variety of degrees and prior work experiences, and followed many different career paths before becoming a CEO. This makes the charter school CEO pool quite diverse.

Second, although charter school CEOs are leaders of educational institutions, 46 percent of CEOs were found to have no Pennsylvania education certification. In addition, many CEOs did not have prior work experience in education, as was verified using their LinkedIn profiles and school websites. The average years in education was found to be about nine years, yet, the data for this was variable with some CEOs spending 30 or more years in education and others with less than ten. Interestingly, having many years of education experience or having a prior background working in education was not correlated higher SPP scores or higher salaries.

Thirdly, when examining what traits were correlated with successful charter schools, it was found that male CEOs and CEOs of stand-alone schools were slightly correlated with more successful schools. Interestingly, many variables were not correlated. For instance, there was no correlation between CEO salary and years of experience, certifications, degrees, or school success. In addition, CEOs with higher

degrees and/or state certifications did not fare better than those with lesser qualifications when regarding school success.

CEOs Have Varying Job Roles and Responsibilities. The second research question investigated the specific roles and responsibilities of charter school CEOs. One of the most notable findings was that CEOs had varying job roles within their institution. When asked in the survey and in interviews, CEOs tended to have very different explanations about what their main responsibilities are and how they spend their time. Three CEOs interviewed stated that fundraising was the biggest part of their job, whereas, four CEOs said that administrative tasks such as board and Pennsylvania State reports were the most challenging.

CEO's Perceptions of Their Roles. The third research question examined how CEOs perceive their role within their institution. The data for this question generated from both the survey and the personal interview. In the survey the CEOs were asked to rate different areas of school leadership by how much influence they had in that specific area. In interviews, CEOs were asked to elaborate on this question. Participants listed a vast and varied list of where they felt that they had the most impact in their current role such as teacher and principal evaluations, hiring decisions, HR issues, instructional leadership, and fundraising. Interestingly, when asked what their primary focus was there was little overlap.

CEOs were also asked to reflect on how they viewed the role and they felt in their position. They were also asked what surprised them when they took this leadership role as well as what in their previous experience best prepared them. Many CEOs felt that the role was an extremely lonely role and felt much more isolated than any previous

leadership position they had held. Furthermore, CEOs interviewed agreed that prior work experience in schools was extremely important to their success. All CEOs interviewed were prior educators, though many CEOs in Philadelphia have no former education work experience. CEOs interviewed also said that both board relations and school finances had the biggest learning curve. Nine CEOs said that they were not prepared to manage board interactions, two went on to say they did not realize the amount of time this particular task would take up.

The Potential Gender Gap in Charter School CEOs

When pairwise correlations were run to look at which characteristics of CEOs aligned with successful schools, it was found that two CEO characteristics were more likely to be associated with higher SPP scores: male CEOs and CEOs of stand-alone schools. This finding prompts certain questions surrounding why these correlations exist. Though a correlation is not evidence of causation, this still begs the question of why this might be the case in Philadelphia.

First, to examine the gender finding it appeared that CEO gender distribution was quite equitable. When looking at gender the ratio of female to male CEOs was found to be nearly even (52 percent female and 48 percent male). However, nearly 77 percent of educators in the United States are female, thus females are underrepresented in this leadership position (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2016). As mentioned previously, a successful school in this study was determined by their SPP score. In this case, male CEOs on average worked in schools with SPP scores that were nearly 7.5 points higher than the schools in which female CEOs worked.

When attempting to delve deeper into this finding, I contacted all CEOs but only was able to connect to one female CEO for the interview portion of this study. However, the one female CEO that I spoke with did address this question regarding a lack of female leadership and stated that it is not where it needs to be yet, but it is better than it has been in the past. She also pointed out that, "The role of the CEO requires extreme overconfidence and that many women by nature do not operate that way." She went on to say that she herself has felt, "like an outsider", even though in her case she was extremely qualified and had years of leading successful schools as a school principal.

