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INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATORS
THAT IMPACT TEACHER RETENTION IN CHALLENGING URBAN SCHOOLS

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the College of Education and Human Performance
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ABSTRACT

Although a plethora of research about teacher attrition exists, very little research has been conducted on the factors that influence teacher retention. The need to identify factors that promote teacher retention is critical to both maintain a well-prepared and contented workforce and also to remedy the current national urban teacher attrition problem. School districts and administrators need to know how to implement systems that support the critical needs of teachers who teach in high-poverty, low-performing schools. This phenomenological research study identifies common experiences, practices, supports, and attitudes regarding teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools by exploring the lived experiences of five veteran teachers from a large urban district in the southern United States. Data from a school-based teacher and principal survey and individual teacher interviews were collected and analyzed. To increase the validity of the research, the data from teacher interviews, school-based teacher surveys, and school-based principal surveys, were used to triangulate the findings.

This dissertation is dedicated to the incredible people in my life for your unwavering support and undying faith.

Ethelene (Mollie) Gass, my grandmother (rest in peace)

Carlo Green, my mother (rest in peace)

Bobby Moore Jr., my loving husband

MarQuise and MezNari Moore,
My marvelous and miraculous Moore men

Tyrone Singletary, my brother

Danielle O'Sullivan Flynn, Godsister

Pamela Houle, Godmother

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

There is a compelling, but under-examined paradox regarding urban teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing schools. Previous educational researchers have examined factors influencing teacher attrition, yet the need to understand the characteristics of those educators who continue to work in urban, high poverty school settings remains (Hill & Barth, 2004). A great deal of literature has been written about why and when teachers leave education, but relatively little has been written to reveal the reasons teachers stay and how dispositions that promote retention and success are developed. In order to affect change and increase teacher retention rates, there is a need to understand the lived experiences of the urban teachers who remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of teachers who remain in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools for three or more years. Researchers have not thoroughly examined organizational characteristics, individuals' dispositions, and lived experiences that have motivated these individuals to remain in such challenging environments (Ingersoll, 2001; Rubalcava, 2005). Therefore, if the current teacher turnover is to be remedied, it will be advantageous to identify both the personal and organizational factors that influence teachers to remain in the profession. Researchers have not specifically sought to explain retention rates in high-poverty schools; however, many have provided organizational perspectives for subsequent

research about the “revolving door” phenomenon in this subset of schools (Ingersoll, 2001; Rubalcava, 2005). In an effort to explain why teachers remain in high-poverty schools, this research study was conducted to analyze the organizational characteristics that contribute to the development of individual teachers’ desire and willingness to remain at high-poverty, low-performing schools.

Empirical research studies since the late 1980s reveal characteristics of teachers who typically leave education (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2012). In 1998, research from the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) and Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. indicated that approximately 10% of new teachers resign after their first year and one-quarter to one-half of new teachers resign within the first three years of teaching. By 2004, the teacher attrition rate grew to between 40%-50% within the first three to five years of teaching, with some educators never returning to the field of education (Billingsley, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Johnson, & Birkeland, 2003; Kardos & Johnson, 2007; Rubalcava, 2005). During the 2008-2009 school year, 8% of public school teachers left the profession. Fitzpatrick wrote in 2012 that turnover among teachers in high-poverty, low-performing schools was substantially higher than suburban schools nationwide.

High poverty rates and poor student academic achievement have been shown to impact teachers in urban schools who experience additional pressures as they work to help students increase their academic achievement (Good & Bennett, 2005). As urban schools are known to be in underserved communities that are hard to staff and face unique cultural challenges, teacher quality and quantity often suffer. Hard-to-staff schools

are more likely to have inexperienced and less effective teachers. These factors promote rapid teacher turnover with little to no teacher retention (Darling-Hammond, 1999, 2003; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001).

Nationally, teacher turnover has remained a concern, and the United States has continued to have an impending teacher shortage in urban school districts. Although the data have continued to show that many teachers are leaving urban schools, a small percentage has chosen to remain. Educational institutions must continue to recruit and retain highly talented professionals, especially urban public classroom teachers (Bradley & Loadma, 2005). In a 1946 interview, Albert Einstein suggested, “We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them” (Amrine, 1946, p. 7). Thus, the rate of teacher attrition cannot be lowered by focusing solely on the issues that cause teachers to leave. Instead, by rising above the current and previous level(s) of thinking, it may be possible to determine why the small percentage of current urban teaching force has chosen to remain committed to the profession and in the classroom. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify both the personal and organizational factors that influence teachers to remain in the urban classroom.

Theoretical Underpinnings and Conceptual Framework

The theoretical underpinning for this study was based on Bandura's social cognitive and perceived self-efficacy theory that describes the urban educator's certitude for taking purposeful action by remaining at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1993, 1997). This study sought to understand why teachers stay in high poverty, low performing urban schools by examining urban teachers' lived

experiences throughout their time teaching in high-poverty, low-performing urban educational settings. It is clear that urban schools experience unique challenges compared to their suburban and rural counterparts and can be a difficult place to teach (Patterson, Grenny, Maxfield, McMillan, & Switzler, 2008). These challenges make it difficult for teachers to remain in urban schools. Until recently, few scholars have recognized that the problem of maintaining a highly skilled teaching staff in urban schools is not one of recruitment, but one of retention (Lavigne, 2014).

Historically, educators who teach in urban areas have had fewer resources (Darling-Hammond, 2003), poorer working conditions and facilities, limited access to textbooks, scarce supplies, fewer administrative supports (Boyd et al., 2011), and lower salaries than their colleagues who teach in suburban and rural areas. All of these challenges contribute to the struggles of teaching in urban schools. However, the teaching profession has some special features that make it an attractive option for some. Darling-Hammond (2003) found that working conditions, induction and mentoring support strongly influence whether and when teachers leave specific schools or the education profession entirely. The conceptual framework for this study was based on the view that administrative support for teachers, self-efficacy, school climate, school culture and collegiality are directly related to teacher retention.

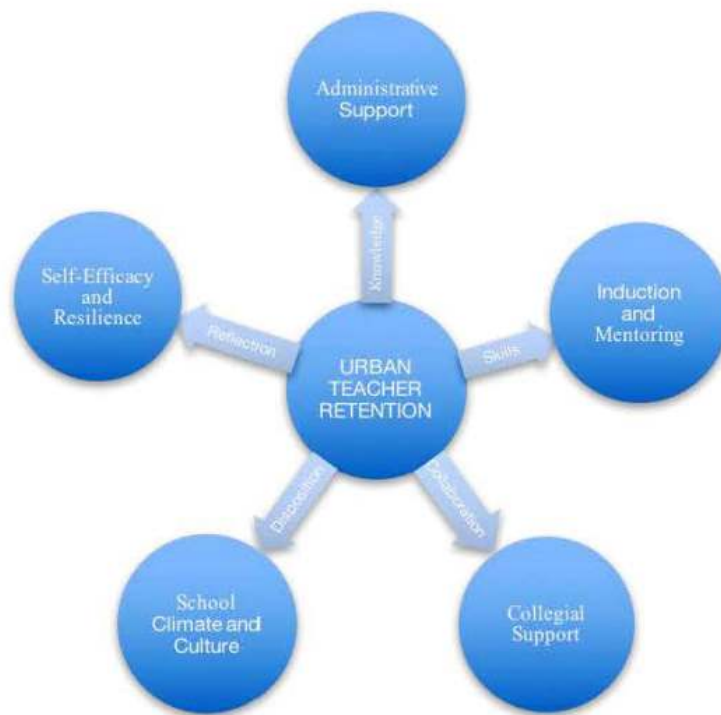


Figure 1. A conceptual framework to understand key factors in teacher retention in urban schools.

Social Cognitive Theory

This study applied the social cognitive theory and self-efficacy lens (Bandura, 1997) to understand the essence of urban teacher retention, in addition to cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, and situational and administrative supports that encompass teachers’ lived experiences. In particular, the emphasis was placed on the importance of teachers’ perceptions and beliefs about and interactions with the educational environment and individuals within the environment (Bandura, 1986). The experiences and beliefs of beginning teachers were situated within a larger theoretical

framework by drawing upon how teachers develop their identities in an effort to remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools.

According to Ravitch & Riggan (2012), conceptual frameworks are structured from a set of wide-ranging ideas and theories that help to properly identify the problem. Additionally, Ravitch & Riggan emphasized the importance of providing a clear conceptual framework, especially in qualitative studies, that encompass personal interest. As teachers' lived experiences do not exist in isolation (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985), experiences are integrated into teachers' sense of self. The use of a theoretical framework was instrumental in determining and identifying important factors related to urban teacher retention.

Bullough & Kauchak (1997) referred to teacher identity as what beginning teachers believe about the overall educational process. A teacher's professional identity is an impressionable, complex and often an ill-defined concept in research (Hong, 2010). In general, professional identity refers to a teacher's concepts or image of self, their roles, societal expectations, and beliefs about teaching (and related influences) and an evolving combination of interwoven personal and professional selves (Bodman, Taylor, & Morris, 2012). According to Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004), teachers balance personal aspects (life outside of the school setting), professional aspects (socially-embedded expectations of teachers and teachers' own philosophy and beliefs), and situational aspects (working environment of the teacher). A teacher's identity is interactive by nature, with teachers' identities emerging out of an interaction between social, cultural,

and organizational environments, including the daily emotions that teacher's experience in classrooms (Beijaard et al., 2004).

Some researchers have found that teachers vary in their professional identity profiles by years of experience. Bodman et al. (2012), found that beginning teachers do draw upon short-term professional identities before forming a final professional identity that is primarily constructed through experience and practice. According to Mau, Ellsworth, and Hawley (2008), teachers' identities are related to their persistence and can be seen both as a matter of choice stability, involving the decision to remain at a particular organization (e.g., educational tasks, job positions, or careers) and also as an indicator of an individual's self-efficacy of performing at either required or chosen endeavors.

Self-Efficacy Theory

Taken together, social cognitive and self-efficacy theories may offer explanations of the internal and external influences contributing to teacher longevity. Teacher efficacy, viewed through the lens of Bandura's social cognitive theory, has been defined as the self-judgment of an individual's capabilities to influence the outcomes of student learning, particularly among students who may be challenging and immersed in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Bandura (1997) stated that teachers who have high self-efficacy exhibit greater enthusiasm for teaching, have greater commitments to teaching, and are more likely to remain in teaching. Self-efficacy can influence individuals' performance in ways that impact teachers' desire to remain in challenging educational environments, their willingness to

expend energy, and their ability to demonstrate commitment, persistence, adaptability, and mental and emotional well-being.

Milner (2002) found that teachers who experience challenging times and adverse educational situations are more prone to leave the profession; many of these teachers are tempted to leave daily. Milner (2002) also asserted that teachers' ongoing capability, commitment, and passion to teach to the best of their ability and for the benefit of their students is directly related to their self-efficacy, relative instability, and stability of their sense of identity, their passion for teaching, commitment, well-being, and effectiveness.

This study relied primarily on in-depth interview data from five experienced teachers who had chosen to continue to work in high-poverty, low-performing urban school for three or more years. The researcher sought to understand the challenges teachers face, their feelings of satisfaction, and the reasons that encouraged them to remain in the profession at a high-poverty, low-performing urban school for three or more years.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What, if any, are the specific cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational and administrative supports that contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?

2. What are the lived experiences that contribute positively to the development of experienced teachers' identities that cause them to remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?
3. What, if any, are the common themes between the experienced teachers' lived experiences and the cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational supports, and administrative supports identified by principals that contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?

Definition of Terms

To explore the perceptions and lived experiences of teachers in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools, the following terms were used frequently.

Administrator: A person in a leadership/evaluative role on a school campus; leaders working together for the collective good (Fullan, 2010).

Contextual Factors: Internal and external factors influencing the supports within the educational environment that are related to the situation and administration (Amos, 2008).

Disadvantaged Student: A student whose family is, according to a federal standard, low income and eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced price lunch program and other public assistance. The term also includes individuals who come from social, cultural, or educational environments that inhibit the individual from obtaining the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to develop and participate academically beyond a certain level (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010).

Explicitation: Explicitation is a term used in phenomenological research, and is preferred to the term *data analysis*. Explicitation investigates the phenomena in the context of the whole, rather than breaking the phenomena down into subparts, as in data analysis (Groenewald, 2004).

High-Poverty, Low-Performing Urban Schools: Schools located in impoverished communities that often have limited financial, human, and programmatic resources to support high quality teaching (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Ferlow, 2002). These schools are often characterized by stress and disorder; students within the population are often highly mobile with a large percentage of minority students receiving free and/or reduced lunch (Freedman, & Appleman, 2008).

High-Poverty School: A common term in educational literature referring to measures of poverty at the school level based on the percentage of students who apply for and are found eligible for federally sponsored free lunch programs (Cochran-Smith, 2006).

Individual Professional Development Plan: Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) includes teacher self-assessment goals, strategies and resources for an individual goal, and timeline for each goal. An IPDP shows in-depth teacher reflection on his or her current skills and knowledge. It details the teacher's thinking and planning about specific challenges and interests.

Irreplaceables: Teachers who are nearly impossible to replace, but who too often vanish from schools as the result of neglect and inattention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools (Jacob, Vidyarthi, & Carroll, 2012).

Leavers: Teachers who have left the teaching profession (Cochran-Smith, 2006).

Lived Experiences: Lived experiences is a term used when describing phenomena with which the subject has direct experience (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). Lived experiences contrast with secondhand experiences (Patton, 2002).

Low-Performing School: Defined as continually low performing based on individual student academic status and overall school achievement; a school that has received state-mandated assistance and has been designated by the State Board as low-performing (receiving state letter grades of D or F) for at least two of three consecutive years (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2010).

Movers: Movers are teachers who have remained within the teaching profession but have chosen to move to less challenging schools (Ingersoll, 2001).

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB): Legislation which holds schools accountable for the achievement of their low-income students; uses the percent of students on free and reduced price lunch as the primary indicator of school poverty (NCES, 2010).

Novice Teacher: An inexperienced teacher new to the field of education; a beginner (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Phenomenological Research: Described by Creswell (1998), as the lived experiences of several individuals that relate to a concept or a phenomenon. A qualitative research method that describes the meaning of the “lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or a phenomenon” (Creswell, 1998, p. 51). With phenomenological research, the researcher attempts to gain insight into the world of the research study participants.

Pulse SmartPen™: A SmartPen that is used to digitize handwritten notes taken on Livescribe Paper Replay™ paper. The paper is encrypted with microscopic dots, which

synchronizes the audio recording with the written notes. By tapping the ink, the SmartPen replays the conversation from the exact moment the note was written. Audio recordings and written notes may also be synchronized to a computer (Livescribe.com, n.d.)

Resilience: The process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances (Matsen, Best, & Garmezy, 1990).

School Climate: The quality and character of the school environment that is based on the patterns of individual life experiences and how the experiences relate to all facets of school life, including the norms, values, goals, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational policies, processes and structures of a school; a group phenomenon, much larger than any single person's experience (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009).

School Leaders: Principals or assistant principals (elementary and secondary) and district level personnel, including program specialists or directors (Fullan, 2010).

Self-Efficacy: A belief in one's ability to succeed at a given task, in relation to this study, a teacher's belief in their ability to make a difference in the lives and learning of students (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

Stayers: Teachers who remain in the teaching profession from one year to the next. For the purpose of this study, stayers are teachers who remain teaching at high-poverty, low-performing urban school for 3 to 5 consecutive years. (Cochran-Smith, 2006).

Teacher Attrition: A prominent term used in educational research indicating the rate at which teachers leave the profession; refers to as the separation of teachers from his or her occupation of teaching (Ingersoll, 2003a).

Teacher Migration: A teacher migrates when he or she remains in the education profession, but leaves the current educational environment. These migrating teachers have also been labeled as “movers” (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Luekens, Lyter, Fox, & Chandler, 2004).

Teacher Mobility: The phenomenon of teachers moving within the educational organization as well as away from the organization (Ingersoll, 2001a).

Teacher Retention: Refers to teachers who remain in the field of teaching or at a particular school (Boe & And, 1997). For the purpose of this study, the term will also include those teachers that remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools.

Teacher Turnover: An umbrella term to describe the phenomenon of teachers leaving their assignment (Ingersoll, 2001a); believed to be a function of the characteristics of individual teachers who depart from school or the education profession.

Themes: Major ideas that help organize and categorize large amounts of descriptive information; a level of abstraction beyond the categories (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

Urban School Areas: A large, inner-city, geographic areas impacted by problems perceived as being caused by the large number of poor and individuals of color who live therein. Once viewed as economically dynamic and attractive, the term urban now has negative connotations, which are believed to profoundly affect education and shape the nature of urban schooling (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002).

Assumptions

For the purpose of this research study, several assumptions can be made.

1. It is assumed that teachers and principals responded honestly (without persuasion) and thoroughly to the survey questions as well as their individual lived experiences during the interview process.
2. The participating school educators served as representatives for public elementary educators in Florida.
3. The Likert-type survey instruments were understood and adequately addressed all of the current issues affecting teachers' desire to remain in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools.
4. Assumptions have been made that teacher turnover and retention has a direct correlation to student achievement. Surprisingly, there has been little research conducted on the causal effect of teacher turnover on student achievement (Ingersoll, 2001).

Additionally, because numerous assumptions have been made about the reasons why teachers stay, more assumptions were determined following the conclusion of the research study.

Limitations

The limitations of the phenomenological research method include the following:

1. The researcher's interpretations of what was stated in each interview could appear as biased because of the researcher's previous experiences within the school district. The administrators' relationship with the respondents may

have had some influence over the way the respondents answered the questions; fear of respondent identification may have influenced the responses.

2. Open-ended responses may not be a true reflection of the teachers' lived experiences due to possible persuasion from the survey items selected in the study as well as the desire to impress the interviewing researcher who is also a school district administrator.
3. The learning that was gained from this study was limited to the comments and perspectives that participants chose to share based on their ability to recall the lived experience.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter contains a review of literature related to teacher retention. It has been organized around five elements integral to studying the impact of teachers' lived experiences on their desire to remain in low-performing, high-poverty urban schools: (a) historical background information, (b) No Child Left Behind legislation, (c) administrative supports, (d) mentoring and induction, and (e) contextual factors surrounding school climate.

The success of America's educational system depends on quality teacher retention. Methods of retaining quality educators in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools are questions of fervent debate among educators, educational researchers, administrators, policy makers, students and parents (Lavigne, 2014). This study was conducted to examine the issue of urban teacher retention from a cultural phenomenon perspective and focused on understanding the lived experiences of those closest to the retention decision, teachers in urban high-poverty, low-performing schools. Though this "glimpse" is unable to predict urban teacher retention, it does allow readers to probe the professional lives and emerging identities of retained urban educators. The preliminary investigation suggested a new policy framework for thinking about urban teacher retention—a frame that extends beyond the classroom and into a variety of multiple professional roles and organizational factors.

Johnson and colleagues at the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers (2013) came to a similar conclusion. Johnson and colleagues (2013) studied how working conditions predicted job satisfaction and career plans for a sample of 25,135 teachers in 1,142 schools and concluded that many of these urban schools suffered from high turnover. The organizational factors of these urban schools played a large role in whether or not teachers chose to leave or remain. The organizational factors were more salient than the individual student factors. To address the issue of misdistribution of well-prepared and experienced teachers, this body of work suggested shifting the focus from finding more teachers for urban schools, to improving the organizational support of urban schools as workplaces for teachers. Researchers have identified four factors that motivate teachers to remain in their current high-poverty, low-performing urban school. These factors include: (a) administrative support, mentoring and induction; (b) high self-efficacy, (c) contextual factors surrounding school climate, culture, and collegiality and; (d) working conditions and resources.

Researchers have shown, through qualitative studies, that one can now gain an in-depth view of the lived experiences of teachers who continue to teach in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools. Further, current researchers have identified what actions school district and principal leaders can take to retain effective qualified teachers within high-poverty, low-performing urban schools (White-Smith, 2012). Taking into consideration that cross culturally, teachers enter and remain in teaching because of a desire to work with students, this research focused particularly on those cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, and situational supports that teachers believe

contribute to their individual identities and their reasoning for remaining at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools.

In 1996, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) developed the *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future* report that challenged the nation to provide all children with what should be their educational birthright; "competent, caring, qualified teachers in all schools by 2006" (p. 4). Since 1996, the situation in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools has worsened. The nation is in a state of emergency. Some even call the situation a "national crisis" simply because school districts cannot retain quality teachers (NCTAF, 2003, p. 21).

Historical Background

Existing evidence as far back as the early 1940s reveals that the problem of teacher retention, affecting urban locations and groups more than others, is not a new phenomenon (Ingersoll & Perda, 2010, 2012). Historically, within underserved urban communities the problems caused by turnover are especially pronounced and the supply has not kept pace with the demand (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Ingersoll, 2001a; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). In the mid 1950s, politicians, advocacy groups, and research teams began to examine, debate, and litigate issues of inequity between high-poverty, urban students and more affluent students to shed light on the factors that influence teacher retention in a systematic manner. In 1956, the National Education Association (NEA) began surveying public school teachers across the United States every five years to find trends relevant to teacher retention (NEA, 2003). By 1968, the United States Department of Education's (USDOE) Office Of Civil Rights (OCR)

began conducting biennial surveys of elementary and secondary schools in the United States (Donovan & Cross, 2002). The results of the survey data, collected across multiple years, raised concern about the quality of education for elementary and secondary students, specifically urban students of color from high-poverty areas. In the early 1980s, Murnane (1981) noted emerging teacher retention issues and found that teachers in schools where more than 10% of the population lived in high-poverty were more likely to leave. Murnane's results also indicated evidence of increased teacher turnover results based on the changing composition of the school environment. According to Haberman (1987), the average career of an urban teacher was between three and five years. After the fifth year, approximately one-half of the urban teaching force were determined to have left the profession. As a result, high-poverty, low-performing schools in the nation's 120 largest urban school districts suffered a teacher shortage.

