

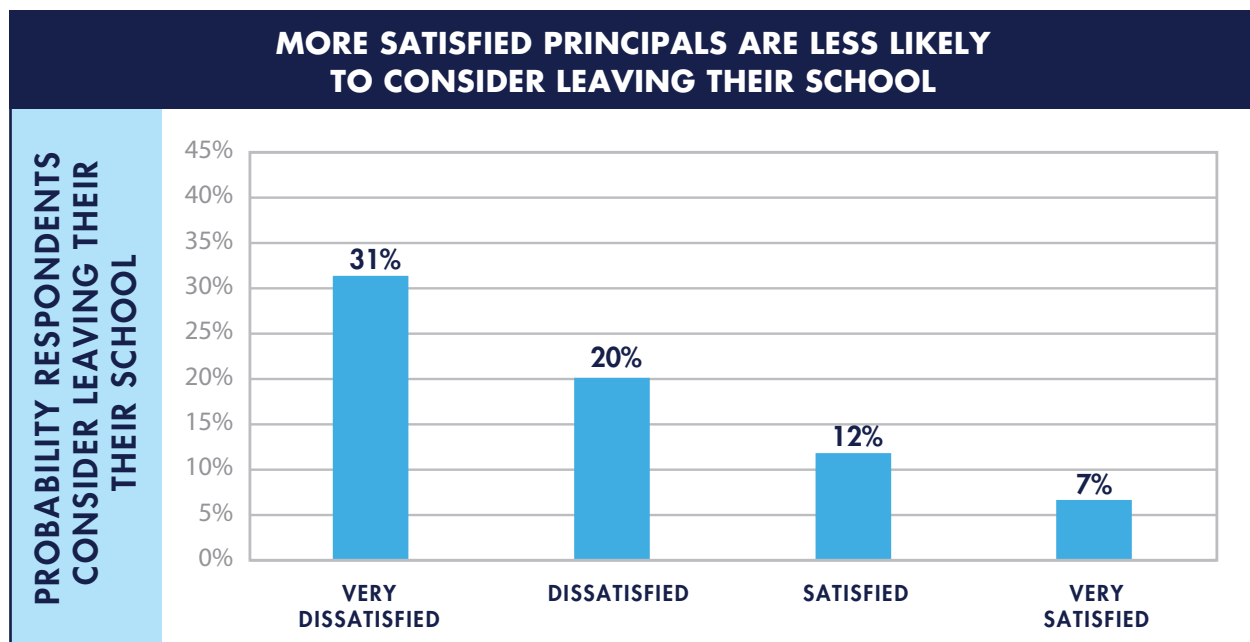
# Trends in Principal Job Satisfaction

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## ABOUT THIS SNAPSHOT

This snapshot provides a look into trends in satisfaction among Tennessee principals. In the 2018 Tennessee Educator Survey, we asked principals about their current levels of job satisfaction. We analyze those responses to show which principals are more satisfied in their jobs, and how the school environment and principals' feelings about their jobs are related.<sup>1</sup>

These trends matter because principal satisfaction is linked to principal retention (Grissom & Bartanen, in press), and understanding more about these trends could point to strategies for reducing principal turnover. In 2018, Tennessee Educator Survey results indicated that lower satisfaction is associated with higher planned future mobility. Specifically, principals with higher levels of satisfaction are less likely to consider leaving their school the following year.