There are several plausible explanations for why this SPP score disparity might exist. First, it is that men are just better at the duties involved in running a school, like one participant said, "You need to have certain traits and be extremely confident to be successful." Maybe female CEOs are underrepresented and run less successful institutions because women feel less confident and if this is a required trait for the role may not be as successful (Zenger, 2018). In this study, it was found that CEOs were not only confident but at times overconfident in their decision-making stating things such as, "It didn't matter that I had no one to ask, I knew all the best answers." If this is the case, someone who is more even-tempered may not fair well in this position.

A second plausible explanation is that women are essentially being set up to fail. Recently there has been a trend to appoint females to high ranking roles and upper management positions as well as political office when there is a crisis. This phenomenon has a name, the 'Glass Cliff' phenomenon and examples of this include Theresa May and Mary Barra (Ryan & Haslam, 2007). Studies with college students show that when a business is doing well, and participants are asked to select a CEO from one male and one

female candidate who are equally qualified, they chose the male 62 percent of the time. However, when there is a crisis added to the scenario, they choose the female 69 percent of the time (Bruckmuller & Branscombe, 2010). In cases such as these it appears that hiring a female is an option when a company or institution needs change things up. The problem with this though, is that women hired in this manner are coming in at a disadvantage and then being compared to male leaders without taking this into consideration.

When considering the Glass Cliff phenomenon in Philadelphia it is possible that this is the case too. Although the full exploration of this possibility was beyond the scope of this study, it is interesting to note that majority of the founders of charter schools in the city have been male. In addition, many of the current female CEOs were hired at times where one could argue the school had been struggling or facing pressure from the SRC. This past year, Philadelphia reviewed 17 charter schools and recommended all but 1 for charter revocation. The process to revoke a charter takes time but the schools will all most likely have the opportunity to fix the issues to avoid closing its doors. It is worthwhile to see how these institutions might react and restructure their leadership teams.

In order to determine if this in fact what is happening in Philadelphia, there is a need for more research in this area. This study only looked at the 2015-2016 school year. A more in-depth study could look over multiple school years or look at other cities throughout the country. More targeted research in this specific area was beyond the scope of this particular study but could shed light on this potential happening.

Despite Education Experience Not Being Correlated with Higher SPP Scores, CEOs Interviewed Agreed Prior Education Experience Important

Two of this study's major findings were found to be in contradiction with one another. First, it was found in the pairwise correlations that there was no correlation between successful schools and any of the following: CEOs prior experience in education, years of experience in education, and Pennsylvania State certifications. Yet, all twelve of the CEOs interviewed claimed that their prior work in education was crucial to their success as a CEO. Furthermore, when asked what traits they would look for if having to hire a charter school CEO they all said they wanted a person who has previously been a leader in education. In the case of Philadelphia charter schools, it is the case that many CEOs operate schools without previously working in the field of education. Thus, it is possible.

Attempting to explain this inconsistency was difficult because all CEOs interviewed possessed prior education work experience. At the same time, speaking only to CEOs that had prior education experience could explain this inconsistency. To shed light on this, CEOs were asked how they thought a CEO without this experience could be successful in this role. First, all of the participants asked this question (n=10), were aware that some CEOs in Philadelphia lacked prior education experience. One CEO mentioned that they know someone who is able to do this and said, "Although I don't advise this, it is possible if you hire a principal who is a very strong instructional leader, a typical school leader, because then, you can worry about the business side of things." Another said, "If you surround yourself with people who are knowledgeable in areas that you are not, you can make this work."

This notion of hiring the right people and finding people with a varied skill set was also discussed when CEOs talked about their learning curve. For example, CEOs interviewed expressed that a major learning curve for them was around school finances. In two cases, to remedy this, the school had a Chief Financial Operator (CFO) brought in to assist the CEO and advise with financial matters. This also connects with another finding in this study, which was CEOs have such a variety of responsibilities that depend somewhat on the institution. This suggests that because charter schools are unique and thus have different needs, CEOs may need to have different compositions regarding leadership teams.