During the 1987-1988 school year, the USDOE began the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS) to collect data on schools and school personnel and to determine the mobility and attrition of teachers around the country. Since its inception in the 1987-1988 school year, the SASS and the TFS have been administered to teachers six more times, approximately every three to four years. Results from the first SASS and TFS (in 1987-1988) indicated that 68,645 public school teachers (of 185,960 teachers overall) moved from urban schools (Bobbit, Faupel, & Burns, 1991). Further, although the overall, attrition rate for the public teaching profession was 7.0% for 1994-1995, 15.3% left special education teaching during the same year. In 2000-2001, the number of public school teachers leaving within the first

one to three years increased to 8.5% and to 6.5% for teachers teaching four to nine years. Based on these data, 25.5% of public school teachers were leaving within the first three years, 32% the fourth year, and 38.5% the fifth year (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008). Ingersoll (2001) suggested that the actual attrition rate for high-poverty schools was 10.5%.

Data documenting the 2000-2001 departure of teachers leaving their positions also suggested that actual attrition rates of teachers from schools with high percentages of students of color enrolled were much higher than the overall national average. For example, results of the 2000-2001 SASS and TFS showed that schools with 34% or more students of color had an almost 17% attrition rate, followed by 15% for schools with 10-34% of the student population as students of color, and 13.5% for schools with less than 10% of the population of students of color (Luekens et al., 2004).

Data from subsequent years of the SASS and TFS offer perspectives and insights regarding teachers' reasons to leave or stay, including age, race, level of job satisfaction, and years of service. The results of the 1993 to 1995 nationwide SASS and the TFS indicated that most teachers would remain in the field of education if they felt competent and satisfied with their current employment environment, which included social and administrative support. The 2000-2001 wave examined teacher retention based on the aspects of job satisfaction. These data indicated that teachers of color were more apt to be placed in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools. Due to the multifaceted challenges at these schools, teachers were generally less satisfied with their jobs. The results from the 2000-2001 wave indicated job satisfaction varied with gender, years of

teaching, and career status. Further, the results revealed that teachers who were under the age of 30 and those with less than 10 years of teaching experience were more likely to leave the profession when faced with characteristics of urban educational settings. Many of the survey participants found it difficult to remain at schools with characteristics of urban high-poverty, low-performing schools which required teachers to teach multiple content areas with limited to no support from administrators and unsatisfactory workplace conditions (Luekens et al., 2004). These findings provide significant implications for educational policy aimed at retaining teachers in education (Liu & Ramsey, 2008).

Teacher attrition and mobility results from the 2004-05 TFS compared characteristics and opinions of teachers who remained at the same school from year-to-year. Survey respondents' attitudes about teaching allowed researchers and policy makers to address questions surrounding teacher retention, specifically teachers' rationales for leaving their previous school. Among the reasons teachers listed in their rationale for leaving their school, dissatisfaction with support from administrations at their previous school ranked the highest (37.2%). The 2008-2009 TFS examined the characteristics of teachers who stayed in the teaching profession. A total of 4,750 current and former teachers completed the TFS data for 2008-09. Of these respondents, about 54% or 2,600 teachers were still teaching at the same school during the 2008-2009 school year (stayers), 18% or 890 were still teaching in 2008-09, but were at a different school than in the previous year (movers), and 26% or 1,260 left the teaching profession in the previous year (leavers) (Graham, Pramer, Chambers, Tourkin, & Lyter, 2011; Keigher, 2010).

More recently, results from the 2012-13 TFS on attrition and mobility indicated that of the 3,377,900 public school teachers who were teaching during the 2011-12 school year, 84% remained or stayed at the same school. Among public school teachers with 1-3 years of experience, 80% stayed in their original school.

NCLB and Teacher Retention

According to Darling-Hammond (2010), stayers may consider teaching to be the “best of times” (p. 1); leavers may consider teaching to be the “worst of times” (p.1) due to the past two decades of political change and education reform. President Barack Obama has had a strong commitment to improving education efforts, and this has resulted in increased accountability measures (Darling-Hammond, 2010). The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2003) and the NEA (2003) report that today’s teaching force is the largest in history with most stringent accountability measures, making it even more difficult for teachers to remain in urban high-poverty, low-performing schools. Teachers in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools often feel marginalized by school reform efforts that do not take into account the numerous barriers faced by teachers in challenging urban educational settings (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

The No Child Left behind Act [NCLB] (2001) is a landmark reform reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA] of 1965. NCLB was one of the most ambitious federal efforts to raise student achievement in the last four decades (Gay, 2007). The intent behind NCLB was to close achievement gaps among students who belong to minority groups, have disabilities, are economically disadvantaged or have

limited English proficiency. According to Gay (2007), NCLB has become a powerful force in the lives of educators. However, NCLB proponents failed to anticipate the impact that the Act would have on teacher retention. When NCLB performance standards are not met on standardized tests, many schools are forced to undergo mandated sanctions such as organizational restructuring at the state and local levels. These sanctions make it difficult for teachers to remain in high-poverty, low-performing schools (Berry, 2004; Bowler, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Recruitment and retention of effective teachers is a difficult task and even more so in high-poverty, low-performing schools where a large percentage of the population are students of color (Beesley, Atwill, Blair, & Barley, 2010; Roelke & Rice, 2008). According to Ronfeldt et al. (2013), not retaining teachers has a significant impact on student achievement. The United States retention rates have continued to decline (Ingersoll & Perda, 2012). These factors place students of color at an even higher risk of academic failure (Jacob, 2007). As student academic rates continue to decline, teachers in high-poverty, low-performing schools are more apt to leave (Ronfeldt et al, 2013).

Historically, teacher retention has been an issue of increasing importance, and the issue has become more severe when viewed through the lens of the academic achievement demands of NCLB (Ingersoll & Perda 2010). According to a report from the Alliance for Excellent Education (2014), teacher attrition costs the United States up to \$2.2 billion annually. Half a million teachers move or leave the profession each year, resulting in a turnover rate of about 20%, up from 9% in 2009 (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014). Based on a nationwide survey of public administrators, school board

members listed teacher retention as their most severe issue due to the closely related rigorous expectations of NCLB and lack of support at the federal level (Boaler, 2003; Bowler, 2003). Many teachers believe that due to accountability requirements and barriers beyond their control, NCLB undermines them as educators and places them in a difficult professional position, thereby largely impacting their decisions to stay or leave the education profession (Rose, 2003). Although it may seem that NCLB has a direct connection to teacher attrition, and that retention cannot be discussed without mentioning its counterpart attrition (Boe, Barkanic & Leow, 1999), NCLB as it relates to attrition is beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, for the purpose of this literature review, I will focus on teacher retention and the characteristics of those teachers that remain in the education profession.

Ingersoll (2001) asserted, regardless of the educators' position, urban schools were losing their best teachers in massive numbers. Decades of research results have indicated that acquiring and retaining highly qualified teachers is challenging; to acquire and retain highly qualified teachers in high-poverty, urban settings the number is nearly impossible (Jacob, 2007). Public perceptions that suggest urban, low performing schools that serve predominantly poor students of color are failing possibly weigh heavily on teachers' decisions to stay or leave (Downey, Von Hippel, & Hughes, 2008).

Administrative Support

A review of the literature indicated the primary reasons for teacher turnover include: (a) minimal to no support from administration and colleagues, (b) insufficient induction and mentoring processes (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), (c) unbalanced working

conditions (Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak., 2005), (d) salary (Boe et al., 1997), and (d) the lack of available resources in historically underserved schools that are especially pronounced (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). The issues that surround turnover are comprehensive and the effects spill over into teacher quantity as well as quality (Brownell, Sindelar, Bishop, Langley, & Seo, 2002). Each of these reasons for teacher turnover were further analyzed with additional supporting research data.

It is important to know that researchers have shown that turnover occurs earlier and with more frequency in teaching than in other fields (Allensworth et al., 2009; Billingsly, 2004). Across the nation, the majority of certified teachers who work in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools leave at higher rates than their colleagues who teach in suburban and rural areas (Blanchett, 2009; Bobbit et al., 1991; Connely & Graham, 2009; Ingersoll, 2001a). A number of studies have been conducted to determine which teachers are most likely to leave urban schools. Findings from these studies indicate that that one of the main contextual factors behind beginning teachers' decision to depart, in particular, is a lack of adequate support from school administrators (Ingersoll, 2003a). Researchers have also collectively suggested that educators who leave high-poverty, low-performing urban schools were not leaving due to their students, but rather the lack of administrative support and the poor working conditions that make it difficult for them to teach (Loeb et al., 2005; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012).

Although the recruitment of culturally competent teachers has been a major issue, retaining urban culturally competent teachers remains a national issue (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2012). Mandating policies and implementing processes are only half the battle in

retaining urban teachers. Successful solutions must originate at the individual school level with school based administrative support and be reinforced by school district support (Marzano, Waters, and McNulty 2005).

Results from Section II of the *2008-2009 Questionnaire for Former Teachers, Information on Leaving the Teaching Profession* and the factors that influenced the decisions to leave K-12 teaching showed that administrator support is vital in a teacher's decision to remain. Johnson & Birkeland (2003) and Boyd et al. (2011) reported that teachers who leave are largely dissatisfied with the lack of support from administrative faculty members, thus contributing to increased teacher turnover. However, the research on administrative support in urban teacher retention and turnover has been limited, especially in regard to lived experiences of individual teachers. Therefore, many organizations do not fully understand how deeply administrative support impacts teacher retention (Boyd et al., 2011). For example, Darling-Hammond (2002) found that teachers who feel unsupported are more likely to leave the field in greater numbers than those who feel supported. Therefore, urban school leaders who embrace a supportive culture and are able to respond to teachers' needs in a supportive manner are more likely to retain quality teachers (Achinstein et al., 2010; Allensworth et al., 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009).

According to Yukl (2002), efficient organizational development, practices, and processes are directly affected by administrative support. Although organizational support at all levels plays a vital part in teacher retention, administrative support appears to carry greater weight (Boyd et al., 2011). Therefore, supportive administrators, those who reduce the stresses in teaching, are more likely to have a teaching faculty who have

higher rates of job satisfaction and are less likely to leave their teaching job (Yukl, 2002). This information was confirmed by the results of a 2005 survey of urban teachers who recently left teaching and stated that school-based administrators had the greatest influence on teacher retention decisions (Boyd et al., 2011). The need for administrative support becomes critical as the demands associated with working in a high-poverty, low-performing school increase. However, more often than not, the lack of administrative support becomes more oppressive, and the intrinsic motivation is not enough for teachers to remain (Deci, 1975). Without school district and school-based administrative support, many new teachers become overwhelmed and discouraged (Boyd et al., 2011).

Boyd et al. (2011) described supportive administrators as school-based leaders who make teachers' work easier while helping them improve their practice. Administrative support can be viewed as a method that causes urban teachers to leave or stay depending upon the individual teacher's perception (Boyd et al., 2011). Urban school districts and administrators have a major obligation to retain urban teachers. School-based administrators are also accountable for retaining new urban educators and are by far, the most difficult and the dominant factors predicting teachers' desire to remain (Ladd, 2011). Teachers new to the profession and new to urban settings need ongoing support and assistance to adjust successfully to urban environments (Grissom, 2011). Teachers who view administrative support as a deficit are more likely to leave their positions, while teachers that view administrative support as effective are more likely to remain in urban settings (Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; Loeb et al., 2005; Marinell & Coca, 2013; Sclan, 1993).

Researchers (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001a, 2003a; Jacob, 2007) asserted that America is not so much suffering from a teacher shortage as from poor teacher retention. Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) examined how the United States produces countless more teachers each year than its school districts actually hire. In order for teachers to remain in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools, they need to feel successful. Teachers desire support from their school-based administrators (Johnson, 2004). School administrators must emphasize the positive effects of teaching to retain teachers in high-poverty, low-performing schools. Teachers who are provided opportunities to build their individual capacity are more apt to stay in low-performing, high minority schools. Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender (2008) reported that strong administrative leadership influences the supply and turnover of teachers, especially in urban cities. Strong administrative leaders usually provide support by systematically helping their teachers become high-quality professionals through ongoing collaborative trainings and professional development.

Through collegial conversations, school administrators can become aware of the individualized lived experience of current urban teachers, this in an effort to support new teachers in their individual classrooms and the school organization as a whole. It is essential that new urban teachers engage in one-on-one support through a series of classroom observations and debriefings. The most important aspects of these observations is the feedback teachers are provided on their individual performance in relation to the current professional teaching standards to support reflection and career persistence (Freedman & Appleman, 2008). In addition to providing teachers with

specific feedback on their practice, classroom visits by a school administrator encourage individual growth and development for both the observer and the teacher being observed. When professional support is embedded in the urban classroom, school-based leaders can gauge the degree to which teachers are implementing the strategies and best practices, and thus promote continual growth and development. Teachers who receive individualized and collaborative support from school leaders and peers have a higher chance of remaining in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools. Urban school leaders who embrace and implement frequent classroom visits that connect with ongoing feedback and systemic professional development have a significantly higher rate of retention success in urban school settings (Boyd et al., 2011).

Effective school leaders understand the need to develop a comprehensive approach to supporting teachers' professional growth and development through school-based and university leadership. Both institutions play integral roles in the retention process; these partnerships are invaluable and require frequent collaboration (Helfeldt, Capraro, Capraro, Foster, & Carter, 2009). School districts and universities continue to refine their partnerships to better meet the needs of new teachers in challenging schools by differentiating and improving organizational supports (Good & Bennett, 2005). As teacher retention, not the shortage of new recruits, remains a critical problem in public education (Ingersoll, 2002), implementing collaboration between universities and local public school districts relieves first year teachers' apprehension about teaching while creating a collaborative network for all stakeholders (Good & Bennett, 2005).

Mentoring and Induction

According to Ingersoll and Smith (2004), school organizations constantly interchange the terms mentoring and induction, but the overall objective to guide new teachers remains the desired outcome. Ingersoll and Smith pinpointed the lack of teacher support, including feelings of isolation, minimal to no induction, mentoring, or collegial connections as often providing the impetus driving teachers to leave urban educational settings. Loeb et al. (2005) also found that teachers who teach in schools with high proportions of low income, low-achieving students of color were more inclined to leave teaching due to limited resources, poor collegiality, support and mentoring. The USDOE projected that by 2014, new teachers will fill approximately one million new teaching positions, each needing administrative and collegial support to meet the needs of 21st century complex and challenging students (Huling, Resta, & Yeargain, 2012).

According to Darling-Hammond (2010), the topic of teacher induction and mentoring has profound relevancy across the United States. School districts have begun successful transformations through strong induction clinical practices (Long et al., 2012). Many teachers have complained that induction programs at the university level can become “too theoretical” (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 40), leaving teachers deprived and unable to authentically apply the information in a classroom setting. In addition, researchers have emphasized the fact that teachers’ instructional abilities contribute most significantly to student achievement and educational improvement (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Effective teacher induction programs are instrumental in terms of both new teacher retention and in strengthening pedagogical practice (Fulton, Burns, &

Goldenberg, 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). The mentoring relationship is of primary importance in developing self-confidence, competence, and collegiality during the first years ((Long et al., 2012; Saffold, 2006). In addition, researchers have shown that urban educators require a wide-range of support, but receive little to no induction and mentoring support. Helms-Lorenz, Slof, Vermue, and Canrinus (2012) discussed how effective induction and mentoring processes can reduce the stress and challenges that urban teachers experience. The authors revealed the relationship between beginning teachers' perceived stress, lack of learning opportunities and how these stressors affect teachers' self-efficacy.

Hong (2010), however, suggested that new teachers too often lack the professional support and constructive dialogue necessary to make the successful transition from pre-to in-service teaching. The result is a staggering number of new teachers who vacate the profession in the first three to five years, one-third (33 percent) of current public school teachers in the United States do not expect to be teaching in K-12 schools five years from now (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Further, researchers have shown that teacher retention is more connected to the induction and mentoring of the first teaching experience than to an individual's academic proficiency. Therefore, the necessity to support new teachers during the induction process is very apparent (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003; Wilkins & Clift, 2007).

Enhancing the competence and performance of teachers who are already working in the neediest schools in the U.S. is vital; induction and mentoring programs have

become even more necessary. Researchers have indicated that most teachers state they have limited contact with other urban professional educators and few are committed to developing relationships that encourage collaboration and commitment. Burstein, Czech, Kretschmer, Lombardi, & Smith (2009) indicated that educators who feel comfortable in urban environments appear to be much more supportive and sensitive to their students' and peer needs, and are, therefore, likely to be more collaborative and committed.

The lack of specific induction and mentoring processes related to high-poverty, low-performing schools negatively affects urban teacher retention. Urban classroom teachers experience an increased need for mentoring and support (Johnson, 2011). Many districts have limited to no preparation programs for urban teachers. Ingersoll (2004) found that schools in an "urban poverty" category had the highest rate of teacher turnover and categorized such reasons as job dissatisfaction, pursuit of another job, personal reasons, school staffing issues, and retirement. Ingersoll's (2004) findings revealed that most of the teachers' reasons for leaving revolved around discipline problems, poor student motivation, lack of time, and classroom disruptions. His research created a vivid description of what it means to teach in an urban, low-performing, and high-poverty school. Although findings suggest that more comprehensive support may have a positive effect on urban teacher retention, additional research is necessary for urban preparation programs and outcomes (Johnson, 2011). Often such programs are limited and situated only on college campuses away from the urban communities that the programs serve, thereby, limiting the knowledge, skills, and mindsets necessary to address the "true" realities of urban schools.

Although most induction and mentoring programs face challenges Long, McKenzie-Robblee, Schaefer, Steeves, Wnuk, and Pinnegar (2012), urban educational settings face a plethora of challenges ranging from poverty, transient populations, inadequate funding, and limited resources in addition to high teacher turnover rates (NCES, 1995). When new teachers in challenging urban settings lack access to exemplary educators and collaborative communication, they begin to feel the pressures of educating students with multiple educational barriers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2012). Many teachers believe that the lack of clinical support related to urban environments renders them inadequate to meet the current challenges of their students (Long et al., 2012). In addition to the current obstacles faced by new teachers, inadequate induction and mentoring programs negate new teachers' professional growth, real-world experiences and their individual desire to remain in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

As demonstrated, induction and mentoring is central to supporting urban teachers. With the many challenges that urban educators face, mentorship programs must maximize access to university experts who are invested in teachers' professional development and students' academic achievement. Educators' development and growth can largely be attributed to the streamline support and coaching they may receive from university experts and school-based leaders (Helfeldt et al 2009; Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012).

Smith and Ingersoll (2004) stated that the need for organizational leaders to assure time for new teachers to collaborate with experienced teachers is a critical factor that has

a positive impact on the new teachers' professional development. According to the 1999-2000 School and Staffing Survey (SASS), teachers who work for organizations that offer continuous induction support and guidance with mentors are less likely to leave the teaching profession than those who do not have induction support and access to mentors (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Fulton et al. (2005) observed that if teachers are to meet the needs of their students in the 21st century, focus should be placed on high quality planning and studying various induction programs based on multiple goals, including building teacher knowledge and professional skills that promotes communication while avoiding teacher isolation. Integrating new teachers in collaborative, supportive community structures encourages dialogue that supports best practices and also builds a network that will enable new teachers to succeed.

Darling-Hammond (2005) concluded that induction and mentoring programs are directly related to quality teaching and should be a top priority in education reform. However, retaining quality urban educators remains a concern particularly for high-poverty, low-performing urban schools where teachers are without additional supports and the necessary experiences to re-tool (Bowler, 2003). Although teachers are affected by a plethora of challenges, researchers have shown that when teachers receive effective mentoring and induction, urban teachers experience an increased desire to remain teaching in a high-poverty, low-performing school (Amos, 2008).

Contextual Factors Around School Climate

Teaching is a complex profession with multiple contextual factors, requiring extensive skills and training for those who engage in the profession. Gay (1990) noted

that as demographic trends change, so too does the social distance between urban students and teachers. Thus, in many instances, these demographic shifts tend to make the retention gap even wider. According to Gay (2000), educators who desire to bridge the social dissonance and cultural gap understand the need to become culturally responsive.

The importance of contextual factors surrounding educational organizations was first brought to light by Ingersoll (2001). Ingersoll's early research was based on the nationally representative SASS dataset and its supplement, the TFS. The TFS emphasizes the effects of teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and organizational conditions that lead to teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2001, 2002a, 2003a). Ingersoll found that the absence of contextual factors pertaining to administrative support, peer-to-peer collegiality, and school culture were coupled with higher rates of teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2001). According to research by Darling-Hammond (2009), new measures of embracing urban educators do exist.