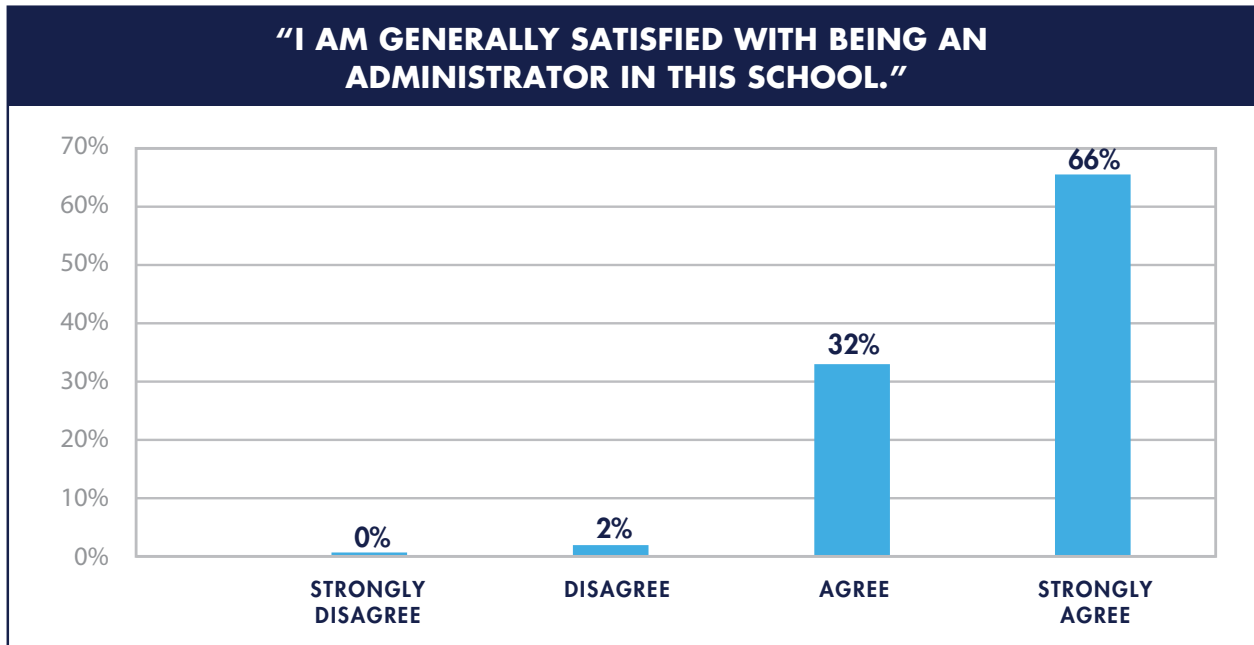


<sup>1</sup> We use a simple regression model to analyze trends of principal satisfaction by principal experience and school achievement index. Therefore, the patterns we discuss for those two factors indicate a predicted level of principal satisfaction at the given level of principal experience or student achievement, rather than the actual satisfaction level. The reported outcomes do not account for the influence of other characteristics, but the results were statistically significant both with and without principal, school, and district characteristics.

# KEY TRENDS

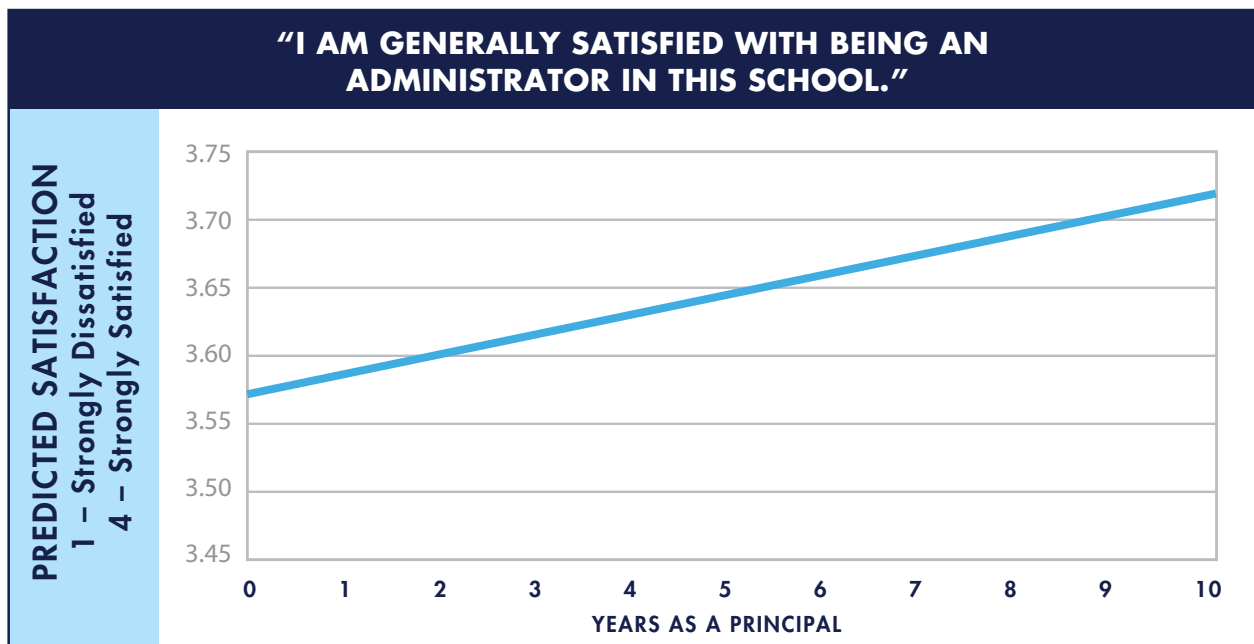
## Overall, principals in Tennessee are satisfied in their current job.