CEOs Said They Felt Lonely and Isolated, Yet Expressed Extreme Confidence

Another area of somewhat contradicting findings was that CEOs in interviews expressed a sense on loneliness and isolation in their role, yet at the same time, articulated an exorbitant amount of confidence when asked about their decision-making. When CEOs talked about the most difficult parts of their job they would many times reference the loneliness and isolation that they felt in their role. Interestingly, for most CEOs interviewed this was not their first leadership role and though they admitted that being a leader is a lonely job in general, they expressed that in the role of CEO it is very isolating. This could be due to many reasons such as: lack of leadership team, absence of a network, not having a mentor, and not feeling like a part of the school.

In one interview the CEO stated that, “In my prior leadership role, I was a principal and felt like a big part of the school, I talked with my most of my staff every day.” When he moved into the role of CEO, he said, “I had less interactions with my staff throughout the school day, I felt like I was operating peripherally.” He also felt that

teachers did not come to him for advice, assistance, or even to chat. This was difficult because he no longer felt like the academic leader in the building. The survey data supported this finding because only 4 CEOs reported spending more than 20 percent of their time on instructional leadership duties. It is possible that this shift might be better or easier if the individual was not a principal first or accustomed to that type of work and enjoyed it. In the same interview though, when asked how big decisions within the school were made, the CEO stated, "I sometimes consult with my team, or meet with board members but at the end of the day it is my decision." This method of top-down management

CEOs also see a decline in their colleagues and in many cases supervise less people than school leaders in other roles. Principals in the city of Philadelphia are abundant, especially when assistant principals and deans are included in this grouping. Additionally, principals are frequently the target of school and district interventions. They receive training though several local and national donors and organizations such as The New Teacher Project (TNTP), Philadelphia School Partnerships (PSP), Neubauer Fellows, and the Philly Plus Program. In addition, principals generally have certifications which means they went to graduate school with a cohort of aspiring school leaders and potentially were able to identify mentors and thought partners and have an alumni network. This is not the case for most CEOs for several reasons. There are only about 60 CEOs in Philadelphia, no major targeted interventions for CEOs or specific professional development, and no typical or required schooling or degree requirements. In interviews they also mentioned that principals are surrounded with a leadership team and

organizational structure stating, “You can run your ideas by your principals and other supervisory staff but as a CEO you need to keep some boundaries.”

When considering this paradox of feeling lonely and isolated and at the same time feeling confident in decisions, it is possible CEOs operating in this fashion are unintentionally exacerbating their isolation. Studies have shown that CEOs who operate top-down are likely to isolate themselves from their companies and institutions (Trueman, 2001).

Throughout the interviews with the CEOs there was a clear theme presented when it came down to how they reflected on the decisions they made and what they thought of their rise to the top and their performance. CEOs undoubtedly had confidence that regardless of outcomes, they made the right decision at the time. Many of the CEOs interviewed when asked about a tough decision or a pivotal time in their career stated that they made the final call or decision. When asked if they consulted anyone before making large scale decisions, only a few mentioned of a mentor or team. Instead, the majority talked about how they came to the final conclusion and made the tough call independently. One even said, “I had no one else to ask, but that is okay because I knew all the right answers.”

The idea that they knew what was best for the school was prevalent among interview participants. This confidence in knowing all the right answers is something that continues even when a school is performing poorly. As one interviewee stated, “Even when the school is about to close, they [CEOs] can’t see that it is because of their decision-making.” This failure to accept their possible missteps or admit mistakes is obviously problematic but it is possible that this is also what allows individuals to rise to

the level of CEO. Confidence was also a trait that CEOs felt was required of another potential candidate, which is necessary in leadership. A leader needs to be confident to be successful but needs to also be critical of their actions and know when to seek guidance.