School Climate

Although there have not been universally agreed-upon definitions of school climate and culture, there is a connection between the two. Educators have recognized the importance of urban school climate and culture and have linked school climate to students' racial and economic composition, size, atmosphere, feelings, tone and/or the setting of the school (Cohen et al., 2009). Allensworth et al. (2009) found factors affecting "school climate and organizations" (p. 25) explained over 75% of the teacher turnover rate. Therefore, creating a school climate that is "positive, trusting, and collaborative" (p. 25) has been thought to be proven most influential.

There is a growing need to understand how to create a positive, supportive culture and climate that will encourage educators to remain in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools. Over a century ago, Perry (1908) was the first educational leader to explicitly explain how school climate affects the stakeholders and the overall process of learning (Cohen et al., 2009). Cohen et al. (2009) stated schools should focus on enhancing the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that support engaged democratic citizens, this implicitly affects the environment or climate of the school. Mancuso et al. (2011) pinpointed the critical elements of administrative supports for building a school culture and climate that encourages teacher retention,. However, school culture is more than an individual experience. It is a group phenomenon that is larger than any one person's experience. School cultures are influential. They shape and re-shape what urban teachers do, think, and feel. Urban school cultures can even mold teachers' behaviors, resulting in a connectedness that causes the teacher to remain (Cohen et al., 2009).

Quartz (2003) indicated that little research, qualitative or quantitative, has been conducted on the reasons why individual teachers choose to remain in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools. The literature reveals that educators who embrace urban school districts believe they are more effective with urban students. These dedicated educators often have a high sense of self-efficacy in addition to a shared "humanistic commitment" (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011, p. 19). They have an ability to develop collegial relationships within the school and the district. In reviewing the literature and the reasons why teachers stay at high-poverty, low-performing schools, researchers reported that teachers frequently indicated the following factors for remaining in the

profession, and more specifically at urban schools: (a) working conditions and resources, (b) administrative support, (c) induction and mentoring and, (d) positive school climate, culture and collegiality. These reasons, among others, were found to have statistical significance in teachers' individual level of commitment. Although research on support, working conditions, induction and mentoring offer some promise, it is unclear if such support, programs, and/or policies are indeed effective at retaining beginning teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2012; Schaefer et al., 2012), leaving a substantial gap in what is known about how best to support beginning teacher retention. Administrators and educators could potentially learn more by studying the beliefs of teachers who remain during the most turbulent years, despite sometimes less than ideal working conditions or other contextual variables (Boyd et al., 2011). This area of research may further illuminate ideas that help teachers adapt and cope, and, subsequently, shield the challenges of the first year of urban teaching.

Demographic and environmental changes are inevitable (Fulton et al., 2005). Teachers who do not make a concerted effort to build relationships with urban students and families in order to remove the social dissonance factor eventually leave the profession (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Schulman, 2005; Fulton et al., 2005; Gabriel, 2005; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings 1995, 2009; Sclan, 1993). Researchers have revealed that teachers who are unable to bridge the relationship gap usually leave the school within five years, with the majority leaving the field of education all together, (Planty et al., 2008). According to the USDOE (2008), shortages of qualified teachers will have an uneven effect on school districts. Urban schools have been more

affected by the teacher shortages than suburban and rural schools (Crosby, 1999) and have been more difficult to staff (Borman & Dowling, 2008). According to Donovan and Cross (2002), most urban schools are located in inner city areas that are plagued by poverty and insufficient resources. These schools are usually faced with a multitude of barriers. In a majority of situations, the existing barriers exceed most educators' areas of expertise and comfort level, and this makes it difficult for students to receive the education they deserve (Allensworth et al., 2009; Ronfeldt et al., 2013).

Hong (2012) wrote that working conditions are the most powerful predictors of where teachers choose to teach. Further, Ingersoll (2002a) noted that when working conditions are poor and resources are limited, educators leave the profession. Although there is agreement among researchers that working conditions play a crucial role in teacher turnover, the actual factors that define the category of working conditions remains vague (Ingersoll, 2002b). In other words, it is difficult to determine what specifically contributes to positive or negative working conditions. Most educators become educators due to their love of children and their desire to work with young impressionable minds, but as teachers are assigned to subjects/content outside their areas of expertise, many educators leave education never to return. These less than desirable working conditions can lead to job dissatisfaction. According to Jerald and Ingersoll (2002), over 24% of all core content area secondary teachers were currently teaching in undesired content areas and most of the schools lacked the resources necessary to support the proper content area of instruction. Teachers who teach out-of-field, in content areas in which they are not trained and lack background knowledge, often leave the profession

due to feelings of uncertainty and a dreary outlook on their future success (Darling-Hammond, 2002). Teaching force data have confirmed that teachers have increasingly moved between schools or left teaching altogether in large numbers after relatively short periods of service due to lack of qualifications (Ingersoll, 2001; 2003).

Furthermore, the teachers most likely to leave or move have been those in under resourced urban schools (Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002). Sclan (1993) noted that teachers' work conditions and available resources can have a direct effect on their morale; low morale negatively impacts teacher commitment and retention. Although educators in high-poverty, low-performing schools have high aspirations for their students, the necessary resources and services are not in place for the students, families, and teachers who need those resources and services the most (Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender, 2008). Together, these factors have contributed to the national teacher attrition rates.

Educators have fought long and hard for the availability of necessary resources and services for the most needy, so that all children can receive the best education. Responding to the continuing public outcry for public schools to rise to meet that challenge, lawmakers passed NCLB in an effort to ensure resources are available (Darling-Hammond, 2009; Mathis, 2005). Ingersoll (2002b) commented that educational institutions would not have as many vacancies if they were not so unsuccessful in keeping teachers in the profession. However, teachers in positive school environments have demonstrated a strong sense of collective responsibility (Allensworth et al., 2009) and, according to Cohen et al. (2009), are less likely to leave the field. These researchers

found that a collaborative school culture made a significant difference in the morale of first years teachers and their intention to remain at their school.

Just as urban schools do not exist in isolation, neither do urban educators. Johnson (2004) posited that collegial support is necessary in order for teachers to feel successful. The social context of teaching has a strong influence on where teachers decide to teach and whether they decide to stay. Allensworth et al. (2009) indicated that teachers are more likely to stay in schools when they experience collegial relationships in a professional climate of mutual trust and respect. Similarly, Mancuso, Roberts, White, Yoshida, and Weston (2011) explored the impact that cultural collegiality and school leadership have on teachers' decisions to remain in challenging environments. There is a significant body of work that clearly connects educators' professional relationships to occupational satisfaction and stresses the benefits of collegial work environments.

Creating a Positive School Culture

A review of the literature revealed a growing body of empirical research indicating that a positive school climate and culture (Beesley et al., 2010; Cohen et al., 2009; Deal, & Peterson, 2009; Mancuso et al, 2011) and collegiality (Kardos & Johnson, 2007) were associated with and/or predictive of academic achievement, school success, effective student development, and teacher retention. In addition, Moore Johnson (2004) determined that though studies have been conducted to analyze how teachers view their work with colleagues and how collaboration is vital to school improvement, only a small number have examined teacher retention as an outcome.

Urban teacher mentors, such as master teachers, peer coaches, and administrators, play a critical role in creating a positive school climate and culture that reflects supportive collegiality (Kardos & Johnson, 2007). Studies focused on urban schools should focus on creating a positive, supportive school climate and culture of collegiality, one that assists newcomers in becoming better prepared to work in urban educational environments (Kardos & Johnson, 2007). It is believed that ongoing research on this topic will assist with the development of strategies to attract more urban teachers to the profession and to retain existing teachers. Furthermore, understanding the complexities of urban educators' lived experiences may provide insights into how to enhance teacher motivation more broadly and increase the number of urban educators in high-poverty, low-performing schools.

Increasing urban teacher recruitment and retention programs, policies, and methods is expected to enhance urban school districts' ability to provide the necessary supports and services to enhance new urban teachers' individual levels of satisfaction and improve retention rates. The body of research on the topic does allow educators and districts to probe the professional lives and emerging identities of retained urban educators. This preliminary analysis suggests that it may be appropriate to have a new policy framework for thinking about urban teacher retention, a frame that extends beyond the classroom and into a variety of multiple professional roles.

High Self-Efficacy

Albert Bandura (1977) introduced the concept of self-efficacy perceptions or "beliefs in one's capacity to organize and execute the courses of action required

producing given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Since that time, the power of efficacy judgments in human learning, performance, and motivation have been repeatedly demonstrated. Bandura (1997) stated that individuals with high self-efficacy demonstrate certain characteristics through individual approach behavior. These individuals with high self-efficacy seek challenges and are willing to try new tasks even if those tasks will push them a little further out of their comfort zone. Therefore, teachers with high self-efficacy are usually not afraid of challenges nor afraid to fail. These teachers remain because of their resilience and self-efficacy to stay in challenging educational environments. Teachers who remain in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools have high self-efficacy (Hong, 2012).

According to Bandura (1986), Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) has a direct correlation to individual human motivation and self-efficacy. SCT holds that portions of an individual's knowledge acquisition can be directly related to observing others within the context of social interactions, experiences, and outside influences. The theory states that when people observe a model performing a behavior and the consequences of that behavior, they remember the sequence of events and use this information to guide subsequent behaviors. Observing a model can also prompt the viewer to engage in behavior already learned. In other words, people do not learn new behaviors solely by trying them and either succeeding or failing. Rather, the survival of humanity is dependent upon the replication of the actions of others. Depending on whether people are rewarded or punished for their behavior and the outcome of the behavior, the observer may choose to replicate the modeled behavior.

Teacher efficacy, a concept common in educational psychology literature, measures teachers' perceptions of their capacity as teachers (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998; 2007). Accordingly, research guided by social cognitive theory has been focused on the social-contextual conditions of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993). Specifically, factors have been examined that enhance instead of undermine intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and well-being. These findings have led to the idea of three innate psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. When these innate psychological needs are satisfied, individuals experience enhanced self-motivation. When threatened, they lead to diminished motivation and well-being (Atkinson, & Raynor, 1974). Social cognitive theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being are largely a function of the social conditions in which educators develop and function (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, teachers who are self-efficacious are more likely to remain through challenging situations.

To help retain teachers, it is recommended that school systems provide collaborative and supportive school leadership, increase teacher participation in decision making, and provide opportunities for new teachers to observe expert teachers and participate in professional development opportunities that are focused on successful behaviors of teachers who remain in high-poverty urban education (Sclan, 1993). High-poverty urban students require experienced, certified teachers who are skilled in working with the population (Blanchett, 2009; Chartock, 2010; Delpit, 2012; Gay, 2000; Ingersoll, 2001). Urban schools are places where teachers are faced with a plethora of challenges that range from poverty, discipline concerns, diverse cultures, students with disabilities,

and English Language Learners. Therefore, teachers must not work in isolation.

Otherwise, they are likely to experience low self- efficacy. McGuire (2011) indicated that teachers with high-self efficacy have more internal and external positive outcomes, such as longevity and higher instructional effectiveness.

Teachers with high self- efficacy who work in an urban school setting attribute their optimistic outlook to their ability to embrace their roles as urban educators while demonstrating culturally relevant practices and an understanding that racial and ethnic differences must be viewed as valuable experiences (Milner, 2002). A teacher's individuality must be identified, supported, and connected to the real world; doing so promotes individual growth and achievement (Ladson-Billings, 2009). As new teachers journey into classrooms that are challenging and diverse, they will need support systems to ensure continued growth and development.

Teachers who remain in urban schools understand how students think and behave, what students find relevant, what students already know, and how teachers can motivate and trigger students' desire to know more. Teachers who remain in urban schools are able to recognize and respond to the diverse needs of the students, parents, and the community in which students live. Gabriel (2005) observed that urban educators who create a sense of connectedness and belonging through authentic conversations can positively impact the social, emotional and academic development of urban students.

By opening their own hearts and minds, educators can see the importance of implementing a system of equality where students are educated based upon their individual needs, and not their racial, ethnic, or socio-economic status. Teachers who

remain in high-poverty urban schools understand their responsibility for creating a culture that works in the best interests of the students (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Yost (2006) indicates that teacher self-efficacy has a direct effect on job satisfaction. It was further found that collective efficacy directly affects teacher self-efficacy, but that it does not have a direct effect on job satisfaction and teacher retention. The psychological process of self-efficacy in relation to teacher retention is relevant (Helms-Lorenz et al., 2012). Researchers working on The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, conducted by Harvard's School of Education, have stressed that educators will remain in education if they feel successful. Efficacy beliefs affect how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave within their daily lives. According to Bandura (1997), individuals who perceive themselves as having a strong self-efficacy will challenge themselves by continually raising the bar on personal expectations and goals.

Urban teachers are faced with obstacles and adverse experiences. Therefore, it is important to understand how urban teachers individual self-efficacy and coping behaviors are interrelated (Helfeldt et al., 2009). Urban educators who display stronger feelings of efficacy lead to greater and more lasting engagement in the education profession and are therefore, more likely to stay (Ladd, 2011). These teachers feel successful, receive administrative support or encouragement, and are less likely to leave the profession (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). Committed urban educators appear to have high intrinsic motivation and are drawn to the students and the environments because of their personal educational experiences (Hong, 2012).

Intrinsic motivation appears to be a requirement of those that choose to remain in high-poverty, low-performing schools (Hong, 2012; Inman & Marlow, 2004). Not only do students benefit from highly motivated urban teachers, but other educator's benefit from working with teachers who are intrinsically motivated, especially in urban environments. In time, urban teachers who are highly motivated can become greatly regarded for the important work they do as a result of their desire to remain (Darling-Hammond, 2005). Teacher motivation is an important field of educational research, especially in countries where teacher retention and quality have become prominent concerns.

A large percentage of teachers enter the field of education with mere hope and a desire to simply make a difference in the life of a child (Sclan, 1993). These intrinsically driven "change agents" are among the few who remain in the field of education regardless of the challenges, (Fullan, 2010). Why do these teachers remain? One of the potential answers that has emerged from the literature base on the topic, is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, or teachers' feelings that they are making a difference in the lives and learning of students has an impact on their decisions to remain in the field (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Yost, 2006). Although this area has received some recent attention from researchers, much of the research regarding reasons for teacher retention remains limited. Self-efficacy is an individual measure of success, effects, and the need to feel a sense of accomplishment in an effort to continue working in a specific profession (Viel-Ruma, Houchins, Jolivette, & Benson, 2010).

A large percentage of educators also enter the field of education based on individual passion. Passionate teachers are intrinsically motivated to help others (Kraft, Papay, Johnson, Charner-Laird, & Reinhorn, 2015). Although the data suggest that fewer teachers choose to remain in the education profession, many teachers in urban environments have chosen to stay. For example, in the state of Florida, the results from the *Level Instructional Staff Retention Rates, 2002-03 through 2011-12* indicates that although teacher morale continues to decrease, urban teacher retention continues to increase. Furthermore, during the 2011-12 school year, Florida retained 85% of first-year teachers, a 6% increase from 2010-11. These findings reinforce previous shared retention data. The results from a longitudinal study of UCLA's Center X Teacher Education, which focuses on urban educators, revealed that 59% of low-performing, high-poverty urban educators (graduates of color) remained in urban settings at rates significantly higher than the national average (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Quartz, Priselac, & Franke, 2009). Thus, it would appear that for teachers who remain working in high-poverty, low performing schools, passion, self-efficacy and a "humanistic commitment" (p. 82) are the determining factors that impact their desire to remain in the field (Achinstein et al., 2010; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012).

Ingersoll (2001) found that teachers who have high self-efficacy are more committed, both personally and professionally, and that they demonstrate crucial commitment characteristics with an openness to learn. Stayers in high-poverty low-performing urban schools with high self-efficacy are irreplaceable. These teachers do not fit a particular mold; they represent a wide range of lived experiences. Usually these

teachers' educational views are not any different from the views of other teachers, but their lived experiences vary greatly. Jacob et al. (2012) refer to urban educators who are so successful that they are nearly impossible to replace as "Irreplaceables." Irreplaceables are more likely to believe that effective teachers can help students in challenging schools overcome any and all barriers while gauging their own effectiveness (Jacob et al., 2012).

High-poverty, low-performing schools show the greatest teacher turnover rate (Ingersoll, 2001). As such, for teachers at such schools, a sense of accomplishment with students is critical in the retention process. High-poverty, low-performing schools are full of students with challenges. These students will be well served in schools with teachers who have high self-efficacy (Johnson et al., 2012). Therefore, it is vital that urban teachers with high self-efficacy are able to build and transfer their intrinsic feelings of success to their students (Yost, 2006). Cochran-Smith (2006) also found that teachers who remain at high-poverty, low performing urban schools showed high levels of self-efficacy and motivation to serve as change agents in their particular school. However, it is unclear whether these intrinsic factors are enough to keep teachers at struggling schools (Cochran-Smith, 2006).

This research study was conducted to highlight the importance of developing educational institutions that positively affect the retention of urban teachers and their lives over time. Administrative support, mentoring and induction, contextual factors, including teacher influence and administrative supports around school climate and the employment of educators with high self-efficacy, are tied to teacher retention. Still, there

remains a gap in the current literature regarding the factors that influence educators who remain in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools (Lavigne, 2014).

Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter substantiates the importance of organizational and systematic supports that surround urban teacher retention, documenting historical background information, No Child Left Behind legislation, administrative supports, mentoring and induction, and contextual factors surrounding school climate. These organizational factors were a vital part of studying the research problem, which focused on urban teachers' desires to continue teaching in low-performing, high-poverty urban schools.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was conducted to examine the characteristics of successful teachers who have remained working at high poverty, low performing urban schools from a phenomenological perspective. Based on the phenomenological approach, supported by the gathering of preliminary survey data, the researcher utilized in-depth interviewing for data collection. In order to examine the lived experiences of successful urban teachers, the researcher sought rich detail in the explanations based upon each teacher's individual responses to interview and survey questions.

This phenomenological approach allowed teachers to share their stories while sharing historical professional development documentation that connected to their success as an educator. In this phenomenological study, the lived experiences and essential themes of five urban schoolteachers' individual experiences, beliefs, and teaching practices were investigated. Through the phenomenological approach, the participants' voices and stories of their lived experiences at low performing, high poverty urban schools were heard. The complex issues teachers encountered in their field required the researcher to utilize specific research methodology to gain an in-depth understanding of the education profession at high poverty, low performing urban schools. Included in this chapter is an overview of the research methods used to answer the research questions including: (a) the phenomenological research design, (b) an explanation of the selection of participants, (c) instrument and data collection, (d) validity

and reliability, (e) data collection, (f) data analysis procedures, (g) limitations, and (h) a summary of data analysis procedures.

Research Questions

Specifically, the researcher strived to answer the following research questions:

1. What, if any, are the specific cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational and administrative supports that contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?
2. What are the lived experiences that contribute positively to the development of experienced teachers' identities that cause them to remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?
3. What, if any, are the common themes between the experienced teachers' lived experiences and the cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational supports, and administrative supports identified by principals that contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?

Phenomenological Research Design

The research design that was used in this qualitative study was phenomenology. Phenomenological research is deeply rooted in philosophy and psychology and is used to explore the details and meaning from the experiences as perceived by individuals or groups of individuals (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen., 2010; Moustakas, 1994). The desired outcome of the design was to provide a description of the experiences of those individuals who have lived the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014; Moustakas, 1994) in an effort to share those experiences for the purposes of retaining educators in high-poverty,

low-performing urban schools. The distinguishing factor of phenomenology from other qualitative studies is the focus on an individual's experience. Groenewald (2004) stated that the operative word in phenomenological research is 'describe'. Further, Groenewald (2004) continued to explain that the data obtained through in-depth interviews are explicated rather than analyzed. Phenomenological research is subjective and therefore requires structures and detailed description of the experience to illustrate the experience (Ary et al., 2010).

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study was to determine which school climate and personal factors impacted a teacher's decision to remain teaching in a low-achieving, high-poverty urban school. Additionally, this research study examined the commonalities found in the phenomenological data of five participants who were considered experienced teachers who had continued to teach in low-performing, high-poverty urban schools. Creswell (1998) described qualitative research as an inquiry approach. In this approach, the inquirer investigates a central phenomenon by asking the participants a wide variety of general questions and documents the participants' views in the form of words and/or images.

Additionally, Seidman, (1991) asserted that in-depth interviewing from a phenomenological perspective is a useful form of inquiry. In this study, in-person interviews posing a wide variety of general questions allowed teachers to openly discuss their individual lived experiences. This process yielded authentic and deep descriptions that permitted the researcher to investigate the central phenomenon (Ary et al., 2010). This qualitative research study allowed the researcher to provide the reader with a

comprehensive picture based on trends, thoughts, and opinions that then warranted the discussion of numerous factors (Creswell, 2014). The phenomenological approach allowed the researcher to focus on the teachers and the true essence of their individual lived experiences (Creswell, 2014; Douglass & Moustakas 1985; Moustakas, 1994).

Creswell (2014) explained that researchers who utilize the phenomenological approach are ultimately interested in answering the “why” questions. Essentially, researchers who seek to understand others’ experiences and their associated meanings have utilized a phenomenological methodology. For the purposes of this study, the researcher attempted to gain answers to the research questions surrounding teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools. The utilization of this research approach validated how teachers’ complex individual competencies, dispositional attributes, and situational and administrative supports contributed to their desire to remain in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools.