More than 95% of principals who responded to the survey agreed or strongly agreed that they are generally satisfied at their current school.



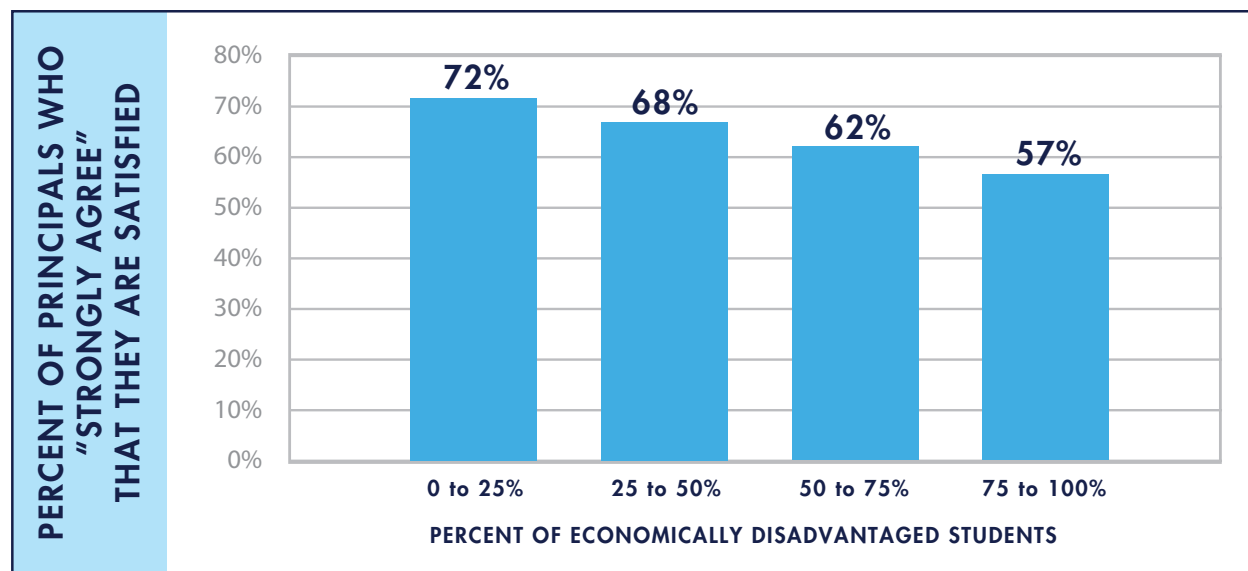
## More experienced principals have higher average levels of job satisfaction.

In general, there is a positive association between principal experience and satisfaction. That is, principals tend to be more satisfied the longer they have served in their role.