Running a successful academic institution requires many competent, passionate, and intelligent individuals. It is not a job for a single person. What was troubling about the interviews was that many times CEOs made no specific mention of a leadership team when talking about decision making. This is concerning because schools typically fair better when decisions are made in an environment where individuals feel empowered (Mulford, 2003). Even when reviewing the organizational charts of different charter schools, it is common that the CEO oversees several members of the intuition directly but there were few charters with lateral roles or roles overseeing the CEO. This sets up a system with a lack of checks and balances and allows the CEO to have substantial unchecked power.

The Beginnings of Charter Schools in Philadelphia Could Explain the CEO Role and Varying Responsibilities

In theory, charter schools were invented to be innovative and grant schools the freedom to operate without the red tape and excessive mandates that tend to be associated with TPS and typical school board governance. They were also created out of the fear, at times unwarranted, that the neighborhood schools were inadequate and thus students deserved an alternative. After the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (1983), the United States was alarmed about the current state of education. Yet, with all of these things considered there are two major issues that are in direct conflict with the very foundation of the charter school movement. First, charter networks or CMOs are now capitalizing on

the charter school scene creating a system nearly the same as a traditional school district. The charter school movement started to create small and unique neighborhood schools that were suited to meet the needs of the community, yet CMOs are replicating a charter model and creating a mini-district within the charter school world. Second, although some charter schools have proven to be a success, majority of charter perform about the same as their public schools and some much worse (CREDO, 2017). The trust in the public system and elected school board has been taken away and awarded to, in many cases, a charter school board and a single CEO that is put in charge of running an entire academic institution. The education community needs to ask ourselves, is this wise?

In this study, the job roles and duties of Philadelphia Charter School CEOs were closely examined. Specifically, in the survey, CEOs were asked to explain how they spend their time on specific tasks associated with running a school. It was found that the ways CEOs spend their time and focus their energy varies, in some cases immensely (Figure 3). For example, when considering where CEOs spent the majority of their time, there were four different areas that CEOs allotted the most time to: fundraising, administrative tasks, board interactions, and mentoring teachers and observing classes. This data suggests that the role of the CEO can vary depending on the charter school.

It was discovered that CEOs shared three surprising characteristics. First, only a little over half of the CEOs possessed a Pennsylvania state teaching certification, and many had no prior experience working in education. Second, most stumbled into this position, meaning it wasn't a long-time career goal. Third, the work they do varies greatly from one CEO to another. These three commonalities can possibly be explained by first considering how and why charter schools were established in the first place.

According to Pennsylvania Charter School Law (1997), charter schools were created for the following reasons:

> To provide opportunities for teachers, parents, pupils and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently from the existing school district structure, as a method to accomplish all of the following:
> (1) Improve pupil learning.
> (2) Increase learning opportunities for all pupils.
> (3) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.

It is oftentimes the case that when a new field emerges there is a period of time that competing or similar entities within the new field vary and overtime, the diffusion of ideas and innovation spreads throughout the institutions making them more and more similar (Guler, Guillen, & Macpherson, 2002). This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as the Theory of Diffusion This is particularly common when the 'old way' of doing things is not viewed as successful and a new way is discovered. Companies and institutions will try and mimic this new way of doing things and without attempting to become more similar to a neighboring or competing institution (Rodgers, 2003). According to research by Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell (1983), in the early stages of development, it is common for an organization's leadership to operate in isolation, finding innovative ways to do things; however, overtime, the dynamic shifts and once established competing or similar institutions within the same filed tend to homogenize and become more similar

According to DiMaggio and Powell, there are certain external and internal pressures that can speed up the process of assimilation. For example, the more reliant an organization is on another organization the more likely there will be pressure to assimilate. In the case of charter schools though, there is no need to rely on other charter organizations but instead, being different is oftentimes praised and thus has the potential

to attract more applicants. It is possible that without this external pressure to conform operating on the charter schools in Philadelphia, charter school CEOs were able to operate with more autonomy and make decisions how they see fit.