Participants

The participants for the research study were identified through purposive sampling, considered representative of the study population (Ary et al., 2010) The individuals selected to participate were comprised of teachers from a large urban southeastern school district in the United States.

Selection of Participating Schools

Upon receiving approval from the University of Central Florida’s Institutional Review Board, (Appendix A) and the large urban school district’s Research Review Committee (Appendix B), the researcher generated a list of schools based on the

following criteria; which will be described in the subsequent section. The list generated included seven elementary schools. Following the identification of the potential participating schools, the researcher contacted each school's principal via phone and email. The researcher explained the study and extended an invitation to participate. (Appendix C) Five of the seven elementary school principals agreed to participate in the individual principal survey, school-wide teacher survey and teacher selection process.

Population

The study population consisted of five high-poverty, low performing urban schools that had the following characteristics: (a) high poverty, poverty rating of 75% or higher; (b) low performing, lowest 300 in the state (based on FCAT reading scores) within the district; (c) three or more years with a school grade of D or F; (d) met federal threshold for Title I eligibility (poverty rate of 75%); (e) was more than 50% populated with students of color; and (f) more than 10% of the population consisted of students with disabilities. Principal participants were educators, who worked in one of the five high-poverty, low performing urban schools in a large urban district, and met the above criteria. Principals were selected from those schools based on applicable teacher participant criteria.

Teacher Interview Participant Selection

After the schools were designated as part of the population, teacher participants were selected from the specific schools based on principal nomination. The participants selected for interviews consisted of five educators who had worked in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools for a minimum of three years. As suggested in the

phenomenological research base (Ary et al., 2010), the participants in this study were selected based on their experiences in the urban school setting, the topic to be studied, and their ability to share their views and feelings on the topic of teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools. A purposive sampling of participants, according to Ary et al., (2010), is key, as these individuals are able to share their personal lived experiences while penetrating the surface of the topic. The teachers were selected for participation in an interview in this study also met the following requirements:

1. The teachers were currently employed at an urban high-poverty, low-performing school.
2. The teachers were at their current urban high-poverty, low-performing school for at least three years.
3. The teachers were willing to meet with the researcher outside of their contractual time to complete the interview process.
4. The teachers were willing to give verbal and written consent to participate in the research study.
5. The teachers were willing to give verbal and written consent to participate in interviews that were audio-recorded.
6. The teachers agreed to have all interview information documented by the researcher.
7. The teachers were nominated by their principals to participate.
8. The teachers were considered highly effective based upon the annual teacher evaluation system adopted by the large urban school district.

After the researcher compiled a list of all potential candidates who met the stated requirements, the researcher randomly selected 10 of the 15 nominated teachers to participate in this study via a random number generator utilizing an online list randomizer. All nominated teachers were entered into the randomizer, generating a list of teachers in numerical order. The researcher then contacted the top 10 selected teachers via email (Appendix C) and requested their participation in the research study. Five of the 10 teachers agreed to participate in the interview process. This sample was interviewed to gather the lived experience of the teachers, and this added depth to the survey data in responding to the research questions (Creswell, 1998, 2014). This methodology is particularly relevant to situations where there is likely to be a broad variation in the specific issues and solutions that can be found.

The letter to the teachers included the following: (a) background of research, (b) purpose of the study, (c) research questions, (d) requirements for participation, (e) researcher contact information, and (f) request for meeting dates, times, and locations.

In the event that one or more of the randomly selected participants decided not to participate in the study, the researcher contacted one or more of the additional selected teachers via email based on the sequential generated list. The interview data collection process took place at mutually agreed upon locations, dates, and times that were most convenient for the teachers. The interview locations were private to ensure confidentiality and protect each participant's privacy.

Teacher and Principal Survey Selection

The entire teacher and principal population at all urban schools in a large urban district that met the following six criteria were surveyed: (a) high poverty (75% poverty), (b) low performing (lowest 300 schools in the State based on FCAT reading scores), (c) three consecutive years with a “D” or “F” school grade based on State requirements, (d) met the federal threshold for Title I eligibility (75% poverty), (e) more than 50% of the population consisted of students of color, and (f) more than 10% of the population consisted of students with disabilities.

The population for the principal and teacher survey consisted of all principals who were employed at the selected schools, all instructional teachers who were classroom-based and employed at the selected schools. Each of the five participating principals provided the researcher with an instructional staff roster and email information. Data from the Likert-type survey provided the researcher insight into the teachers’ and principals’ perspectives concerning organizational procedures, processes, and perceived supports. Survey data collection took place via email; therefore, participants were able to complete the survey anywhere Internet access was accessible. The survey elicited responses to questions derived from the research recommendations based on the Education for Future Teacher Questionnaire. The Likert-type scale survey instrument in this study was utilized for triangulation purposes.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The researcher was the main instrument used for data collection in this qualitative phenomenological study, conducting the teachers’ face-to-face interviews. To ensure

reliability, the interview questions were prepared based on the initial teacher and principal survey responses. Once the teacher and principal survey responses were completed, interview questions were developed. The interview questions were then funneled through the Delphi technique (Appendix D); each question was asked verbatim and in the same order during each interview.

Survey questions were developed and based on the literature review, local situational factors as they related to cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, and situational and administrative supports (Ary et al., 2010). Additionally, a panel of experts in the fields of general education, special education, higher education, leadership, urban educational leadership, professional development, and retention developed the final interview questions. The interview instrument (see Appendix E) was developed to capture the essence of the participant's individual experience.

All sample interview questions were developed and categorized by the researcher into the three subgroups including, cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, and situational and administrative supports (Ary et al., 2010) to connect with each research question. A panel of six experts provided advice and ultimately determined the final interview questions. Table 1 lists the panel members, their positions, and areas of expertise.

Table 1

Expert Panel Members by Position and Area of Expertise

Expert Panel members	Position and Area of Expertise
Dr. Samoht Gnal	University Professor Major: Educational Psychology, Specializations: Research Design, Tests and Measurement
Dr. Eillom- Grubsretep	University Associate Dean Specialization: Leadership, Urban Educational Leadership
Dr. Trebla Odnalro	Orange County Public Schools Specializations: Urban Education and Minority Achievement
Dr. Olrac Eikciv	Executive Director Education for the Future Specialization: High-poverty, low-performing urban schools and educators
Dr. Enelehte Ennovy	Eckerd College Specializations: Professional development
Dr. Airamats Grubsretep	Public School Title I Director Specializations: Urban educational leadership, culturally responsive teaching, urban school recruitment and retention leader

Note. Pseudonyms have been used in an effort to protect the privacy of all expert panel members

Teacher Interview Procedures

To recruit participants, the researcher sent an email to each of the five principals of the schools selected for this study and requested names of three highly effective teachers that have remained at the high-poverty, low performing, urban schools for three or more years. Taking into consideration the probability of attrition, the researcher’s goal

was to solicit a total of 15 participants: five volunteers to participate in the interview process and five to 10 interview alternates. From the pool of volunteers, the researcher used a random number generator to make a random selection of five volunteers. Upon collection of the potential candidates' names and contact information, the individuals were contacted by e-mail with an invitation to participate in the study. The invitation included the purpose and significance of the study. If the potential candidate accepted the invitation, an appointment was scheduled to meet in-person at the candidate's school, or at a location of the participant's choice.

If there was no response, a follow-up email was sent one week after the initial email. If, after the second attempt to elicit a response from the potential candidate, there was no response, the candidate's name was removed from the list and the random number generator was used to select a volunteer from the alternate pool. Thus, the alternate pool of volunteers remained on standby throughout the study in case a selected participant declined to participate or dropped out of the research study. Five of the nominated and randomly selected teachers agreed to participate.

The researcher obtained written consent from the participants prior to conducting the interviews. The researcher requested and obtained permission to record the interviews using a Pulse™ SmartPen (Livescribe, n.d.). If a participant denied the request to be recorded, the researcher wrote all interview responses. TranscribeMe transcribed all recorded interviews electronically for analysis. Through the documentation process, the interviews were coded to protect the identity of the participants. A password-protected laptop computer, accessed only by the researcher, was used for the transcriptions.

Participants' audiotaped interviews were transcribed by TranscribeMe to ensure the accuracy of the responses and to maintain the reliability of the recorded information. The researcher listened and re-listened to the audiotapes to verify transcripts and to identify possible explications and themes. Audiotapes and transcribed data were maintained in a locked file cabinet by the researcher in order to provide evidence of any questions that result from this research. Following is a summary of the specific steps taken in preparation for and conduct of the teacher interviews. The complete teacher interview protocol and interview questions are contained in Appendix E.

1. Principals were emailed individually and asked to submit names and email addresses of three highly effective teachers on their campus for the interview process.
2. All recommended teachers were sent an invitation to participate in the interview portion of the study.
3. The researcher obtained electronic consent from the participants.
4. The researcher developed interview questions based on the results of the teacher survey to add clarification to selected survey items.
5. A panel of experts determined appropriate questions and increased the depth of validity.
6. To determine validity and reliability of the interview questions, a Delphi panel of experts was utilized.
7. The interview questions were revised based on expert panel results.
8. The researcher prepared written consent for interview participants.

9. Five interview candidates were randomly selected using an online number generator.
10. The researcher contacted interview candidates, obtained written consent, and scheduled the interview dates, locations, and times.
11. Interview questions were asked in the same order; anecdotal information about any changes in behavior/body language in response to interview questions were noted by the researcher.
12. Participants' responses were documented using an electronic template, including observations about the participants' behavior/body language during the interview.
13. Interviews were recorded via Pulse™ SmartPen (Livescribe, n.d.); a written record was produced for participants who refused to be recorded using the Pulse™ SmartPen.
14. All recorded data were transcribed by TranscribeMe, an online confidential transcription service
15. The teacher interview data were collected and analyzed for common lived experiences.
16. The researcher coded the responses to protect anonymity.

Table 2

Coding of Interview Participants

Participants	Recoded Participants
1	E5
2	D4
3	C3
4	B2
5	A1

Teacher and Principal Survey Procedures

The steps involved in the planning and implementation of surveys and interviews were detailed to establish that appropriate procedures were taken to promote validity and reliability and were as follows:

- Requested permission to use and modify *Education for the Future Staff Questionnaire* (Appendix F);
- Modified the teacher section of the *Education for the Future Staff Questionnaire* (Appendix G);
- Developed the principal survey based on *Education for Future Staff Questionnaire* (Appendix H);
- Emailed sample survey questions to the Delphi committee members to rate and establish the validity and reliability of the teacher and principal survey questions;

- Emailed final questions to Delphi committee following consensus of the teacher and principal survey questions;
- Created the Teacher and Principal survey (based on the Education for Future Staff Questionnaire) by entering survey questions into Qualtrics Survey System;
- Submitted research request to IRB for approval to conduct research;
- Submitted research request to the school district for approval to conduct research;
- Prepared written communication for teachers and principals that included participant consent, email invitation to participate in the survey, reminder participation email, and an automated thank you for participation in the survey;
- Received IRB approval from the University and the school district,
- Emailed invitations to participate in the study to all teachers at the chosen high-poverty, low performing urban schools and principals;
- Notified participants of 21-day survey completion deadline and subsequent survey closure date;
- Emailed reminders to the participants on days 7 and 14;
- Monitored survey participation rates on days 7, 14, and 19;
- Downloaded the survey data on days 7, 14, and 21;

- Created reports using Qualtrics; the raw data from Qualtrics were exported for further analysis. The identifying IP addresses accompanying the survey responses were coded to protect the identity of the participants;
- Created an automated statement to appear on Qualtrics if a participant attempted to open the survey after day 21;
- Closed the survey on day 21 to prevent any further participation; automated message appeared that informed possible participant that the survey had closed;
- Collected and examined the teacher survey data to identify themes;
- Analyzed collected teacher and principal survey data and analyzed for themes and percentage of agreement;
- Contextualized themes and created composite summary to assist with the development of the teacher interview questions;

Instrumentation

Survey Instruments

The teacher and principal online surveys were developed and adapted by the researcher using Bernhardt's (2013) Education for the Future Teacher Questionnaire. Permission to modify the questions from Bernhardt's survey was requested and granted. The types of survey items included: forced choice, ranking, open-ended responses, and Likert-type scale responses. The purpose of both surveys was to identify commonalities among the teachers' and principals' responses in an effort to find areas of agreement and to eventually arrive at themes.

In regard to the principal survey (Appendix H), a total of 17 items extracted from the larger instrument were used to elicit information from the principals in the following three areas:

- Cultural competencies (items 23, 24, 27, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, and 51)
- Dispositional attributes (item 34); situational supports (items 10, 12, 28)
- Administrative supports (items 11, 29, and 36).

For the online teacher survey (Appendix G), a total of seven items (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8) were used to gain information regarding the lived experiences that positively contributed to the development of experienced teachers' identities causing them to remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools.

Interview Instrument

The teacher interview protocol (Appendix E) was the primary instrument used in data collection for this qualitative phenomenological study. The interview protocol was based on the results from the teacher and principal survey. Through the Delphi technique, using a panel of experts, interview questions were developed. All questions were asked verbatim in the same order.

Validity and Reliability

Creswell (2014) stated that researchers must specify the steps to be taken in order to ensure reliability and validity within the research process. "Qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent across different researches and different projects" (Creswell, 2014, p. 201). To allow the participants anonymity and encourage honest feedback without a fear of retribution, two surveys were developed, one

principal survey and one teacher survey (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011). Both surveys focused on determining the specific aspects that promote teacher retention and were based on findings within the literature contained in Chapter II. After the survey items were developed, validity and reliability of the questions and corresponding responses were established through the Delphi process. The survey items were revised based on the results of the Delphi process. The online surveys used in the study were published using Qualtrics software, available through the University of Central Florida.

Validity and reliability of the interview questions was strengthened using the Delphi technique, a forecasting method that has been used to seek predictions from a panel of selected experts and involves surveying a group of experts and helping a group come to a consensus regarding the researched topic (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). The Delphi process allows for anonymity to be maintained between each of the expert panel participants. Although each of the panel of experts reviewed the comments or answers to the questions, comments were anonymous with no identifiable information. This process allowed the opinions of the experts to be revised repeatedly until a consensus was reached (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). As directed by the Delphi method framework, the researcher assembled a panel of experts in the fields of general education, special education, higher education, leadership, urban educational leadership, and professional development to develop/create interview questions. The panel of experts created interview questions that were based on the responses from the teacher survey that needed further clarification and assisted the researcher in determining the validity and relevance of the questions.

The researcher used systematic steps to select the expert panel, as delineated by Okoli and Pawlowski (2004, p. 7). The steps included the following:

1. The Knowledge Resource Nomination Worksheet (KRNW) was prepared, identifying relevant categories such as disciplines, academics, organizations, and related literature key to the topic of urban teacher retention. The researcher looked for experts in educational leadership, urban education, the school district leaders, and school transformation areas.
2. A list of expert panel members was prepared.
3. Experts were ranked by their individual qualifications; experts with the most experience were ranked higher than those with less experience.
4. All experts were invited to participate in the interview question process via email (Appendix D).

The panel of experts was asked to complete responses to sample questions and return their responses to the researcher. The researcher then edited the content by filtering out irrelevant content details and look for common themes and viewpoints. Reports with the results that included the ideas from all of the experts were then sent to the entire group. The entire group edited their responses, commented on those of others, and changed their opinions based on the new information. Two questions asked early in the interview were repeated in alternative words near the end of the interview to measure consistency of responses.

Threats to the validity of the research were lessened by removing personal bias in the interpretations of the interviews and through the use of interview questions that were

created by an expert group. When conducting phenomenological research, validity is dependent on the researcher's ability to be aware of and decrease personal bias in the interpretation of interviews (Moustakas, 1994). Instrument validity is about asking the right questions to validate one's findings.

The reliability of an instrument is a measure of an assessment instrument, such as a survey, which states consistent implementation will result in consistent results (Bernhardt, 2004). Qualitative designs allow for systematic, in-depth, holistic analyses of phenomenon in a natural setting with participants' voices at the forefront of the study (Creswell, 2007). Some such designs are well suited for examining social validity as it is based on ascertaining teacher perceptions in authentic contexts (McDuffie & Scruggs, 2008). Qualitative methods also facilitate open-ended investigations that can help researchers uncover unanticipated findings or avenues for further exploration. According to Patton (2002), qualitative methods "can tell the stories behind the numbers, capture unintended impacts and ripple effects, and illuminate dimensions of desired outcomes that are difficult to quantify" (p. 152). This strength aligns with experts' recommendations of examining social validity over time rather than at the end of study (Schwartz & Baer, 1991).

Triangulation

In this research study, triangulation occurred through the use of different data sources of information to compare and see if similar results are found and add to the validity of the study (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2014; Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). The researcher used methodological triangulation with the use of the teacher survey, principal

survey, and teacher interviews. Administering the survey to both teachers and administrators provided two different perspectives related to urban teacher retention. Commonalities were gathered from the data. The researcher determined whether agreement existed between the results of the teacher survey, principal survey, and teacher interview responses. Using triangulation, the researcher viewed the data through multiple lenses to strengthen the conclusion of this study (Ary et al., 2009; Creswell, 2014; Glesne, 2006).

Data Collection

Survey Data Collection

The survey data were collected using Qualtrics online data collection tools. Qualtrics is a web-based survey tool that was utilized by the researcher to create, edit, distribute, and collect survey data. Qualtrics data were exported for further analysis. The names of the participants were confidential and only known to the researcher. Each participant was assigned an identification number, and the data were reported using the numbered identifier. The document that matches names to identifiers generated from Qualtrics was securely stored to protect confidentiality of the participants. The researcher further protected the data by storing it in a secure password protected computer database.

Interview Data Collection

According to Patton (2002), interviews that are consistent and organized will assist with data analysis. As the purpose of recording interviews is to ensure that all documented information is gathered in a complete and consistent manner, all interview responses were recorded using a Pulse™ SmartPen (Livescribe, n.d.). The recorded

interviews were transcribed onto the online template. Interviewer observations of the teachers being interviewed were also recorded by hand.

Data Analysis Procedures

Survey Data Analysis

Upon completion of the online surveys, data were analyzed based on commonalities found in principals' and teachers' responses. Data obtained using the Likert-type scale survey administered to teachers were collected, examined, and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequencies and percentages were calculated and placed in rank order from high to low in an attempt to further identify the common responses. The responses from the teachers were analyzed as a total population as well as by grade-level and by years of experience. Qualtrics survey data were collected, summarized, and coded. Detailed summary outcomes were prepared based upon categories and compared to the interview results. No additional questions were required. A data table was created based on the participants' responses. A thorough analysis was conducted on all data collection results. The open-ended responses were categorized and coded for interpretation. Survey data (situational supports that contribute to teacher retention) were presented as a percentage of agreement. Collecting multiple viewpoints and sources of information add strength to the conclusions drawn in the research according to Ary et al. (2014), Creswell (2014), and Fitzpatrick et al. (2011).

Interview Data Analysis

The analysis process involved comparison of responses obtained in the structured interviews of the five teacher participants. The researcher analyzed the interview

responses, grouped the responses by commonalities, and included specific interview comments to add clarity, substance, and depth to the survey participants' responses. The qualitative analysis of phenomenological interview data involved the analysis of similarities and differences between the interview and survey responses. The interview responses were analyzed using Hycner's steps to data analysis (Hycner 1985, p. 280-294). A comparative analysis was completed for the survey responses and the interview responses to identify commonalities in the responses of the anonymous online survey participants and interview participants. Moustakas (1994) stated that researchers should make contact with and respect their own questions and problems in order to implement a process that affirms creativity, insight, and self-reflection in an effort to search for knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon.

The data for this research employed Hycner's (1985) guidelines for analyzing phenomenological interview data. The steps were repeated for each interview conducted. This process helped with organization and management of the data.

Transcription

The data were transcribed from the audio recordings and additional notes. The transcription process included transcribing literal statements while noting significant non-verbal and Para-linguistic communication. The entire interview was documented in word form onto a Word document.

Bracketing and Phenomenological Reduction

As the researcher, it was imperative to listen attentively to the recordings of the interviews and to exercise care in reading the transcripts. The researcher approached this

process with an open mind and a willingness to let whatever meanings surround urban teacher retention emerge. This step required the researcher to consciously open herself up to see urban teacher retention in low-performing, high-poverty schools as a phenomenon in its own right. This process enabled the researcher to be aware of and suspend personal biases. This awareness allowed for objective data collection and for the experiences of the teachers and principals to be explored with openness, permitting meanings to emerge.

Listening to the Interview for the Sense of the Whole

Once the researcher “bracketed” her interpretations, she then listened and read the interviews multiple times to become familiar with the data collected, while also listening for a sense of the entire story, and for the emergence of specific components of meaning and themes. The researcher listened for nonverbal forms of communication (e.g., the tones, pauses, rhythm, volume).

Delineating Units of General Meaning

Delineating units of general meaning is a critical phase of explicating the data to ensure that the statements that illuminate the phenomenon are extracted and isolated. Here, the researcher began the very rigorous process of reviewing the transcriptions line-by-line, phrase-by-phrase, and word-by-word. The process of getting at the essence of the experience expressed in a word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, and significant nonverbal communication is complex. This process crystalizes and condenses the participants’ statements, while utilizing as much as possible of the participants’ literal words. By staying as close as possible to the literal words of the participant, the researcher creates a general unit of meaning. Meaningful statements are considered statements that are

directly related to the research questions. After the data were analyzed, the commonly mentioned phrases, ideas, or experiences were used to help develop the framework for identifying meaningful statements. This step required the researcher to be aware of the potential danger of subsuming and, therefore, obscuring the data.