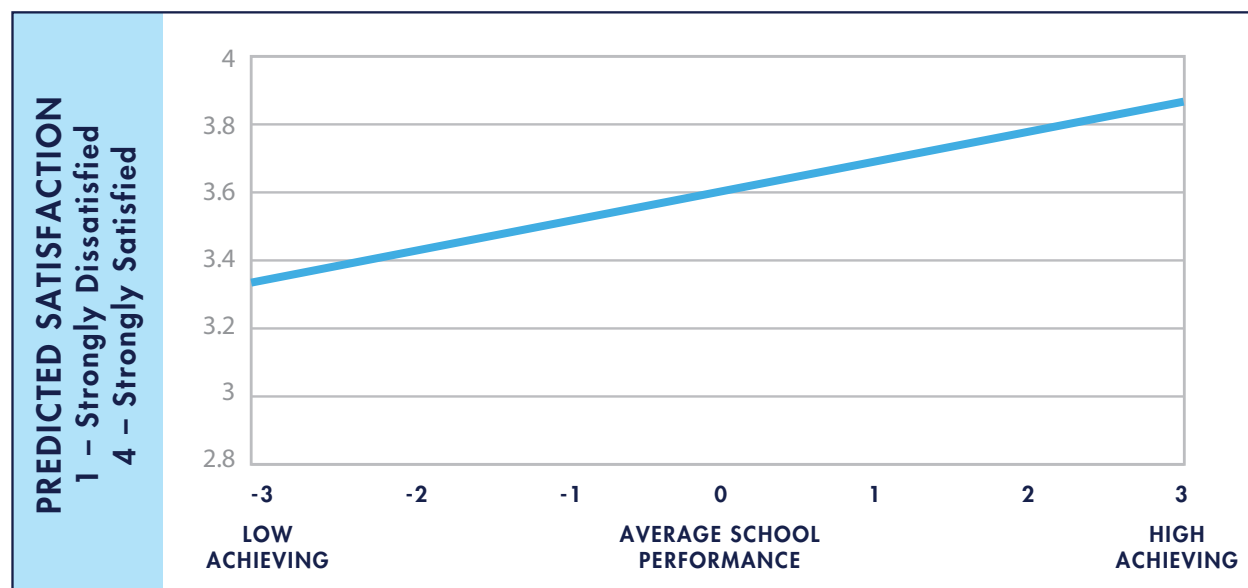
## Principals in high-poverty schools tend to be less satisfied than principals in schools with lower levels of student poverty.

Principals in high-poverty schools are less satisfied, on average. Specifically, 72% of principals in the lowest-poverty schools (fewer than 25% of students are economically disadvantaged) strongly agreed that they are satisfied. In contrast, only 57% of principals in the highest-poverty schools (more than 75% of students are economically disadvantaged) expressed similar feelings.



## Principals in lower-achieving schools are less likely to express feelings of satisfaction than principals in higher-achieving schools.

There is a positive association between principal satisfaction and school achievement. In other words, in schools with higher levels of student achievement, principals are more likely to express feelings of satisfaction with being an administrator in that school.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> To see this result, we created a standardized achievement index that summarizes TNReady test score levels across all state tests administered in the school. On this scale, schools with average performance are placed at 0. Above-average schools have positive values, while below-average schools have negative values.



## NEXT STEPS FOR RESEARCH

Our analysis shows principal satisfaction varies by important school factors and may be linked to future mobility plans. Future TERA research in this area will look more deeply at the factors and effects of principal satisfaction, particularly as it relates to the recruitment and retention of strong school leaders.

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## REFERENCES

Grissom & Bartanen (in press). Principal Effectiveness and Principal Turnover. *Education Finance and Policy*.

## ABOUT THIS SERIES

*The Tennessee Educator Survey is an annual joint effort by the Tennessee Department of Education and the Tennessee Education Research Alliance (TERA) to gather information about schools across the state. Open to all teachers, administrators, and certified staff, the survey is a way for educators to provide feedback about what's working and where improvements can be made in areas like school climate, educator evaluation, and other state initiatives. Survey responses directly inform state research and decision-making processes and are a tool for schools and districts to inform their practice.*

*In a series of survey snapshots, TERA will provide a broad look at responses and trends from the 2018 survey in several key areas relating to educators in Tennessee. Topics include job satisfaction, hiring patterns, growth and professional learning, educator evaluation, aspects of school support roles (assistant principals and instructional coaches), and more.*