Another finding of DiMaggio and Powell was that the more contact an organization has with the state or local agency, the quicker they will assimilate. This could be compared to schools that answer to a central district. One would imagine that schools governed by a central district office will be more similar than schools that have no central office. In the case of most charter schools, there is no central office (with the exception of CMOs) and so no external pressure that is forcing or compelling the organization to conform. If charter schools were required to have more contact with the school district in which they operate or even answer to the State more than a yearly report, there would most likely be more uniformity among charter school CEOs which may benefit charter schools as a whole by ensuring that the leaders are best suited for this role.

Implications for Practice

Charter School Law. Charter school law should be revisited. Since the institution of charter schools in 1997, there have been no changes to the original charter school law. In over twenty years, there have been serious changes to the charter school landscape such as the creation and nearly exponential growth of charters and CMOs. It would be wise for legislators, both local and State, to review the law in light of these changes. Two major areas are suggested for close examination. First, charter law in Pennsylvania may benefit from requiring CEOs to participate in some sort of cohort or professional learning community (PLC). Second, there should be some base line

qualifications for the role of charter school CEO. Both of these recommendations are already in place for teachers and principals. In almost all cases educational professionals need to be certified and they need to keep their certification active by attending professional development and/or taking college courses.

Having a network and a mentor could potentially change the current narrative of loneliness and isolation found in this study. CEOs have no one to consult or run ideas by. If there was a Philadelphia CEO network that all CEOs of charter schools were required to join upon charter authorization this might ease the burden or feeling alone. Research suggests that support networks, principal cohorts and, and PLCs have been successful in helping principals. They have allowed principals to work with other professionals to engage in the sharing of ideas, best practices, and provide an outgoing network of support for principals (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Hord, 2009). Researchers have found that principals interviewed shared their enthusiasm for being a part of such PLCs and did credit these groups for allowing them to feel more comfortable in their role (Hord, 2009).

Additionally, charter school law can possibly require specific qualifications as a baseline for a CEO candidate, such as a college degree and possibly even a certification. At the current time, there are no required degrees or certifications for a charter school CEO. As mentioned before, certifications are commonplace in the education world. There are specific certifications for almost job roles within a school and oftentimes, these require maintenance and updating in order to stay current and valid. Yet, CEOs have no such requirement. Though having a certification in and of itself is not a guarantee that a person is fully equipped for a job role; it does show that the individual has been exposed to the major aspects of running a school and has knowledge regarding school operations.

There is also a Praxis test that is required in most states for certification. Ideally, CEOs should be held to a higher standard, their role requires them to have a vast knowledge of education, learning, teaching, school law, human resources, and much more.

Charter School Boards. When considering the long list of skills, job duties, and responsibilities a typical CEO is tasked with, it is fair to say that a single individual is going to have areas some areas of weakness when assuming the role of CEO. Charter School Boards (CSB) should first be aware of what their unique institution requires of a CEO, for example is fundraising the main concern or instructional leadership. Once deciding on the skills required for the role, CSBs should look at their current staff and school situation and first consider what the best fit for their school might be. In one interview conducted, the CEO stated, "I had a really good finance guy, and our school had a good lawyer on our board, that was helpful to me because those were two areas that needed major attention and I had very little prior experience with these." It was clear that the CSB did not hire him for those reasons and whether consciously or not it worked out because they had people in place who took care of those issues.

It is recommended that after considering the traits that a CEO must have to be successful, boards should also create an entry plan to outline how the areas of potential weakness are going to be improved. This could include having an assigned mentor, requiring the CEO to partner with an organization, or asking for outside help from a professional development provider or professional coach. Also, include this plan in the contract and budget to increase the likelihood it is fully carried out. This may also help with the feeling of isolation that CEOs expressed experiencing.