Delineating Units of Meaning Relevant to the Research Question

The researcher reviewed the meaningful statements to determine if they related to the research questions. If the responses did pertain to a research question, the researcher coded them (1 = yes, 2 = no). Non-essential research data were coded as Not Applicable (NA). In this categorization, it was always better to err on the safe side and include emerging data that needed clarifying, because greater clarity emerged as more time was spent with the data and the overall content as well as the dialogue. The researcher referred to the expert panel to ensure reliability, asking the panel to examine the categories where the units of meaning were placed. The categorization of the panel was compared to the categorization of the researcher. The researcher required a minimum of 80% agreement before proceeding to the next step.

Eliminating Redundancies

The researcher examined the units of meaning for each subject individually and eliminated statements that were repetitious, keeping the statement listed only once. The researcher noted how many times the statement was repeated as well as how it was mentioned, signifying the importance of a particular issue to the participant. During this step, the researcher was also aware of relevant meanings; participants may use the same

words, but the actual meaning may appear very different depending on the context, emphasis and the participants' paralinguistic cues.

Clustering units of relevant meaning

The researcher reviewed the units of meaning selected and examined to see if any of the statements had natural clustering, also known as common themes. The researcher was also aware that there might be some overlapping in clusters, which is to be expected given that it is impossible that human phenomena be completely defined.

Determining Themes from Clusters of Meaning

For each research question, the researcher examined all the clusters to search for larger themes that spoke to the essences of the teachers' experiences. This process was repeated for each research question.

Writing a Summary of Each Individual Interview

The researcher assembled all of the data, themes, and clusters, creating a summary of the whole discussion for each teacher interviewed. A written summary was developed by the researcher for each teacher interviewed. The researcher wrote a summary for each teacher interviewed.

Return Summary and Themes to Participants for Review

The written summaries were sent to each teacher for their review. This process is also referred to as member checking and adds to the validity of the research. The researcher also sent a letter asking teachers to report any concerns or disagreement. The outcome of this step was intended to be interviewee/researcher agreement to ensure the essence of the interview was accurately and fully captured.

Modify Themes and Summaries

The researcher did not need to collect additional data from the teachers. No teachers reported any concerns or disagreements with the essence statements sent to them by the researcher. Additional interviews were not necessary.

Identifying General and Unique Themes for All the Interviews

The researcher examined all the data and looked for commonalities in themes or experiences among the teachers. Any themes that were unique to a single teacher were noted as outliers.

Contextualization of Themes

After the researcher identified general and unique themes, she described each unique theme within the context of the research question addressed.

Composite Summary

At this stage, the researcher may note significant individual differences (Hycner, 1985, pp. 280-294). The researcher summarized all of the research data collected, themes found, and the essence of the phenomenon being investigated. The researcher provided a holistic picture that was conveyed through the investigation.

A summary of each interview theme was created and organized in tabular form to assist in the identification of commonalities that focused on each research question. The tables served as a tool to identify themes that were considered outliers and to facilitate the comparison of teacher interview results and the separate principal and teacher survey responses.

Limitations

The limitations of the phenomenological research method include:

1. The researcher's interpretations of what was stated in each interview could appear as bias as a result of the researcher's previous experiences within the school district. The administrators' relationships with the respondents may have had some influence over the way the respondents answered the questions, and fear of respondent identification could have influenced the responses.
2. Open-ended responses may not be a true reflection of the teachers' lived experiences. Reasons for this limitation could be the result of persuasion based on the researcher's role from the survey items and/or the desire to impress the interviewing researcher who was also a district administrator.
3. The learning that will be gained from this study was limited to the comments and perspectives that participants chose to share based on their ability to recall the lived experience.

Summary

The methodology used to implement this qualitative phenomenological study has been described in this chapter. The researcher sought to provide a comprehensive explanation of the qualitative phenomenological method deemed appropriate in addressing the research questions. The phenomenological approach enabled the researcher to uncover factors directly related to urban teacher retention, specifically in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools. Included in the chapter were procedures

used (a) to conduct the study, (b) to develop an instrument using the Delphi technique, and (c) to collect data through interviews with teachers. The applicable items from the survey of principals and teachers were detailed. Data analysis procedures were discussed in detail. Validity, reliability and triangulation of data were also discussed. The use of a qualitative phenomenological study of successful urban teachers assisted in the identification of commonalities and subsequent themes that may be characteristic of successful urban teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools.

CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was for the researcher to gain insight into the lived experiences, with regard to cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational and administrative supports, of urban elementary school teachers who contribute positively to their development and identity, choosing to remain in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools. The researcher gathered data from three sources: (a) principal surveys, (b) teacher surveys, and (c) teacher interviews. Semi-structured interview questions were designed to gather information from the interviewed teachers who were identified for participation by their school principals. Each participating school principal was instructed to select five teachers who had taught for three or more years at the current school and had received a rating of highly effective on their annual appraisals. The researcher, using a random number generator, identified a teacher to be interviewed from each school.

The first section of this chapter includes information to provide a context for the subsequent analysis of interview and survey data. The content presented contains (a) demographic information on principals and teachers which assists in the deeper understanding of the subsequent tabular data and summaries presented; (b) a summary of the analysis of the data from the principal and teacher online surveys and the five teacher interviews using tabular displays and accompanying narratives; and (c) a summary of the discoveries using identified commonalities leading to the emergent themes. The

researcher ensured the credibility of this study by having the interview participants review their transcripts for accuracy of their statements within the transcribing process. According to Glene and Peshkin (1992) obtaining the reactions of the respondents: (a) will verify that one has reflected the participants' perspectives, (b) may inform the researcher of any problematic areas of concern, and (c) could assist the researcher in developing new ideas and interpretations.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of teachers who have remained in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools for three or more years. The literature does not thoroughly examine organizational characteristics, individuals' dispositions, and lived experiences, which have motivated these individuals to remain in such challenging environments. Therefore, if the current teacher shortage is to be remedied, it will be advantageous to identify both the personal and organizational factors that influence teachers to remain in the profession. The study was designed to facilitate exploration, analysis, and understanding of organizational characteristics that contribute to urban teacher retention. Researchers have not specifically sought to explain retention rates in high-poverty schools; however, many have provided organizational perspectives for subsequent research about the revolving door phenomenon in this subset of schools (Ingersoll, 2001; Rubalcava, 2005). In an effort to explain why teachers remain in high-poverty schools, this research study was focused on the organizational characteristics that contribute to the development of individual teachers' desire and willingness to remain at high-poverty, low-performing schools.

Research Questions

1. What, if any, are the specific cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational and administrative supports that contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?
2. What are the lived experiences that contribute positively to the development of experienced teachers' identities that cause them to remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?
3. What, if any, are the common themes between the experienced teachers' lived experiences and the cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational supports, and administrative supports identified by principals that contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?

Teacher Survey Participant Demographic Information

Descriptive data for teacher respondents were obtained from 50 teacher participants at low-performing, high-poverty urban schools. Of the 50 teacher participants, 4% taught Pre-Kindergarten, 22% taught Kindergarten, 32% taught Grade 2, 28% taught Grade 3, 24% taught Grade 4, and 24% taught Grade 5. The content taught by the teacher participants was as follows: English language arts (35, 70%), mathematics (31, 62%), science (28, 56%), social studies (23, 46%), technology (13, 26%), art/music (3, 6%), physical education/health (2, 4%), special education (6, 12%), and other (1, 2%). Educational background data beyond the baccalaureate degree were analyzed and included the following. A total of 17 (34%) of the teachers held master degrees; 1 (2%) of the teachers had earned specialist degrees; and none had earned doctoral degrees. The

surveyed teachers' teaching experience was as follows: first year teachers (8, 16%), 2-3 years of experience (10, 20%), 4-6 years of experience (5, 10%) 7-10 years of experience (6, 12%), 11-14 years of experience (3, 6%), 15-20 years of experience (1, 2%), 21-25 years of experience (3, 6%) and 26 or more years of experience (8, 16%). Demographic data obtained from the survey of teachers are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Demographic Data for Teacher Participants (N = 50)

Descriptor	N	%
Grade Level Taught		
Pre-Kindergarten	2	4.0
Kindergarten	11	22.0
Grade 2	16	32.0
Grade 3	14	28.0
Grade 4	12	24.0
Grade 5	12	24.0
Content Area		
English language arts	35	70.0
Mathematics	31	62.0
Science	28	56.0
Social Studies	23	46.0
Technology	13	26.0
Art/Music	3	6.0
Physical Education/Health	2	4.0
Special Education	6	12.0
Other	1	2.0
Highest Degree Held		
Baccalaureate	27	54.0
Master's	17	34.0
Specialist	1	2.0
Doctorate	0	0
Years of Teaching Experience		
First-year	8	16.0
2-3	10	20.0
4-6	5	10.0
7-10	6	12.0
11-14	3	6.0
15-20	1	2.0
21-25	3	6.0
26 or more	8	16.0

Principal Survey Participant Demographic Information

Four of the five participating principals completed the demographic survey. Three of the principals were female and one was male; two were Hispanic, one was Caucasian, and one was African American. Three responding principals held master's degrees, and one had completed a specialist degree. All respondents worked at the elementary school level. Regarding their total years of experience as principals, all had at least seven or eight years in their positions, and one had more than ten years as a principal. As to urban school experience, one of the principals had 2-3 years of experience; one had 6-7 years of experience, and two indicated 7-8 years of experience. One of the principals did not choose to participate in the survey.

Table 4

Principal Survey Descriptive Information (N = 4)

Principal	Gender	Ethnicity	Degree Attainment	School Level	Years as Principal	
					Urban	Total
P-1	Female	Hispanic	Master's	Elementary	2-3	10+
P-2	Female	Caucasian	Master's	Elementary	7-8	7-8
P-3	Male	Hispanic	Specialist	Elementary	7-8	7-8
P-4	Female	African American	Master's	Elementary	6-7	7-8

Note. One participating principal did not complete the survey

The reporting of the data analysis has been organized to include (a) the results of the online survey of principals and (b) the online survey of teachers. Tables and accompanying narratives have been used to report the responses of participants to the survey items designed to elicit categorical data to respond to the three research questions.

Data Analysis for Research Question 1: Principal Survey Data

What, if any, are the specific cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational and administrative supports that contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?

The five participating principals were surveyed to elicit data to respond to Research Question 1 as to specific cultural competencies (Table 5) and dispositional attributes, situational and administrative supports (Table 6) that contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, low performing urban schools.

Table 5

Principal Responses to Survey: Cultural Competencies

Item #	Item	Principal			
		P-1	P-2	P-3	P-4
23	There are positive interactions on my campus between teachers and administrators.	A	SA	A	A
24	There are positive interactions on my campus between administrators and students.	A	SA	A	A
27	School should set aside time to teach all urban educators how to relate to urban cultures (cultural proficiency).	A	A	A	SA
45	I feel like I belong at this school.	A	A	A	SA
46	I believe my teachers work effectively with ethnically/diverse students.	A	A	N	A
47	I believe my teachers work effectively with English language learners.	A	A	N	N
48	I believe my teachers work effectively with low-achieving students.	A	A	N	N
49	I believe my teachers work effectively with students who live in poverty.	A	D	N	N
50	I believe my teachers work effectively with students who have learning disabilities.	A	N	N	N
51	Teachers are offered support to ensure they are teaching the standards.	A	SA	A	A

Note. Response Code: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neither Agree or Disagree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

As shown in Table 5, principals responded to 10 items focused on cultural competencies, indicating their agreement or disagreement ranging from A = Agree to SD = Strongly disagree. Principals were asked to share their beliefs as to the positive interactions of students, teachers, and administrators on their campus, cultural proficiency, and the extent to which teachers worked effectively with diverse types of

students. As shown in Table 5, all of the four principals agreed or strongly agreed that there were positive interactions with teachers, administrators, and students (items 23 and 24), that the school should set aside time to teach all urban educators how to relate to urban cultures (item 27), that they belonged at this school (item 45), and that teachers were supported in teaching the standards (item 51).

When responding to a general item (item 46) as to whether teachers worked effectively with ethnically diverse students, three principals agreed that they did so, but one neither agreed nor disagreed. The responses were less positive, however, when principals were queried regarding specific groups of students: the effectiveness of teachers with English language learners (item 47), low-achieving students (item 48), students who live in poverty (item 49), and students with learning disabilities (item 50). There was no strong agreement response by any principal that teachers worked effectively with any of these groups of students, but only one principal expressed disagreement with one item (49) that teachers were effective with students living in poverty. Overall, principals provided a mixture of agree or neither agree or disagree responses as to whether their teachers were effective with the specific groups.

Table 6

Principal Responses to Survey: Dispositional Attributes, Situational Supports, and Administrative Supports

Item #	Item	Principal			
		P-1	P-2	P-3	P-4
	DISPOSITIONAL ATTRIBUTES:				
34	Willingness to participate in interview elaborating on urban principal experience				
	Yes	0	0	0	0
	No	0	1	0	0
	Maybe	1	0	0	1
	SITUATIONAL SUPPORTS				
10	Rank the organizational structures, programs, supports and policies you feel are most implemented on your campus (1=least, 6=greatest)				
	Effective administrative support	5	6	6	0
	Effective administrative feedback	6	5	4	0
	Cooperative groups	2	2	3	0
	Mentoring and induction	1	1	1	0
	Collegial/collaborative communication	4	3	2	0
	Effective professional learning communities	3	4	5	0
	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORTS				
11	Rank the organizational programs, supports, and policies you feel are most implemented on your campus (1=least, 11 = greatest)				
	Principal support	9	11	11	0
	Assistant principal support	11	10	10	0
	Peer support	3	8	9	0
	Working conditions	2	9	7	0
	Salaries	7	1	5	0
	Teacher preparation	1	7	2	0
	Teacher certification	10	3	1	0
	Internal reward (such as student success)	6	4	6	0
	External rewards (such as awards and public/private recognition)	4	2	3	0
	Program support	8	5	4	0
	Support/assistance with low-performing students	5	6	8	0

As shown in Table 6, principals responded to three items that were specifically concerned with dispositional attributes, situational supports, and administrative supports.

Principal 1 responded to only one item on the survey, indicating a willingness perhaps to participate further in an interview elaborating on the urban principal experience. Of the three principals who responded to this items, only one provided a somewhat positive response, indicating that he or she “maybe” would be willing to be interviewed.

Item 10 of the principal survey was focused specifically on situational supports and called upon the principals to rank the organizational structures, programs, supports and policies they believed to be the most implemented on their campuses. As shown in Table 6, principals assigned high rankings to having implemented effective administrative support and effective administrative feedback. They assigned only slightly lower rankings to having developed effective professional learning communities and collegial/collaborative communication. The lowest ranked levels of implementation were assigned to mentoring and induction and cooperative groups.

Item 11 of the principal survey addressed administrative supports, and principals were asked to rank the organizational programs, supports, and policies they believed were most implemented on their campuses. As shown in Table 6, these rankings were somewhat mixed. However, principal support, assistant principal support, and peer support were assigned the highest ranks by all three responding principals.

The analysis of the principal survey data revealed four commonalities related to individual teachers’ cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational, and administrative supports that contributed to their individual desire to remain in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools: (a) administrative support, (b) peer support, (c) communication, and (d) professional development.

Data Analysis for Research Question 2: Teacher Survey Data

What are the lived experiences that contribute positively to the development of experienced teachers' identities and cause them to remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?

To respond to the second research question, the teacher respondents (N = 49) were asked to respond to seven items (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8) posed on the online survey. Their responses are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7

Frequencies and Percentages of Participating Teacher Responses to Teacher Survey (N = 49)

Survey Item #	Item (N)	Strongly Disagree <i>f</i> (%)	Disagree <i>f</i> (%)	Neither Disagree or Agree <i>f</i> (%)	Agree <i>f</i> (%)	Strongly Agree <i>f</i> (%)
1	I FEEL:					
	Like I belong at this school. (49)	3 (6.1)	5 (10.2)	9 (18.4)	22 (45.0)	10 (20.0)
	That the staff cares about me. (49)	1 (2.0)	4 (8.2)	17 (35.0)	17 (35.0)	10 (20.0)
	That the learning can be fun at this school (49)	2 (4.1)	6 (12.2)	8 (16.3)	24 (49.0)	9 (18.4)
	That learning is fun (49)	6 (12.2)	12 (25.0)	13 (27.0)	15 (31.0)	3 (6.1)
	Recognized for good work (49)	2 (4.1)	14 (29.0)	10 (20.0)	16 (33.0)	7 (14.3)
	Intrinsically rewarded for doing my job well. (49)	2 (4.1)	8 (16.3)	12 (25.0)	16 (33.0)	11 (22.4)
	Clear about what my job is at this school. (49)	1 (2.0)	4 (8.2)	6 (12.2)	26 (53.1)	12 (25.0)
	That others are clear about what my job is at this school. (49)	1 (2.0)	7 (14.3)	11 (22.4)	17 (35.0)	13 (27.0)
2	I WORK WITH PEOPLE WHO:					
	Treat me with respect. (49)	1 (2.0)	4 (8.2)	8 (16.3)	25 (51.0)	11 (22.4)
	Respect each other. (48)	1 (2.1)	8 (17.0)	13 (27.1)	16 (33.3)	10 (21.0)
	Collaborate with each other to make learning consistent across grade levels. (48)	1 (2.1)	10 (21.0)	11 (23.0)	18 (38.0)	8 (17.0)
	Are committed to continuous improvement. (48)	1 (2.1)	4 (8.3)	8 (17.0)	24 (50.0)	11 (23.0)
	Provide one another feedback on their teaching. (48)	3 (6.3)	15 (31.3)	11 (23.0)	10 (21.0)	9 (19.0)
3	MY ADMINISTRATORS:					
	Treat me with respect. (48)	2 (4.2)	3 (6.3)	5 (10.4)	24 (50.0)	14 (29.2)
	Are effective instructional leaders. (49)	0 (0.0)	8 (16.3)	9 (18.4)	21 (43.0)	11 (22.4)
	Communicate effectively. (49)	1 (2.0)	10 (20.4)	14 (29.0)	19 (39.0)	5 (10.2)
	Support me in my work with students. (49)	1 (2.0)	8 (16.3)	10 (20.4)	21 (43.0)	9 (18.4)
	Support shared decision-making. (49)	4 (8.2)	13 (27.0)	9 (18.4)	15 (30.6)	8 (16.3)
	Allow me to be an effective instructional leader. (49)	4 (8.2)	12 (25.0)	7 (14.3)	15 (30.6)	11 (22.4)
	Are effective in helping me reach our vision. (49)	3 (6.1)	7 (14.3)	14 (29.0)	19 (39.0)	6 (12.2)
	Actively encourage staff to collaborate. (49)	1 (2.0)	3 (6.1)	13 (27.0)	20 (41.0)	12 (25.0)

Survey Item #	Item (N)	Strongly Disagree <i>f</i> (%)	Disagree <i>f</i> (%)	Neither Disagree or Agree <i>f</i> (%)	Agree <i>f</i> (%)	Strongly Agree <i>f</i> (%)
5	I LOVE:					
	Working at this school. (49)	2 (4.1)	6 (12.2)	16 (33.0)	11 (22.4)	14 (29.0)
	Seeing the results of my work with students. (49)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (10.2)	15 (30.6)	29 (59.2)
	To teach. (49)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	4 (8.2)	9 (18.4)	35 (71.4)
6	I BELIEVE:					
	Every student can learn. (49)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	12 (25.0)	37 (76.0)
	The instructional program at this school is challenging. (48)	1 (2.1)	3 (6.3)	8 (17.0)	19 (40.0)	17 (35.4)
	This school provides an atmosphere where every student can succeed. (48)	2 (4.2)	14 (29.2)	10 (21.0)	14 (29.2)	8 (17.0)
	Quality work is expected of all students at this school. (48)	0 (0.0)	8 (17.0)	9 (19.0)	20 (42.0)	11 (23.9)
	Quality work is expected of me. (48)	1 (2.1)	1 (2.1)	1 (2.1)	20 (42.0)	25 (52.1)
	Quality work is expected of all the adults working at this school. (49)	2 (4.1)	7 (14.3)	4 (8.2)	19 (39.0)	17 (35.0)
	The vision for this school is clear. (49)	2 (4.1)	5 (10.2)	8 (16.3)	21 (43.0)	13 (27.0)
	The vision for this school is shared. (49)	2 (4.1)	4 (8.2)	12 (25.0)	17 (35.0)	14 (29.0)
	We have an action plan in place, which will get us to our vision. (49)	1 (2.0)	7 (14.3)	13 (27.0)	17 (35.0)	11 (22.4)
	This school has a good public image. (49)	20 (41.0)	16 (33.0)	8 (16.3)	4 (8.2)	1 (2.0)
	It is important to communicate often with parents. (49)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (33.0)	33 (67.3)
	I communicate with parents often about their child's progress. (49)	0 (0.0)	2 (4.1)	13 (27.0)	17 (35.0)	17 (35.0)
	Student outcomes for my class(es) are clear to me. (49)	0 (0.0)	3 (6.1)	9 (18.4)	21 (43.0)	16 (33.0)
	Student outcomes for my class(es) are clear to my students. (49)	1 (2.0)	5 (10.2)	7 (14.2)	23 (47.0)	13 (27.0)
	Learning is fun in my classroom. (49)	1 (2.0)	5 (10.2)	10 (20.4)	21 (43.0)	12 (25.0)
7	I WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH:					
	Students with learning disabilities. (47)	0 (0.0)	2 (4.3)	5 (11.0)	20 (43.0)	20 (43.0)
	English language learners. (47)	1 (2.1)	1 (2.1)	13 (28.0)	18 (38.3)	14 (30.0)
	Ethnically/racially diverse students. (48)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (6.3)	21 (44.0)	24 (50.0)
	Students who live in poverty. (48)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (4.2)	16 (33.3)	30 (63.0)
	Low-achieving students. (48)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (4.2)	18 (38.0)	28 (58.3)

Survey Item #	Item (N)	Strongly Disagree <i>f</i> (%)	Disagree <i>f</i> (%)	Neither Disagree or Agree <i>f</i> (%)	Agree <i>f</i> (%)	Strongly Agree <i>f</i> (%)
8	MORALE IS HIGH ON THE PART OF:					
	Teachers. (48)	9 (19.0)	19 (40.0)	11(23.0)	6 (13.0)	3 (6.3)
	Students. (48)	4 (8.3)	13 (27.1)	17 (35.4)	10 (20.8)	4 (8.3)
	Support staff. (48)	8 (17.0)	18 (38.0)	8 (17.0)	9 (19.0)	5 (10.4)
	Administrators. (48)	3(6.3)	7 (15.0)	20(42.0)	15 (31.3)	3 (6.3)

Note. Not all respondents answered all items. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Survey items 1, 5, and 6 centered around what teachers felt and believed about their lived experiences. Regarding items 1, 5, and 6, the majority of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they work in an administrative and peer supported environment that is fun, caring, accepting, rewarding and has clear expectations.

