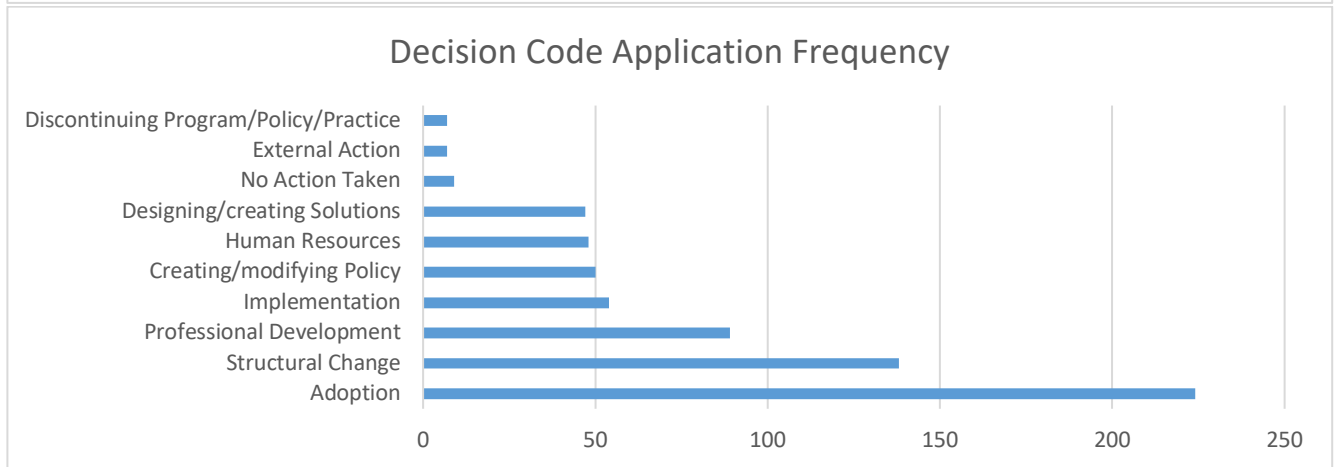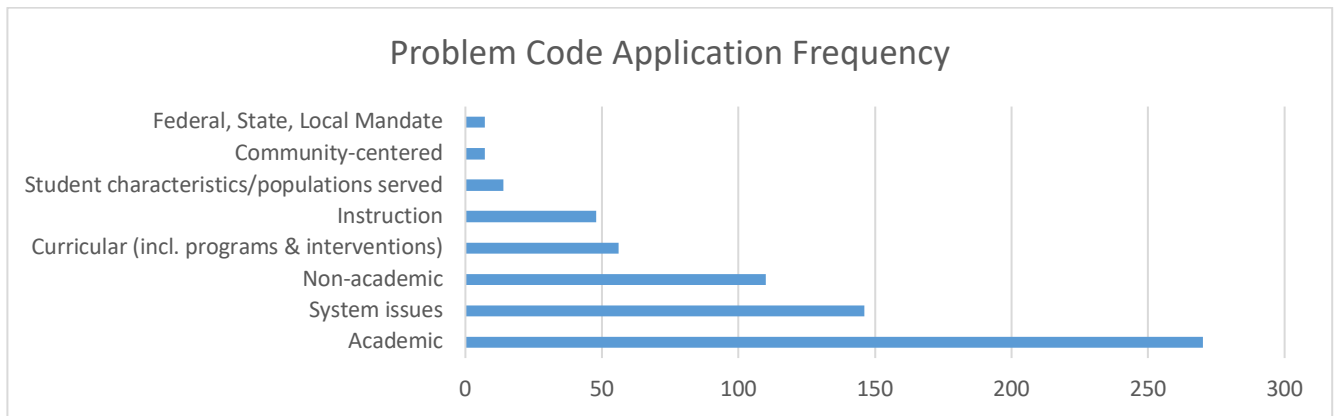# TYPES OF PROBLEMS AND DECISIONS OCCURRING IN SCHOOLS

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Insights from the Center for Research Use in Education

DATA POINTS

The *Survey of Evidence in Education (SEE-S)* is intended to capture information that will allow us to have a better understanding of how decision-making unfolds in schools. In order to gather more than generalized perspectives, the survey is anchored in a respondent-identified organizational decision that occurred in the school within the last two years. Respondents describe an organizational decision made in the last two years and answer: 1) What decision was made (i.e., what was changed or introduced/what actions were taken)? 2) Why was the decision necessary (i.e., what problem/challenge did it address/what was the goal)? For analysis purposes, responses to question 1 are coded as "decisions," and responses to question 2 as "problems." The graphs below display the frequency of "problem" and "decision" code applications.

Problem Code Application Frequency

Horizontal bar chart with categories (top to bottom): Federal, State, Local Mandate; Community-centered; Student characteristics/populations served; Instruction; Curricular (incl. programs & interventions); Non-academic; System issues; Academic. X-axis from 0 to 300.

Decision Code Application Frequency

Horizontal bar chart with categories (top to bottom): Discontinuing Program/Policy/Practice; External Action; No Action Taken; Designing/creating Solutions; Human Resources; Creating/modifying Policy; Implementation; Professional Development; Structural Change; Adoption. X-axis from 0 to 250.

The most frequent type of problem reported was academic. Problem data was coded as "academic" if the framing focused specifically on student achievement, performance, or test scores. In examining the types of decisions made to address these problems, we find that decisions to adopt something new (e.g., curriculum, intervention, program, practice) were the most prevalent. Structural changes, including changes to the schedule, use of physical space, or addition of a new structure, were the next most frequently cited type of decision. This analysis provides new insight into the types of problems that schools face, which may be useful information for education researchers to consider. Additionally, information about the types of problems and decisions that commonly occur in schools could be useful to incorporate in teacher education programs to prepare future educators for the pervasive problems and decisions schools address.

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