Supporting Charter School CEOs. When considering the needs of charter school CEOs, the study suggests that they felt lonely and isolated and lacked a network or community. CEOs should be provided with the opportunity to join networks within the city of Philadelphia. Charter school boards and charter school authorizers may want to look into opportunities to allow these networks or communities to form.

Aside from feeling isolated, CEOs also expressed that upon starting their role, they had a steep learning curve regarding school finances and board interactions. Ideally, there should be an opportunity for those aspiring to run charter schools to learn about these before being on-the-job. Colleges and universities can potentially offer classes geared to this specific area that may appeal to new CEOs. In addition, professional development providers may find offering specific programs for CEOs to be both lucrative and worthwhile for their clients.

Implications for Research

Broaden the Study. Due to the scope of this study there were several areas that were unable to be fully explored. Future research should expand this study to include more CEOs both in Philadelphia and perhaps out of state in locations such as New Orleans or New York City to determine if the trends found in this study are singular to this area or exist throughout the nation. Furthermore, recognizing that charter school law varies from state to state, it would be interesting to see if other states have created more stringent laws regarding CEO qualifications or requirements for the school role and the effects of these laws.

One major difficulty I had during this study was getting CEOs to agree to an interview. Many times, they ignored my calls and emails. A CEO in one instance, even

went as far as telling me that "talking to me would be a waste of tax dollars." Ideally, more CEOs should be interviewed. Especially, to obtain a better and larger sample size that are reflective of the broader range of traits.

CEO Impact on Teacher Practice. Another way to explore the role of CEO and the impact and influence they may have on their school is to look at CEOs from the teacher perspective. Nine CEOs interviewed said that a large part of their role was instructional leadership in the school. If this is the case, seeing how the CEO carries out this responsibility could be a worthwhile opportunity. Monitoring CEOs time spent on teacher development and instructional support as well as observing their interactions could illuminate this particular facet of the CEO role.

Hiring practices of Charter School Boards. Knowing more about the current hiring practices of CSBs could help to understand the findings in this study more deeply and in addition understand what skills CSBs are looking for in a candidate. Possibly asking schools who are hiring a CEO to share their process and even a list of candidates that applied would allow researchers to get a sense of who is not only getting hired, but what does the talent pool for this role look like.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. There are only 64 charter school CEOs in Philadelphia; while elements of this study capture the experience of CEOs of charter schools in Philadelphia, the small sample size, combined with the unique context of Philadelphia, and low survey response rate means that the findings should be applied with caution to other cities. Furthermore, this study was divided into three parts and thus each part has a variety of limitations.

The first limitation is that the in-depth interviews were limited to only twelve charter school CEOs. While I employed a sampling strategy designed to capture the breadth of experiences of charter school CEOs in Philadelphia, their experiences may not be representative of the broader field. This creates an issue with generalizability (Smeyers & Depapepe, 2006). One major issue with my study is that all CEOs interviewed had prior education experience. It would be beneficial to speak with CEOs who have a different background to better understand their perspective. Ideally, researchers would survey a larger number of CEOs from a variety of locations and this could allow for stronger conclusions and more quantitative analyses.

The second part of the study, the survey, captured a larger sample of CEOs and was in some ways more representative of the entire population. However, unlike the interviews, which provided an opportunity for in-depth questioning, the survey could not always provide a deep explanation, but instead state information gathered that eventually led to the more in-depth interview questions.

Another issue with this study is that it looks at the perceptions that CEOs have of their job role and how they report spending their time, as well as what they deem to be significant, but it does not mean that this is actually the case. A further study could compare the findings in this study to more in-depth interviews principals and boards of trustees to determine if their perception of the CEOs influence is aligned with what the CEO suggests.

Lastly, this dissertation focused on brick and mortar charter schools in Philadelphia, though there is an increasing number of cyber school charter schools that operate in Philadelphia. This new trend in schooling should be examined in detail.

Similar to charter schools they offer an alternative to their TPS, but they are very different because the student can enroll from anywhere. Virtual charter schools have become an attractive option for many students that do not live in range of a charter school alternative.