Items 2 and 3 focused on the teachers' experiences as they relate to organizational supports and whether or not those supports contributed to their desire to remain in a high-poverty, low-performing urban school. For these items, of the 49 teachers responding, 36 (73.4%) stated that they are treated with respect; 26 (54.3%) agreed that they worked with individuals who respect them, 26 (55%) agreed that they work in a collaborative environment; 35 (73%) were committed to improving as professionals; and 19 (40%) agreed that they worked with peers and administrators who provide supportive feedback.

Items 7 and 8 focused on teachers' lived experiences as they related to cultural competencies and the overall organization's disposition. Of the 48 teachers who responded, 45 (94%) stated that they have the diverse skills, knowledge, and attitudes to work effectively with ethically/racially diverse students; 46 (96.3%) felt as if they work effectively with students who are economically disadvantaged; 46 (96.3%) stated that they work effectively with students that are struggling academically; 13 (29.4%) also agreed that morale was high for staff; and 18 (37.6%) believed that morale was high as it relates to administrators.

An analysis of the 2015 Teacher Belief Survey data revealed two commonalities related to the lived experiences that positively contributed to the development of an experienced teacher's identity to remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools.

Two commonalities emerged that relate to Research Question 2: (a) administrative support, and (b) peer support. A frequency analysis was conducted to address Research Question 2. Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the teacher survey data and validate the commonalities found in the teacher interview data. Frequencies were calculated and compared with the commonalities revealed in the interview data.

Administrative Support

When asked about administrative support in item 3, a majority 30 (61.4%) of teachers agreed that their administrators support them when it comes to working with their students. Only 11 (18.3%) teachers did not agree with the positive statements regarding administrative supports in relation to students, and 10 (20.4) were neutral. Within item 3, 23 (46.9%) of the 49 respondents stated that their administrators were supportive when it comes to making organizational decisions; 17 (35.2%) did not agree that administrators supported shared decision making, and 9 (18.4%) were neutral.

Peer Support

When asked about peer support (item 2), a majority (26, 55%) agreed with positive statements about peer interactions as they related to peer collaboration across grade-levels. There were 11 (23.1%) of the teachers who did not agree with positive statements about collaborative peer interactions across grade-levels, and 11 (23%) were neutral. When asked about supportive feedback in item 2, the 19 (40%) teachers agreed that they received positive supportive feedback from their colleagues; however, 18 (37.6%) did not agree, and 11 (23%) were neutral.

Data Analysis for Research Question 2: Teacher Interview Data

What are the lived experiences that contribute positively to the development of experienced teachers' identities and cause them to remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?

Following are brief summaries of the interviews conducted with the five urban teachers who agreed to participate in the study. The summaries contain professional demographic information for the teachers and their schools as well as a description of the settings in which the five interviews were conducted. Central in the summaries are key points stressed by the teachers regarding cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational, and administrative supports as they related to the teachers' lived experiences regarding urban teacher retention.

Teacher 1 (T-1)

T-1 was an African American elementary school teacher who was also a product of her current district's educational system. She has been an urban teacher for six years; all of which had taken place at low-performing, high-poverty urban school, by choice. The teacher also had one year of previous experience as a kindergarten and first grade teacher in a high-performing, affluent elementary school. T-1 currently taught second grade at a low-performing, high poverty urban school where she had taught for several years. All of her educational experience was in the elementary school setting. T-1 was currently the second grade team leader and team mentor.

The interview with T-1 was conducted on a school day, after school hours, at the researcher's school, at the request of T-1. T-1 arrived early (professionally dressed with a notebook and pen in hand) at the front office of the researcher's school. The researcher

was called to the office to meet T-1. When the researcher arrived to greet T-1, T-1 was walking around the front office waiting area, inquisitively looking at the information on the front counter and collecting a few of the reading materials. The researcher greeted T-1 by introducing herself and thanking T-1 for her willingness to participate, and desire to meet at the researcher's school. T-1 signified happiness by smiling and repeatedly clapping her hands stating how excited she was to participate in the study. The researcher and T-1 began to walk to the researchers office, which was located in the rear of the school (a campus which expands 24 acres). During the lengthy walk to the researcher's office, T-1 appeared very comfortable as she began to talk and share her personal and professional life experiences, unprompted. T-1 had a connection with the meeting location, as she shared fond memories of her youth. She spoke with pride as she discussed her adolescent years and how impactful they were and more importantly how impactful (positive and negative) her teachers were during this phase of her life. She explained this was why she had become the person she is today. T-1 appeared very prepared and ready to share educational information. She began to state her current school's mission and vision and school demographic information as if it was second nature. T-1 stated her current school had 635 students across grades Pre-K-5 (90% African American, 5% White, 3% Multi-racial, 1% Asian, and 1% Hispanic). T-1 stated that her school currently had 32 students with Individual Education Plans and 45 students with 504s. The researcher was impressed and asked T-1 why these data were so engrained in her memory. T-1 simply replied, "Because all of these are my babies." As the walk continued, T-1 continued to share her personal and professional information.

The conversation flowed easily; at times generating laughter and hand clapping as T-1 candidly conversed with the researcher.

The interview took place in the researcher's office, a large room with a desk, four chairs, four filing cabinets, and a large poster that states, "Follow your Dreams." T-1 immediately commented on the poster and stated how neatly, orderly, and organized the office area appeared to be. She also commented on how quiet the area was and how this was not what she was accustomed to in an educational setting, even after hours. T-1 appeared extremely comfortable and stress-free. Throughout the entire interview process, which lasted approximately 3 hours, T-1 was extremely animated when responding to the interview questions. Her enthusiasm was infectious, she providing great details as she responded to each question, often pausing and putting her hand on her chin, pondering prior to responding to the questions. Many of her responses included the use of hand gestures, often handclaps and body movements and feet tapping which expressed excitement to each question. She even chuckled throughout the interview. T-1 appeared to value open, honest communication.

Key points made by T-1 were related to administrative and peer supports and organizational constructs that encouraged successful teacher retention. T-1 shared the importance of having a supportive administrative team. She stated that there have been many times when she has felt challenged as an educator and wanted to quit, but knowing that she can communicate openly with her administrator reduces the frustration. T-1 described her instructional leadership style and practices that support her administrative and peer team as a whole. She described the importance of leadership at all levels, and

how she embodies true teamwork, authentic communication, and peer support. T-1 expressed the importance of being a team player, never allowing another team member to feel or become unsuccessful. She explained the importance of having and communicating tolerance when it comes to bridging the diversity gap (for students and teachers) and the important role cultural competence can have on the overall process of retaining urban teachers. T-1 stated that cultural competence was “essential.” She expressed how administrative supports and leadership opportunities are key in the retention process and that retention will not take place unless teachers feel supported by their principal. T-1 stated that when “good” teachers are retained, the playing field is leveled for students. T-1 stated that when good teachers are given constructive advice, they are able to grow professionally and feel more successful, resulting in their continued desire to remain in challenging situations. T-1 appeared to be a very passionate educator. She explained her various roles at her current school and how creating a positive collegial atmosphere on her team and within her school is what she models as a team leader. T-1 emphasized successful urban educators have a “growth mindset” and therefore understand the importance of remaining at challenging schools. T-1 stated that she believes that urban educators are born and come with an internal with-it-ness and are intrinsically motivated.

Teacher 2 (T-2)

T-2 was a Caucasian fifth grade teacher in a high poverty, low performing urban school. The teacher had previous experience as a kindergarten and first grade teacher. She had worked at her current school for seven years. T-2 had over three decades of teaching experience in urban challenging schools, all which has been in the elementary

school setting. T-2's current school has a program whereby all students receive free breakfast and lunch regardless of the parents' and/or guardians' socio-economic status. The school has recently adopted a modified mandatory uniform dress code policy. The school has free before- and after-school child care for all students in addition to an extended school day (one hour of additional instruction). The school grade is currently an F. Recent media reports labeled the school as a failing school along with five other schools within the district.

The interview with T-2 was conducted during the teacher's winter vacation break, at the teacher's request. The interview took place in the early morning hours at a public library near the teacher's home at her request. T-2 indicated that the early hours were best because it was winter break, and she would be more refreshed for the interview process. There was very light activity at the interview location. The researcher attributed this to the early morning hours and the winter break. The researcher arrived early at the meeting location in an effort to greet the teacher as she arrived and to remove any ambiguity about the room location and to guide the teacher to the meeting room. Prior to the teacher's arrival she called to inform the researcher that she was running a few minutes behind schedule due to family car issues. T-2 arrived approximately 15 minutes after the scheduled interview time. Once she arrived, the researcher greeted her, thanked her for taking time out of her family schedule, and assured her that her tardiness was not an issue. T-2 apologized to the researcher for her tardiness. T-2 appeared extremely sincere in her apology and continued to apologize profusely as the researcher escorted her to the interview room. The researcher and T-2 walked over to the elevator to transition from the

entrance area of the library to the interview room, which was located on the second floor of the library. During the travel process, T-2 spoke calmly about her family and shared stories about her own children, both of whom were adults. T-2 stated that now that her own children were adults, there was nothing more important to her than her ability to have daily conversation with each of them; and that through this communication she has seen them blossom into amazing adults. As the elevator began to move, T-2 shared cell phone pictures of her family. T-2 mentioned that her own children often ask her why she puts in so many hours at work (sun up to sun down) and how they were relieved that she will be retiring soon, simply to rest. T-2 chuckled and smiled and shook her head. T-2 then stated, she could never truly retire from her students. T-2 appeared very affectionate and family oriented. We spoke casually as we continued to travel to the interview location. Once the researcher and T-2 arrived at the interview room, T-2's demeanor became very thoughtful, focused and full of eagerness. T-2 shared a recent experience at her school as district personnel observed her during a school walkthrough. T-2 stated that the experience went differently than she had expected. T-2 stated that this year would have been her last year teaching, due to the district retirement plan (DROP), she would have been forced to retire. During this statement T-2 became extremely emotional and began to cry, heavily. The researcher stood up and walked around the table and handed T-2 a tissue and began to rub her back in an effort to console her. As she continued to explain, the tears became less and less tears of sadness but tears of joy. This was evident based on her disposition and body language. T-2 then explained that based on the recent district walkthrough observation, the district contacted her to extend her teaching

assignment for an additional year at her current school. T-2 began smiling and joyfully explained how she graciously accepted the district's request to extend her teaching contract. T-2 stated that administrative supports are vital, but since many of these are connected to district supports they do not always "hit the mark of what is needed." She noted that it was extremely important to have the support of one's building administrator. She expressed her faith in her students and that there is hope for the students within her current educational system.

The interview took place in a meeting room with one table and four chairs, one large window near the door that allowed us to see out and others to see in. The researcher strategically placed T-2's seat facing away from the window in a proactive effort to reduce visual interruptions. T-2 appeared relaxed and very comfortable with the researcher. T-2 repeatedly thanked the researcher for allowing her the opportunity to participate in the research study, describing her feelings of excitement for being involved in the interview process. She stated that she has always desired to communicate her feelings on educational issues, specifically urban issues. T-2 put her head down on the table for a few seconds and then lifted it up and began shaking her head. Her tone became brash, she apparently recognized her tone and apologized immediately, but followed-up by saying there is a clear disconnect. T-2 appeared to be frustrated with this topic and she leaned back in her chair and continued to shake her head in disapproval. T-2 continued by stating that often teachers are told that their input and feedback is valued but the actions at the district level show differently. T-2 stated that although there is a clear disconnect and limited open/transparent communication at the district level, she has been blessed

that this is not the case at her school. Her school principal engages in open, honest authentic communication. T-2 stated that she is very satisfied with her current school's support efforts, which is why it is so difficult to leave. During this process, T-2 again began to cry as her words became overwhelming as she described her three decades as an urban educator and the fact that she was nearing retirement. The researcher handed T-2 more tissues and asked her if she needed to take a break. T-2 apologized for crying repeatedly. The researcher informed her that her apology was unnecessary and gave her the freedom to cry as much as she desired. T-2 thanked the researcher and continued to cry periodically throughout the interview process when responding to questions that appeared to be directly connected with teacher retention and their individual connectedness to their students.

T-2 expressed her undying love for the profession, specifically as an urban educator. T-2 stated she would never teach anywhere other than an urban challenging school. She passionately discussed her aspirations as an urban educator and the imprint she would like to leave for other educators who will eventually take her place. She stated her views on the processes that surround retaining great teachers. She shared her overall philosophy of leadership and how principals and peer support are an integral part of the retention process. She shared how educational organizations must look at urban teacher needs differently from the needs of other schools within the district, stating the cookie-cutter effect is alive and well and must be demolished if retention is the desired outcome. T-2 stated how teachers must be able to grow as professional leaders based on their individual professional needs.

Teacher 3 (T-3)

T-3 was a Caucasian fourth grade teacher in a high poverty, low performing urban school. T-3 had taught for nine years, all at her current school. Prior to the start of the interview, T-3 shared that she was a teacher on a continuing contract, which is why she was not afraid to speak up and state what is actually going on in her school and organization as a whole. T-3 was very confident in her statements and her disposition supports. T-3 immediately explained how most teachers would be fearful of participating in such an interview due to repercussion, no matter how confidential. T-3 had a very assertive tone and appeared very sure of herself and her statements about teacher retention. She indicated she had worked in various capacities within the field of education as a graduate student and that this allowed her an opportunity to see educational issues on various levels. T-3 previously worked in higher education as a graduate assistant while she earned a master's degree in education. She expressed her love for the world of academia. T-3 shared that she was involved in many leadership roles at her university and was look upon as a role model. T-3 expressed her aspirations to become an educational leader but stated clearly that she did not wish to be a school-based administrator. T-3 had previously taken on several leadership roles at her current school. She was the head of the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) committee, fourth grade team leader, and mentor leader for new teachers for the past six years. T-3 had also been an active member in the School Advisory Council, Parent Teacher Association, and was currently supervising the school's Title I audit box, an additional duty that requires a great deal of time due to state and district accountability requirements. T-3 has been the lead mentor at her school for

the past three years which requires her to coordinate and organize the overall school induction process for new teachers, making mentee and mentor connections.

The interview with T-3 was also conducted during the teacher's winter vacation break at the teacher's request. The interview took place in the early morning hours at a public library near the teacher's home as requested by the teacher. T-3 indicated that the early hours were best since it was winter break, that she worked a second job, and the morning hours would be more conducive and not interfere with her additional responsibilities. There was an increase of activity at the interview location; the researcher attributed this to the time and current events that were scheduled to take place at the library. The researcher met T-3 at the front door of the location in an effort to greet the teacher as she arrived and to remove any location barriers while guiding the teacher to the meeting room location. T-3 arrived 5 minutes before the scheduled interview time. Once she arrived, the researcher greeted T-3 much like her previous greetings. The researcher thanked the teacher for taking time out of her busy schedule. T-3 thanked the researcher for understanding the need to include the teachers' voice when it comes to retaining successful teachers at challenging schools.

The interview with T-3 was very much concentrated on the desired outcome. This approach resulted from initial conversational interactions, and the teacher's no-nonsense attitude. T-3 shared her thoughts on social justice for all teachers, but specifically those in urban challenging schools. She was very clear on her desire to see immediate change as it related to urban educators. T-3 stated that there is a clear disconnect between north county and south county teachers in her school district. T-3 stated that urban teachers

face an entirely different set of challenges than teachers in less challenging schools and that to provide supports as if the schools were identical was a disgrace. She stated that “cookie- cutter” support systems are not what urban challenging schools need. Rather, principals need the freedom to provide meaningful supports specific to urban educators that will actually make a difference in the lives of their teachers and students. T-3 stated that she has a very supportive principal who is always willing to “stick her neck out” for what her teachers need. T-3 stated that urban teachers in challenging schools need professional development that focuses on cultural competence, without which urban schools will not be able to retain good teachers. She spoke of her irritation when she has heard north county teachers belittle south county teachers who are in challenging schools. T-3 became very direct with her statements surrounding this issue. The researcher observed T-3 began to clench her hands together, making partial fists with both hands. Her eyes began to widen, and she began to lean forward in an effort to emphasize her statements. T-3 appeared to be very passionate in her overall beliefs about urban educators and even more so about how urban educators affect urban students. T-3 attributed her success as an urban educator to the fact that she grew up in urban areas and therefore has urban experiences and can relate to her current population. T-3 stated that having a principal who “backs you” at the district level, parent level, and student level is the type of support teachers “highly need.”

Teacher 4 (T-4)

T-4 was a Caucasian fourth grade teacher in a high poverty, low performing urban school. T-4 had been teaching for five years at her current school. Prior to her elementary

experience, she was also an urban high school teacher. T-4 stated that she desired to become an elementary school teacher to make an early impact on the lives of students and their families.

The interview with T-4 was also conducted during the teacher's winter vacation break at the teacher's request. The interview took place in early afternoon hours at a public library as requested by the teacher. The researcher met T-4 at the front doors of the location in an effort to greet the teacher as she arrived and to remove any location barriers while guiding the teacher to the meeting room location. T-4 arrived on time. Once she arrived the researcher greeted T-4, much like her previous greetings. T-4 noticed a textbook on educational leadership as she walked through the library and stated, "It's so much more than a textbook." The researcher thanked the teacher for taking time out of her busy schedule. T-4 stated that it was a pleasure to be asked.

T-4 immediately began sharing how lucky she was to participate in the study. T-4 expressed how important it was for urban teachers to get to know everything they can about their school, community, parents, students and colleagues. She even elaborated on the fact that urban teachers need not only to know their principal's expectations, but they need to know what their students, parents, and the school as a whole expect of them as teachers. T-4 indicated that urban teachers' expectations are very different from those of non-urban teacher expectations who are not in high poverty, low-performing schools. T-4 shared that her principal is supportive in all areas of need, specifically the area of classroom instruction. T-4 also observed that her principal was "super supportive" of the teachers at her school as instructional leaders. T-4 stated her principal encourages her to

see the power within herself. She acknowledged that her principal empowers her through supportive actions on behavioral and academic levels. She indicated that she personally believed cultural competence was very important and the lack of cultural awareness only increases the challenges at urban schools. T-4 explained how urban teacher's dispositions are very different from non-urban school teachers dispositions, noting that "Every morning I make sure to greet my students at the door with a handshake and good morning," that immediate personal attention is what they need. T-4 stated that the needs of urban teachers are much like the needs of urban students. Just as urban students need different types of supports, so do the teachers; and just as students needs ongoing consistent and authentic communication so do the teachers; and just as the students need high expectations and structure so do the teachers. T-4 expressed the belief that urban teachers are held to higher standards than non-urban teachers in less challenging schools. She emphasized statements about accountability, administrative support, constructive criticism, reflective feedback from peers and principals. She believes that the bar is set high for urban teachers, and urban teachers in challenging schools must have thick skin and remain open-minded.

Teacher 5 (T-5)

T-5, a Caucasian third grade teacher; had taught at her current school for four years. T-5 actually interned at her current school for an entire semester and was hired immediately by the school principal directly after her internship. T-5 began as a Kindergarten teacher and looped with her students for Grades 1, 2, and 3. T-5 was recently nominated as the 2015 Educator of the Year for her school. She has taken on

multiple leadership roles within and outside of her current school; was currently the fourth grade team leader, Leading and Learning Cadre (LLC), treasurer for the Parent and Teacher Association (PTA), yearbook coordinator, multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) team member, professional development facilitator, and an active Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) team member.

The interview with T-5 was conducted on a school day, after school hours at the researcher's school at the request of T-5. She arrived early at the front office of the school. The researcher was sitting at the front desk waiting for her; thus, when T-5 arrived, the researcher immediately greeted her with introductions, shook her hand, and thanked her for her willingness to participate in the study and for her desire to meet at the researchers school. T-5 appeared very nervous yet professional and enthusiastic about the interview. As the interview progressed she became more relaxed as evidenced by her posture and witty comments. T-5 appeared to very pleasant and outgoing with a very vibrant personality. T-5 was clearly a high achiever as noted based on her discussion surrounding her awards and nominations. The researcher and T-5 began to walk to the interview room located near the front of the school. T-5 commented on the overall look of the school as it related to the school's age. T-5 stated this must be a Title I school, indicating an urban school with high needs and limited resources. She then stated at least it was not a failing school. T-5 appeared to have a very personal connection with this topic. She began to explain how low-performing, high-poverty urban schools are never looked at for the successes they have had but only for the failures.

T-5 expressed confidentiality concerns throughout the interview, repeatedly stating, “Can I be truly honest?” She indicated that she was a researcher, was always looking for opportunities for professional development, and that she had looked at what other school districts were implementing to support urban teachers. T-5 asked if she could speak off record after the interview, as she wanted to be more candid but was very fearful of retaliation. T-5 expressed how important it is for principals to build relationships with their teachers. T-5 Urban teachers must feel a connection to their principal and peers. T-5 indicated that if urban teachers are to remain in challenging schools they must feel good about themselves. Principals must know how to build urban teachers up. She suggested that non-urban schools are easier based on collegial conversation with her peers that are at high-performing, affluent schools. She spoke with pride as she discussed her school and how impactful good teachers can be in challenging schools. Key points made by T-5 were related to administrative support practices as they related to professional growth opportunities, relationships with principals and peers in addition to ongoing authentic communication with staff through structured and non-structured opportunities.

T-5 stated that she believed that her administrator has her back and favors teachers who are team players. She emphasized how important it is for urban teachers to be adaptable to new ways of thinking. She believes that her principal seeks opportunities to build authentic relationships. “One thing I love about my principal, she’s very real with us.” T-5 indicated that she believes that with the appropriate supports and guidance in place that teachers in urban settings will remain, but principals have to be honest about

struggles and face them head on. T-5 stated that urban teachers must have a growth mindset and be open to grow professionally.

Commonalities Emerging From Teacher Interviews

The five teachers interviewed for this study embodied a specific, unique, and passionate style for working with students in high poverty low performing urban schools. All teachers interviewed encouraged and required collegiality among their peers and administration. All were dedicated teacher leaders with the desire to make a difference by changing the educational culture of high-poverty, low-performing urban schools. An analysis of the data obtained from the teacher interview responses revealed that teachers identified with a variety of experiences that contributed to their individual development, causing them to remain at a high poverty, low performing school.

Four commonalities emerged that relate to Research Question 2 as to the lived experiences that positively contribute to the development of experienced teachers' identities causing them to remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools? They were (a) administrative support, (b) peer support, (c) open/transparent communication, and (d) professional growth/leadership opportunities.

Administrative Support

The commonalities revealed that school administration maintained a supportive culture and were knowledgeable of the needs of each teacher. Table 8 illustrates the summarized teacher comments supporting administrative support.

Table 8

Teachers' Responses Supporting Commonalities: Administrative Support

Teacher 1 (T-1)	Teacher 2 (T-2)	Teacher 3 (T-3)	Teacher 4 (T-4)	Teacher 5 (T-5)
Open door policy	Common mission and vision	Principals stand up for teachers' voices	Continuity to sustain and build relationships	Constructive feedback
Conducts formal and informal conversations with staff	Establishes norms for quality instruction	Creates comprehensive and unified instructional programs	Communication	Care and concern
Confidential	Willing to be flexible	The importance of human capital	Committed	Trustworthy
Supports professional development experiences	Team player	Instructional support	Adaptable	Creates unified instructional programs

T-1 shared the importance of having a supportive administrative team. When she feels challenged as an educator, it was important to know that she can communicate openly with her administrator, thereby reducing frustration that she may be feeling due to staff, students, and parents.

T-2 stated that administrative supports were vital, but since many of these are connected to district supports many of these may not always “hit the mark of what is needed. This is why it is extremely important to have the support of your building administrator.”

T-3 stated principal support in an urban school such as her current school was needed “100%.” “I have an amazing principal.” “My principal goes above and beyond,

she has not always been the principal there, but has always been on the administrative team (as an AP).” The teacher expressed the belief that this type of support motivates her to try her best while creating a growth mindset.

T-4 shared that her principal is supportive in all areas of need, specifically the area of classroom instruction. “I have to say my principal is super supportive of us in the classroom.” “My principal encourages us to see the power we have within ourselves when it comes to dealing with our population of students; she will step in when needed.” The teacher acknowledged that her principal empowers her through supportive actions on a behavioral and academic level.

T-5 stated that she feels as if her administrator has her back and favors teachers that are team players and adaptable to new ways of thinking. She indicated that her principal seeks opportunities to build authentic relationships. “One thing I love about my principal, she’s very real with us.”

Peer Support

The commonalities among the responses of the five teachers interviewed suggest the theme, peer support. Table 9 contains a summary of supportive statements made by teachers interviewed.

Table 9

Teachers' Responses Supporting Commonalities: Peer Support

Teacher 1 (T-1)	Teacher 2 (T-2)	Teacher 3 (T-3)	Teacher 4 (T-4)	Teacher 5 (T-5)
Communication	Teamwork	Collegiality	Supportive group of professionals	Allows for a growth mindset
Sustained and stable relationships	Allows for peer reflection	Builds strong educators	Common vision and mission	Creates a feel of unity
Ability to socialize with likeminded professionals	Creates a sense of family	Allows for personal growth and networking		
	Allows for organizational success			

T-1 expressed that peer support allows her to be reflective and accepted, elaborating that when teachers feel that their peers support them they are more open to having specific areas of deficiencies pointed out, because they know that they have their best interests at heart.

T-2 stated that peer support allows the team to remain close without outside forces “picking us apart.” We celebrate our achievements like a “big family.” “We may not always get along, but we want the best for everyone, like a normal family.”

T-3 stated the importance of peer support comes from knowing who is vested in her team. “Peer support allows for the hands-on and hands-off approach, some teachers only want their concerns heard.” Peer support allows the teachers to connect and support based on need not just grade-level and/or content, teachers get to know each other from

reflective standpoint and ask questions that actually encourages teachers to self –reflect and become even more supportive. “ I feel as if peer support gives you more in-depth feedback. It’s more helpful versus the traditional “supportive” feedback responses like ‘You’re doing this very well,’ or ‘You’re developing in this area.’”

T-4 defined teacher support as “ I’ve got your back, knowing that somebody is there for you. If you’re having a tough day, go and sit down, just listen to me, listen to me vent, and I don’t need anything from you, just listen, this is peer support.”

T-5 stated that the ability to have candid/open conversations with one’s peers is vital. “Teachers must be able to converse, laugh, and have fun.” The educational organization may not always be a fun environment, so peer supports make it a little easier when those trying times arise.

Open/Transparent Communication

The review of the teacher interview data revealed commonalities as it relates to open/transparent communication. Table 10 displays a summary of comments made by teachers interviewed.

Table 10

Teachers' Responses Supporting Commonalities: Open/Transparent Communication

Teacher 1 (T-1)	Teacher 2 (T-2)	Teacher 3 (T-3)	Teacher 4 (T-4)	Teacher 5 (T-5)
When you feel welcomed	Creates a positive culture	Encourages teachers to contribute their input	Creates a culture of teamwork	Creates a culture of unity
Allows for formal and informal conversations to take place	Personal communication makes you feel like family	Input viewed as valuable	Creates opportunities for collegial conversations	Encourages to seek support
Trustworthy	Allows you to celebrate achievements		Conducts informal communication follow-ups	
Encourages teachers to elicit support				
Fosters communication among faculty, staff, and students				

Teachers discussed the need for open transparent communication throughout the entire organization. Teachers stated that they must feel as if they can discuss their individual needs openly with administration, (specifically the principal) and that communication must be clear.

T-1 stated, “Effective communication is a major part of having a school that teachers want to remain at for years.” She also stated that effective communication comes with the feeling to be free, not fearful of self-expression.

T-2 observed that open communication allows teachers to feel connected and creates a sense of “family.” Open communication allows teachers to grow, to share their successes and their failures.

T-3 stated open/transparent communication is essential at any school. Transparent communication allows others to grasp a true view of an individual teacher’s needs so that needs can be accessed authentically and not in a “cookie cutter” format.

T-4 stated that teachers have to be able to communicate in a “trustworthy” manner. “This form of open door personal communication is key; in this manner the teachers feel valued.”

T-5 stated, “Open communication is necessary in schools like ours.” Communication processes are in place to ensure teachers are able to communicate with one another as well as administration. There is no doubt that transparent communication increases the success of schools and programs, “but it can not be a cookie cutter concept.”

Professional Growth/Leadership Opportunities

The commonalities among the responses of the five teachers interviewed suggested the common theme of growth/leadership opportunities. Table 11 contains brief summaries of teachers’ comments that supported this theme.

Table 11

Teachers' Responses Supporting Commonalities: Professional Growth

Teacher 1 (T-1)	Teacher 2 (T-2)	Teacher 3 (T-3)	Teacher 4 (T-4)	Teacher 5 (T-5)
This is a mindset opportunities	Allows for mastery	Leads to empowerment	Commitment	Creating staff get-togethers
Increases opportunities	Allows teachers to take ownership	Ability to get your individual needs met	Personal development	Personally invested
Personal accountability	Discourages complacent behavior	Helping others grow allows me to grow	Personal desire	Stressed the importance of professional growth activities
Needed areas of growth				
Involvement in the coaching process				
Planned reflective development				

T-1 shared that she is currently the positive behavior support team leader in addition to being the team leader for first and second grade. “Teacher leadership is essential, it is very essential, and it pushes you.” She has personally been involved with “on the job” training opportunities.

T-2 was personally involved with the development of her campus professional development plan. She also was involved in the selection and modification of teams within their professional development cadres. “I enjoy working and growing as a teacher

leader and welcome new opportunities, especially ones where I get to advocate for new teachers.”

T-3 was personally involved in the induction process at her school and the development of the teacher leaders program. “ I have a desire to learn while leading.” She explained that professional development was very important and stated that educators “must,” continue to encourage other educators to “sharpen their saw.”

T-4 explained how she utilizes different opportunities to grow professionally, socially, and emotionally to remain a successful teacher. She also explained that there are a lot of things that go into a teacher’s professional growth.

T-5 was personally involved in the process of creating teacher leaders. “ I think meetings are important, but get-togethers are even more important.” Implementing “get-togethers” allowed her to get to know others on a personal level while developing professional development growth opportunities.

Data Analysis for Research Question 3

What, if any, are the common themes between the experienced teachers’ lived experiences and the cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational supports, and administrative supports identified by principals that contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?

Data used to respond to Research Question 3 were obtained through an online survey of principals and teachers in five urban challenging schools and five teacher interviews with teachers who exemplified irreplaceable dispositions and attributes as urban teachers. The data initially were analyzed for each of the instruments (principal survey, teacher survey, and teacher interviews) to identify commonalities among teachers’ and principals’ responses. Commonalities identified in the initial analysis of

data from the three main sources were: administrative support, peer support, open/transparent communication, professional growth/leadership opportunities, and professional development. In further review and comparison of the identified commonalities, the following four themes emerged: administrative supports, peer support, communication, and professional development.

Emergent Themes

An analysis of the data obtained from the teacher interview responses revealed that teachers interviewed desired support that was manifested in a variety of ways. Table 12 contains the four major themes that were identified by both teachers and principals as contributing to teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools. (a) administrative supports, (b) peer support, (c) communication, and (d) professional development. Following is a discussion of these major themes.

Administrative Supports

Of the five teachers interviewed, all indicated that administrative supports are vital to the overall success and retention of urban teachers. Teachers' survey data also indicated a large percentage of teachers require administrative supports.

The teachers interviewed for this study were personally involved in the support process, and the teacher interviews provided a holistic view of the practices, changes, and supports provided to the teachers. Literature on effective leadership supports personal involvement as a desirable strategy (Fullan, 2010). Future research is needed to investigate whether the principal's personal involvement has a significant influence on teacher retention in challenging schools. The researcher in this study focused on the lived experiences of five

teachers, which resulted in various common themes. Though future research might include a greater number of participants, studying a small group permitted the researcher to gain a depth of knowledge.

Urban public schools face complex support challenges that are linked, shortage of resources, limited funding, minimal to no mentoring and induction, limited professional development and lack of communication (Ladson-Billings, 2007) these challenges plague urban schools often leading to “revolving door” (Ingersoll, 2001; Rubalcava, 2005).

Peer Support

Peer support was a common theme found between the teachers’ lived experiences and the reported overall support principals believed they provided on their campuses. All teachers interviewed agreed that school administration maintained a supportive culture, were knowledgeable of their teachers needs and were, therefore, supportive of those needs. Based on the principal survey results, all four respondents ranked peer support as one of the most important factors related to teacher retention. Teacher survey data revealed significant agreement relating to peer support. When asked about peer support, the majority (81%) of surveyed teachers agreed with positive statements about peer interactions and believed it should be a required component of teacher retention. When asked about standards-based support received from colleagues, a very high majority (81%) responded that they had received positive support from their colleagues. Less than 20% of the teachers indicated that they had received negative support from their colleagues.

Communication

The review of the teacher interview data revealed commonalities related to communication. All teachers interviewed agreed that communication was essential for their overall success as urban teachers. One question posed to surveyed teachers regarding communicative supports revealed that 20 (49.2%) teachers agreed or strongly agreed, and 11 (22.4%) disagreed with the theme of communication as it relates to the lived experiences of an urban teacher. The principal survey responses supported the teachers' statements, with all four of the principals ranking communication as high regarding organizational supports provided to teachers.

Professional Development

The impact of professional development was another common theme between the principals surveyed and the teachers interviewed. Of the five teachers interviewed, there was a frequency of agreement that suggested professional development as a common theme between the lived experiences of urban teachers and principal supports for professional development. Three of the four principals stated that professional development opportunities were supported on their campus. All teachers interviewed reflected on the importance of professional development to their success.

Summary

This chapter presented demographic information of participating teachers and their schools. The results of the analyses of data obtained from surveys of four principals and 50 elementary school teachers along with teacher interview data from five highly effective teacher leaders were reported. Data analyses results were displayed in tables and

discussed in accompanying narratives. Commonalties were detailed, and emergent themes were identified. The data from the teachers' interviews were compared with teacher and principal survey results for the purpose of triangulation. The data from the five interviewed elementary school teachers, four elementary school principals, and 50 elementary school teachers were compared, and a summary of the findings with identified commonalties and themes was presented. In the following chapter, a summary of the study is presented along with a discussion of the findings, implications for practice and recommendations for research.

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of urban elementary school teachers who have remained in a low-performing, high-poverty urban school. In this chapter, the research findings are summarized and discussed, and implications are presented regarding the specific cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational supports, and administrative supports that contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, low-achieving urban schools. This chapter also contains implications for educational policies and practices and recommendations for future research.

The concept of teacher attrition has been more frequently considered than has the retention issue as it relates to urban settings. Thus, this study was unique; thereby adding to the limited body of research on veteran teachers' lived experiences regarding retention. The information shared by the teacher participants gave the researcher insight into their lived experiences as urban educators and allowed for a meaningful reflection on the similarities and differences in each teacher's story as well as the identification of major themes shared by all participants in the study. This chapter has been organized around the following three research questions, which were used to guide the study:

1. What, if any, are the specific cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational and administrative supports that contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?
2. What are the lived experiences that contribute positively to the development

of experienced teachers' identities that cause them to remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?

3. What, if any, are the common themes between the experienced teachers' lived experiences and the cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational supports, and administrative supports identified by principals that contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?

Summary of the Study

This study was conducted to research the lived experiences of five urban teachers who had remained at a low-performing, high-poverty urban school for three or more years in a large urban school district in Southwest Florida to ascertain their individual reasons for remaining in a challenging urban setting. The researcher sought the assistance of district principals to obtain a list of possible participants based on the criteria for the study. Participants were nominated elementary school teachers who received a rating of highly effective on their latest evaluation, taught in an urban low-performing, high-poverty school for a minimum of three years, and were selected by the school based principal for demonstrating leadership characteristics that were aligned with highly effective educators.

Once all five of the nominated teachers agreed to take part in the study and be interviewed, the researcher distributed an on-line teacher survey to all other instructional school based teachers and an on-line principal survey to the five principals who agreed to participate in the study. The on-line survey items were adapted from Bernhardt's (2013) Education for the Future Questionnaire. The researcher developed the teachers' interview

questions and validated them through a Delphi technique. The interviews were analyzed employing Hycner's (1985) guidelines for phenomenological analysis.

Summary and Interpretation of Findings

Research Question 1

What, if any, are the specific cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational and administrative supports that contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?

The principals' responses to the survey questions regarding teacher retention in high-poverty, low performing schools served as indicators of cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, and situational and administrative supports. Of the four principals completing the survey, three ranked academic support as the least implemented support, with one principal ranking it as most implemented. Two of the four principals ranked peer support as being highly implemented; one principal ranked it as least implemented, and one principal did not respond. Researchers have suggested that principals can create an oasis of support when they develop others to assist in the support process. Marzano et al. (2005) found that one's mindset could have a significant impact on how one feels. Many teachers believe that the lack of supports that relate to urban environments renders them inadequate to meet the current challenges of their students (Long et al., 2012). When it comes to organizational support, principals are an integral and essential part of the picture. Based on the principal survey item 29, all four of the principals in this study indicated their roles as school leaders as multidimensional with three of the four principals indicating that between 40% and 80% of their day was spent supporting academics with the remaining time supporting collegial conversations, managing

behavior, attending professional learning communities, assisting with positive behavior supports, teacher evaluations, walkthroughs and attending district meetings. This involvement ties to the findings of many researchers. Leithwood and Jantz (2006) defined effective administrative supports as the ability to build the school vision, developing specific goals, and priorities while offering individualized support to teachers and developing a culture of collaboration. Moreover, Ingersoll (2001) indicated that administrative support was one of the most significant predictors of urban teachers' intent to stay in an urban educational setting.

However, more often than not, the lack of administrative support becomes more oppressive and the intrinsic motivation is not enough for teachers to remain (Deci, 1975). Without district and school-based administrative support, many new teachers become overwhelmed and discouraged (Boyd et al., 2011). In order for teachers to remain in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools, they need to feel successful. Teachers crave support from their school-based administrators (Johnson, 2004). According to Ingersoll (2001), the level of administrative support in a school is a major factor in whether or not teachers decide to persevere in their profession.

Principal involvement including level of communication, dispositional attributes and situational supports may well influence the organizational culture of the school. A different trend emerged in the principals' responses regarding importance of effective communication and principal support. According to the 1999-2000 SASS, teachers who work at organizations that offer continuous support to beginning teachers are less likely to leave the teaching profession (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Three of the four principals

who participated in the survey believed that they supported a culture of collaboration and communication and ranked communication as being the most implemented support.

Three of the four of the principals who participated in the survey believed that their teachers' needs for communication were met. Based on the survey all principals believed that teaching is a collegial act that is best done in collaboration with other teachers.

The reasons behind the principals' responses regarding administrative support can be found throughout the research literature on teacher retention. Principal support of urban educators is essential in developing teachers professionally (Grissom, 2011). The effectiveness of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000) and the effectiveness of the schools (Marzano et al., 2005) can impact principals' perception of the support they actual provide for teachers. The implementation of professional development by the principal can have a positive effect on the teachers' belief about academic support for urban organizations (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Principals' satisfaction with their individual levels of educational support may be rooted in self-efficacy based on the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997), whereas principals' beliefs in their individual willingness to take on challenges can positively provide a positive impetus their teachers and organizations as a whole.

In this study, the mixed results regarding professional development was that principals' perceptions of meeting their teachers' needs may be based on several factors (e.g., well-defined professional development opportunities, leadership opportunities, collegial collaboration and communication). The principals' choice of teacher supports may not be available at their schools (Allensworth et al., 2009). The principals'

expectations of their teachers may impact the type and amount of professional development required. Principals' overall attitudes about teachers and their needs can also influence a teacher's desire to remain working in a high-poverty, low-achieving urban school (Kraft et al., 2015).

Peer support has been cited as the greatest need in retaining teachers in challenging schools in various studies (Pugach & Winn, 2001; Greenlee & Brown, 2009). All principals who were surveyed stated that they offered professional development for their teachers. Friend et al. (2010), however, stressed that professional development should not end at the basics but should be constant, developing teachers' collaboration skills. Further noted in the research was the notion that employees lacking the necessary training can be disruptive to the culture (Bolman & Deal, 2008, Owens & Valesky, 2011). According to Danielowich (2012), peer support allows teachers to become reflective in their practice, this reflective support increases collegiality and the overall growth and development of urban teachers. Based on the survey responses, the principals who participated in this study understood that investing in their personnel training was ultimately an investment in their organization (Danielowich, 2012).