Conclusion

This study examined the roles and responsibilities of charter school CEOs and looked at the characteristics of CEOs in Philadelphia. CEOs in this study were found to have a variety of job roles and responsibilities that in some way were atypical for a school leader. This may be due in part to the fact that there was no typical career path to get to this role. In some cases, CEOs interviewed described how this role 'fell into their lap' and admittedly never imagined themselves being in this role. Though the CEOs interviewed were all previously school leaders in a different capacity, they expressed feeling isolated and lonely in their role even though they had the courage of their convictions when making tough decisions. They also stated that they felt they did not have a network or group of colleagues to turn to or consult when making tough decisions. Lastly, CEOs interviewed were all former educators and stated that prior education experience was crucial to their success as a CEO. However, in Philadelphia there is a substantial number of CEOs who did not have education work experience prior to their role and still in some cases are able to lead successful schools.

This was an exploratory study that used both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the characteristics, roles, and responsibilities of Philadelphia charter school CEOs. The findings in this study were, at times, conflicting and thus raise more questions regarding this role. For example, CEOs felt both lonely and isolated and yet were

extremely confident in their decision making within their institution. Another finding that was inconsistent was that CEOs interviewed claimed that experience working in education was imperative to their success and yet, the quantitative findings did not find any correlation between this variable and successful schools. CEOs interviewed in this study did not have a career goal of becoming a charter school CEO, possibly because this role in rather new in the education community. Now though, that this role is more common in schools, there are individuals who might be planning on their career path. Knowing more about this role and expanding on the research of this study would be helpful to CSBs, charter school authorizers, and colleges of education. It would possibly allow them the ability to offer aspiring charter school CEOs a formal means to prepare for this role.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: GPS AND SPP SCORE METHODOLOGY

School Performance Profile Calculation Explanation:
http://paschoolperformance.org/FAQ

Great Philadelphia Schools Calculation Explanation:
https://greatphillyschools.org/articles/greatphillyschools-ratings-methodology-2018

APPENDIX B: SURVEY MAILED TO CEOS

School Name _____
Your Name and Position_____

1. Are you male or female?
   a) Male b. Female

2. What is your race?
   a) American Indian or Alaska Native b. Asian c. Black or African-American
   d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander e. White

3. Are you of Hispanic or Latino Origin?
   a) Yes b. No

4. What is your year of birth?

5. What is your current ANNUAL salary for your position before taxes and deductions?

6. What is the highest level of education you have obtained?
   a) Associate Degree b. bachelor's degree c. master's degreed. Doctorate

7. What field is this degree in?
   a) Education b. Business C. Law D. Other

8. Have you taught before?
   a) Yes b. No

8a. If yes, how many years?
   a. 1-3 years b. 4-7 years c. 8-12 years d. 12+ years

9. Is this your first CEO position?
   a) Yes b. No

10. Is this your first school leadership position?
   a) Yes. b. No

10a. If no, were you a principal previously?
   a. Yes b. No

11. Are you a stand-alone charter school or a central management network (CMO)?
   a) Stand-alone b. CMOs

12. How many schools do you oversee?
   a) 1 b. 2 c. 3 d. 4 e. 5+

13. What is the student population at your school/s?
    a) 1-199 b. 200-399 c. 400-599 d. 600-799 e. 800+

14. How many employees do you oversee directly?
    a) 0-3 b. 4-7 c. 8-11 d. 12+

15. How many teachers were employed at your school/s in 2015-2016?
    a) 1-15 b. 16-30 c. 31-45 d. 46-60 e. 61+

16. Which best describes how school-wide decisions are made at your school/s?
    a) Top-down b. Collaborative c. Leadership Team d. CSBtom-Up

17. Do you currently hold a Pennsylvania Administrator Certification?
    a) Yes b. No

18. Before you became a CEO, did you have any management experience outside of education?
    a) Yes b. No

19. In the past 12-months have you participated in any form of professional development?
    a) Yes b. No

    19a. If yes, what form? (Check all that apply)
        a. University course b. Visits to other schools c. Action Research
        d. Mentoring supported by a university or district d. A CEO network
        e. Workshops/Conferences f. Other (please explain…)

20. We are interested in the importance you place on various educational goals. From the following ten goals, which do you consider the most important, the second most important, and the third most important?

1 - Building basic literacy skills (reading, math, writing, speaking)
2 - Encouraging academic excellence
3 - Preparing students for postsecondary education
4 - Promoting occupational or vocational skills
5 - Promoting good work habits and self-discipline
6 - Promoting personal growth (self-esteem, self-knowledge, etc.)
7 - Promoting human relations skills
8 - Promoting specific moral values
9 - Promoting multicultural awareness or understanding
10 - Fostering religious or spiritual development

21. Please answer the following questions regarding how much ACTUAL influence do you think you have as a principal on decisions concerning the following activities?
(4 - Major Influence, 3 - Moderate Influence, 2 - Minor Influence, 1 - No Influence, 0 - Not Applicable)

    a. Setting performance standards for students of this school
    b. Establishing curriculum at this school
    c. Determining the content of in-service professional development programs for principals and teachers of this school
    d. Evaluating teachers of this school
    e. Evaluating principals of this school
    f. Hiring new full-time teachers of this school
    g. Hiring new full-time administrators of this school
    h. Setting discipline policy at this school
    i. Deciding how your budget will be spent
    j. Bringing funds into the school by applying for grants
    k. Developing partnerships within the community with business and organizations
    l. Recruitment of new students and enrollment activities

22. Including hours spent during the school day, before and after school, and on the weekends, how many hours do you spend on ALL school-related activities during a typical FULL WEEK at THIS school?

a. 0 – 20 hours b. 21 – 40 hours c. 41- 60 hours d. 60+ hours

23. How many total hours do you spend interacting with students during a typical FULL WEEK at this school?

a. 0-5 hours b. 6-10 hours c. 11-15 hours d. 16-20 hours
e. 21 – 25 hours f. 26+ hours

24. How many days per year are you required to work under your current contract?

25. What is the length of your current contract?

26. On average throughout the school year, what percentage of time do you estimate that you spend on the following tasks in this school?
Rough estimates are sufficient.
Please write a percentage in each row. Write 0 if none.
Responses should add up to 100%.

    a. Internal administrative tasks, HR issues, regulations, reports, budget
    b. Curriculum and teaching-related tasks, lesson planning, mentoring teachers and principals, classroom observations
    c. Student interactions, discipline and academic

d. Parent interactions
e. Board interactions
f. Other (please specify)

27. Were you or are you going to be rated in a FORMAL evaluation this year?
a. Yes b. No

27a. If yes, are test score outcomes or student growth included as evaluation criteria?
a. Yes b. No

28. How often are you rated in a FORMAL evaluation?
b. Two or more times a year b. Once a year c. Once every 2 years
d. Once every 3 years or more years e. No formal evaluations are conducted

APPEDIX C: DEFINITIONS

Charter Schools - Charter schools receive public money and are attended by choice. Each school is guided by a "charter" that specifies certain results that will be achieved. They are subject to some of the rules, regulations, and statutes that apply to other public schools, but they are more flexible than traditional public schools. To receive Charter School Program funds, a charter school must meet the definition in Section 5210(1) of The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2004 (National Charter School Resource Center, 2013)

Charter Management Organization (CMO) – was first used by NewSchools Venture Fund (NSVF) to describe a network of charter schools that report to a central management office (NSVF, 2006).

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – A term first coined in the business world is now becoming more and more commonly used in the education world. A CEO is a term for the leader of a charter school.

Decision-Making Power – Who has the authority to make decisions in an organization and at what extent.

Traditional Public School (TPS) – Referring to the schools within the central district.