To instill effective and lasting change, a culture in which communication and collaboration is encouraged is essential (Martin et al., 2014). Researchers have demonstrated that those principals who were supportive, able to communicate and offer professional development learning opportunities to their staff had an overall better relationship with their teachers (Nichols et al., 2010). It has also been shown that effective principals teach and coach about the importance of being committed to

communication. For example, effective principals practice transparent communication; one cannot be a supportive leader without clear, positive communication. Because principals are the main creators of a culture of communication in their schools, when principals practice effective communication, it becomes the standard and their “way of work.” Further, teachers and principals must communicate effectively regularly. In fact, strong communication tools and practices are essential to a school’s overall success. Although, effective communication can be tricky, principals are responsible for ensuring that good examples are set. Based on the results of the principal survey, it was evident that all principals were aware that effective transparent communication is crucial to collaboration and linked to teacher retention. There are numerous possibilities for ongoing communication, and when implemented effectively these opportunities help build common understandings of teacher needs

Warner & Winter (1993) stated that communication is a multidimensional process. Principals in the study understood the importance of peer collaboration and communication, even more so than principal communication as a support. The principals ranked the implementation of peer communication as a necessary support for urban teachers. Communication within peer groups can provide systems of communication that supports teachers in ways different from individual, mentoring and administrative forms.

Research Question 2

What are the lived experiences that positively contribute to the development of experienced teachers' identities and cause them to remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?

The teacher participants were interviewed about their lived experiences and whether or not those experiences had an impact on their desire to remain in a low-performing, high-poverty urban school. Four themes emerged from the teacher interview data that contribute to urban teacher retention, as it related to Research Question 2: administrative supports, peer support, open/transparent communication, and professional development. When teachers felt supported, their individual belief in themselves and their confidence increased. Teachers exhibited self-efficacy through self-critique and monitoring of their professional growth and development. Administrators can contribute to teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy through ongoing open/transparent communication.

In regard to administrative supports for urban educators in challenging schools, they can have a positive effect on urban teacher retention (Amos, 2008). In all five interviews, the teachers described the support they received from their administrators and stressed the importance that administrative support and peer support had on the lives of urban teachers. For example, all five of the interviewed teachers reported having benefitted from being able to have impromptu conversations with their principal, collegial conversations with their colleagues, support with student behavior, parental support, regular feedback on their teaching, and embedded professional development. These supports are influential on novice teachers who desire to remain in high-poverty,

low performing challenging urban schools. According to Tickle et al. (2011), administrative supports are the most significant predictor of a teacher's intent to remain in the teaching profession past three years. All interviewees' responses to the interview question that addressed administrator support indicated agreement that administrative support was essential to their lives of urban educators. Administrative supports are imperative to elementary, middle and secondary school teachers. (Tickle et al., 2011).

Teachers interviewed identified ongoing professional development as an important aspect of retention. The teachers who participated in the study indicated their personal involvement in day-to-day events enabled them to cultivate supportive relationships and grow professionally. These findings mirrored those of (Fullan, 2001) who found that professional growth and supportive relationships positively influenced the culture of the organization. The teachers interviewed cited examples of the various leadership and growth opportunities that had been afforded to each of them and which had contributed to their professional growth and desire to remain teaching in their high-poverty, low-performing urban school. Darling-Hammond & Tothman (2011) noted that meaningful involvement in professional development and leadership opportunities is key in retaining educators.

The interviewed teachers stated that professional development and leadership opportunities were one of three ways to retain urban teachers. Effective leaders promote professional development and encourage the growth of urban teachers while building capacity. Allowing teachers to have a voice in the professional development opportunities to be offered supports the teachers and increases communication efforts among teachers,

peers and administration. All of the five teachers interviewed agreed that their school-based embedded professional development opportunities had an impact on teacher retention and their ability to excel in an urban classroom environment. The research supports the notion that if urban educators received and participated in professional growth and leadership opportunities, their desire to remain teaching in challenging urban schools would increase.

Fulton et al. (2005) stated that if teachers are to be successful in the 21st century, they must increase high quality communication and avoid teacher isolation. The practice of integrating new teachers in a collaborative, supportive community structure not only encourages dialogue that supports best practices but also helps new teachers build a network that can enable success and retention. However, when new teachers in challenging urban settings lack access to exemplary educators and collaborative communication, they begin to feel the pressures of educating students with multiple educational barriers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2012) and often are not retained. Successful schools cannot operate without massive amounts of communication between teachers and principals. Creating a supportive culture requires principals to have frequent dialogue and conversations with their teachers. According to Warner and Winter (1993), by implementing effective communication as a multidimensional process, principals can improve communication while developing additional areas of needed support and creating a culture of satisfaction. This multidimensional communications process was mirrored in the study by the interviewed teachers who shared their belief that open communication is essential to the success of urban teachers. The results of the teacher

interviews indicated that principals who have open door policies are able to create a supportive culture that encourages a collegial community and positively impacts teachers' desires to remain in challenging urban schools.

Research Question 3

What, if any, are the common themes between the experienced teachers' lived experiences and the cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational supports and administrative supports identified by principals that contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?

The following common themes emerged in the analysis of the data to respond to the first two research questions. Data used in the analysis came from the responses of teachers and principals to an online survey and interviews with teachers. Four major themes emerged: administrative supports, peer support, communication, and professional development.

Despite the many challenges, there are some teachers who continue in the profession, and the lived experiences of teachers and administrative supports have been found to play an important role in the urban teacher retention process. According to self-reports from beginning teachers, leadership that promotes collaboration, team teaching, and extended time to work with mentors, are just a few of the supports that help retain teachers (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). Administrative support, teacher autonomy and decision-making power, and supportive relationships with colleagues are positively related to beginning teacher retention (Boyd et al., 2011).

The teachers and principals who gave their time to complete the surveys for this study or to be interviewed have provided a wealth of feedback about the lived experiences of urban educators. The analysis of the survey and interview data provided a

foundation that yielded four themes that each group agreed were important. However, teachers reported that transparent communication was key to building a collaborative culture that retains teachers. Principals did not express a high emphasis on transparent communication. All of the teachers who participated in interviews would not consider teaching in any other educational environment other than an urban challenging environment.

More than half of the teachers who responded to the online survey felt supported in their current environment, and all of the principals surveyed believed they provided supports that would increase urban teacher retention. However, one of the four principals surveyed was unsure if enough administrative support was provided that would lead to urban teacher retention. These mixed results mirror prior research studies where teachers and principals differ in their beliefs on the administrative supports needed as they relate to urban teacher needs. Resilient principal leadership, a commitment to supportive responsibility and shared influence, frequent, open and transparent communication can begin to bridge the gap that urban teachers experience. When teachers are active in the day-to-day organizational decision-making of their schools, they tend to be more satisfied overall (Bielick & Chapman, 2003; Paul et al., 2005).

Principals play a vital role in retaining teachers. When considering how to support their teachers, principals at challenging urban schools must have resources available to assist in supporting their teachers' professional development needs as well as social and emotional needs through open/transparent communication (Florida Department of Education, 2013).

Van Tassel-Baska (2006) noted that communication with teachers was found to be one of the most beneficial supports principals could embrace; a culture of collaboration exudes success. Researchers have shown that “can do” schools implement ongoing communication among principals, teachers, students, and parents. This sentiment was echoed throughout the interviewees’ responses. The comment of one interview participant summed up a shared belief among urban educators who were interviewed by saying:

I think support for urban educators is essential, because most administrators assume teachers like me are fine. But, if we aren’t pushed, nurtured and supported educators can become unmotivated and some will eventually leave, feeling as if they have no other option. (T-1, 2015)

The researcher in this study used a phenomenological approach to try and understand the lived experiences of elementary school teachers who were rated as highly effective based on the district annual appraisal process. Principals will have educators with various levels of ability in their organizations, and they must be able to adjust their leadership style to the individual educator’s situational needs. Effective leaders recognize their staffs’ readiness levels and support them accordingly (Hickman, 2010). Principals who recognize the need for situational supports will ultimately understand the power of principal support and how these types of supports can contribute to the retention of urban educators.

Principals of urban challenging schools have to provide varying levels of situational leadership. For instance, a principal in a challenging urban school must be

proactive, prepare and plan for any of the issues that are associated with working in a challenging urban school (e.g., poverty, hunger, educational gaps and a lack of parental support, limited resources, and highly qualified teachers). Ideally, principals who employ situational leadership can empower effective communication teams to continue their methods and possibly utilize them to lead other struggling teacher teams. Additionally, effective principals would provide more individualized support to those teachers who are struggling through feedback and training. Successful leaders are knowledgeable about their subordinates' readiness level and provide the necessary level of support (Hughes et al., 1996). Participating principals indicated they provided various levels of supports to teachers, depending on their level of knowledge or experience.

The themes revealed that the teachers' lived experiences supported a culture of administrative supports, peer supports, open/transparent communication and professional growth and leadership opportunities, which aligned with the research literature. Because principals employed practices recommended by research, this suggests that the principals who participated in this study were knowledgeable about the literature on retention.

Although researchers have posited that teachers would prefer that principals define their roles as instructional leaders (Kraft et al., 2015) the principals who participated in this research study empowered teachers to define their roles for themselves, while embedding expectations. It was clear that participating principals had identified teachers as possible interviewees who demonstrated effective traits; they described the chosen teachers as those who were going to do whatever it took in order to ensure overall success for their team.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings in this study provide significant implications for educational policy aimed at retaining teachers in education. Based on a nationwide survey of public administrators, school board members listed teacher retention as their most severe issue and cited the rigorous expectations set forth in NCLB and a lack of support at the federal level as the surrounding issues-(Boaler, 2003; Bowler, 2003).

It was noted in this study that it is difficult to retain urban educators in challenging schools without the support of the school administrator. By examining effective teacher characteristics, administrators can create a supportive educational culture.

Educational organizations can keep teachers in urban high-poverty, low-performing classrooms if they make a concerted effort to meet or exceed teachers' needs. According to the lived experiences of the teacher participants in this study, retention will occur when teachers are supported, given meaningful and professional development and leadership opportunities through open/transparent communication. Although teacher retention remains a national issue, this study has identified attitudes and beliefs held by teachers and principals that, when supported, are hallmarks of teacher willingness to remain in teaching at high-poverty, low-performing schools.

Principals are a vital component in the success of a teacher's desire to become a teacher leader. Although the teacher survey return rate was low, there was enough interest from teachers and principals to consider increasing professional development

opportunities. The results of this research study highlight the need for on-going communication between educators and administrators.

Social cognitive and self-efficacy theories provide frameworks for analyses of the influences that prior emotional connections would have on the individual teacher's desire to remain at a low-performing, high-poverty urban school. Previously lived experiences could influence a teacher's consideration to not move to a different school. In other words, when a teacher has had a positive or negative experience, the teacher's emotional response can be rooted in that previous positive or negative experience regardless of the nature of the next experience. The social cognitive and self-efficacy theories helped the researcher in exploring teachers' beliefs and interactions within the educational environment. Teachers' responses in the present study were closely tied to social cognitive and self-efficacy theories. Teachers' passion and intrinsic motivation to remain at high-poverty, low-performing schools assisted the researcher to connect some of the research that related to self-efficacy. Principals can empower teachers who have high self-efficacy and are ready to move forward and lead staff in a supportive manner.

Principals who employ situational leadership supports can communicate about the various professional development needs. It has been suggested that professional development for teachers who are struggling in a specific area based on their individual needs should be targeted rather than implementing a "cookie-cutter" approach when leading staff through effective communication support strategies. Teachers who participated in this study demonstrated leadership attributes by providing support when needed and empowering their colleagues. Additionally, it would be advantageous for

teachers and principals to assess themselves and monitor their implementation of support and professional development. Teachers rarely have a choice in their received professional development. Allowing teachers to have a voice and choice can lead to an increase in retention of teachers. Specific examples of valuable professional development activities provided by teachers interviewed in this study were focused on the following topics: (a) having time to collaborate, review, and reflect on observable behavior management strategies; (b) curriculum and planning; (c) effective student and parent communication; (d) having opportunities to review, discuss and analyze student data; (e) engaging in peer and administrative collegial conversations (in and outside of school) to encourage a growth mind-set; (f) understanding the complexity of urban students/families and their environment; (g) diversity discussions; and (h) cultural competence.

Model principals develop a culture that is supportive by ensuring communication, and by making professional development a priority. When teachers witness their principals placing a high level of importance on communication, professional growth and leadership opportunities, they will as well. Therefore, the support process described by teachers appears to be a factor in implementing successful teacher retention strategies.

Recommendations for Further Research

This research study has added to the body of previous research focused on urban teacher retention in challenging schools by recording and analyzing the lived experiences of five urban teachers in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools. Additionally, the teacher and principal online surveys were used to further identify teacher needs as they

related to teacher retention. The following recommendations for future research address the areas of administrative support:

1. This study was limited to elementary school teachers and administrators. Examining the practices and lived experiences of secondary teachers rated as highly effective in high-poverty, low-performing schools would provide insight into additional practices and allow comparison of practices across primary and secondary school setting. High schools, middle schools and elementary school settings experience similar barriers in relation to retaining urban educators. Additional examinations of the perceptions of secondary urban principals and educators who received a rating of highly effective would provide insight into practices implemented in diverse and broader settings and allow for comparisons of findings.
2. The teachers in this study were selected by the participating principals based on the district's current evaluation rating system; all teachers were rated as highly effective. A future researcher may further study effective teachers by gathering teachers' and administrators' perceptions. By examining effective characteristics, administrators can retain effective urban educators who have a set of traits that have proven to be effective in urban settings.
3. Given the mixed survey results when teachers were asked about organizational academic needs and principal support for urban teacher retention, more research needs to be conducted to determine the extenuating circumstances that would result in teachers' consideration of remaining at an

urban school. Similarly, more research needs to be conducted on the support issues that did not overlap between teachers and principals and were related to the principals' perceptions of teacher needs.

4. Further research also needs to be conducted to learn more about the characteristics and underlying reasons influencing teachers to stay in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools. Because the majority of the teachers who participated in the survey and interviews identified their race as White, future research needs to focus on the beliefs and satisfaction of principals and teachers identified as Black, Hispanic, Asian or another race.

Summary

The findings in this study further validated literature surrounding administrative supports for implementing organizational procedures and retaining urban educators. The themes identified in this study (administrative supports, peer support, communication, and professional development) are facilitated, in great part, by building level administrators. Teachers in this study reinforced, through survey data and in interviews, that administrative supports were exceedingly important and that relationships with peers contributed to the quality of their school lives. All interviewed teachers were content with their roles as instructional leaders. They viewed themselves as responsible for the success of their students and therefore believed they were obligated to remain. The interviewed teachers shared their views, stating that if they were not to remain, "Who would?" Interviewed teachers had a positive attitude about the profession and enjoyed the rigor of working within challenging urban environments. This positive attitude appeared to

motivate the teachers to become even more effective and remain teaching in high-poverty, low-performing schools.

All of the participants spoke of the importance of communication and professional development that ensured staff participation and encouraged collaboration. The role principals play in how these themes are implemented in schools cannot be underestimated. This is true, to some extent, for all schools. It has, however, special meaning in high-poverty, low-performing schools where there are unique needs and teachers need to be supported and retained in order to maximize their contributions to the educational enterprise.

The results of this research study can be used to make informed decisions about meeting teachers' needs in hopes of improving retention within various school districts. Through the findings of this research, support from the current literature on urban teacher retention as it relates to teacher lived experiences, administrative supports, and the researcher's personal experience, I can see the impact that effective leadership and support practices can have on teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools. Dedicated teachers and administrators who are personally involved in providing support for urban teacher retention and demonstrate a high level of commitment. Lived experiences, cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational supports and administrative supports can influence the culture of an organization while ultimately retaining urban teachers and transforming the educational environment. Given the opportunity to develop and implement effective strategies to retain urban teachers, organizations must understand the vital role that principals/administrators play in making

decisions that support teacher retention. When considering how to support urban teachers, school districts must have resources available to assist in supporting each individual school, and the schools must implement the strategies necessary to support each individual teacher.

APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
FWA0000351, IRB0001138

To: **LaSonya Moore**

Date: **August 26, 2015**

Dear Researcher:

On 08/26/2015, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination
Project Title: Characteristics of Educators who are Successful in Urban
Challenging Schools
Investigator: LaSonya Moore
IRB Number: SBE-15-11537
Funding Agency:
Grant Title:
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. *When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.*

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Maratori".

Signature applied by Joanne Maratori on 08/26/2015 03:42:55 PM EDT

IRB manager

APPENDIX B
SCHOOL DISTRICT PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



November 12, 2015

LaSonya Moore
6421 22nd Avenue N.
St. Petersburg, FL 33710

Re: Proposal number S-03-1516

Dear LaSonya:

We are pleased to inform you that all required documentation has been received and reviewed. Your research titled, "Characteristics of Educators who are successful in Urban Challenging School" has been approved. Approval is based on the application submitted to this office for review.

Additionally, please notify the Assessment, Accountability and Research (AAR) office if any modifications are made to the study. Once the research is completed, forward a copy of the final research article to this office.

Best wishes for continued success.

Méjande Petit-Bois, Ph.D.
Executive Manager, Evaluation
Assessment, Accountability and Research
Pinellas County Schools

ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING
301 South 54th Street
P.O. Box 2112
Largo, FL 34697-2112
Tel: (727) 588-0000

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APPENDIX C
COMMUNICATIONS WITH TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL PARTICIPANTS

PRINCIPAL EMAIL INTRODUCTION AND PARTICIPATION REQUEST TO POTENTIAL RESEARCH SUBJECTS

Dear (School Principal)

I am a doctoral candidate enrolled in the College of Education and Human Performance, and a member of the National Urban Special Education Leadership Initiative at the University of Central Florida.

I am working on a dissertation titled: *Characteristics of Educators who are successful in Urban Challenging Schools*.

This research study will provide educational leaders insight to better understand the policies, practices and dispositional attributes that support teacher retention in low-performing, high-poverty urban schools.

The research will also examine principal perspectives in regards to organizational policies, practices and supports relating to teacher retention. Your school has been chosen based on specific requirements, which include:

1. High Poverty, poverty rating of 75% or higher
2. Low Performing, Lowest 300 (based on FCAT reading scores) within the district
3. 3 or more years with a school grade of D or F
4. Meets federal threshold for Title I eligibility (poverty rate of 75%)
5. More than 50% populated with students of color
6. More than 10% of the population with Students with Disabilities
- 7.

The purpose of this letter is to request your assistance in this study. I am requesting to send (via email) you and your teachers an anonymous survey. In addition you will be asked to select 5 teachers who demonstrate the following characteristics for the interview process:

1. Highly Effective Appraisal Rating
2. Demonstrate Leadership Characteristics
3. A minimum of 3 years teaching experience at current school
- 4.

I aim to find 3-5 teachers that meet the selection criteria. All teachers at your school will be asked to participate in the survey portion of the study. The selected teachers will be in this research study for approximately 1 to 2 hours over a two months period of time.

If you are able to assist me with the selection of prospective teachers, please contact me via email. If you have any questions regarding this research study, please feel free to contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX, or via email at _____.

Thank you in advance for your consideration to assist with this study.
Sincerely,

LaSonya Moore
Doctoral Candidate, University of Central Florida

INITIAL TEACHER SURVEY CONTACT

Dear Urban Educator,

My name is LaSonya Moore. I am a graduate student with the University of Central Florida conducting research at your school. The purpose of the study I am conducting is to explore the lived experiences of urban elementary school teachers in relation to organizational policies, processes and supports.

I have obtained permission from your principal to contact and invite you to participate in a brief survey that will include all teachers who are not currently teaching at your current school. Your participation in this survey will provide valuable information regarding the selection of co-teachers at your school. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and the information you provide will be kept confidential.

To complete the online survey, please go to the URL below. You will be provided with instructions on completing the brief survey.

Thank you in advance for participating in this important research study.

If you have any questions regarding the survey please contact LaSonya Moore at (727) 545-5055

Sincerely,

LaSonya Moore
Doctoral Candidate
University of Central Florida

Your Anonymous Survey URL Link:

INITIAL TEACHER INTERVIEW CONTACT

Dear Urban Educator,

I am writing to request your assistance for my research. I am a doctoral candidate with the University of Central Florida, working on an Urban Special Education Leadership degree. The purpose of my study is to identify the policies, practices and dispositional attributes that support teacher retention in low-performing, high-poverty urban schools, you have been chosen based on the requirements, which include:

- a. Urban school-based educator (classroom)
- b. Low-performing and high-poverty educational setting
- c. 3 to 5 years teaching experience at current school
- d. Rated as Highly Effective on the most recent *Teacher Evaluation System*

Should you agree to participate in the interview process, please email me with a preferred meeting date, time, and location.

If you have any questions regarding this research study or the interview, please feel free to contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

LaSonya Moore
Doctoral Candidate
University of Central Florida



EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH: TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Title of Project: Characteristics of Educators who are Successful in Urban Challenging Schools

Principal Investigator: LaSonya Moore

Faculty Supervisor: Suzanne Martin, PhD

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you.

- The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of urban elementary school teachers in relation to their beliefs and perceptions on urban teacher retention. The study will examine urban teacher retention as it relates to situational and administrative supports.
- You have been asked to take part in this research study because you are an elementary school teacher with three or more years at your current school, you were nominated by your principal as a *Highly Effective* educational leader. In addition to, experience leading urban classrooms for three or more years.
- Prior to the interview, the researcher will request permission to distribute an online survey to teachers and principals at your school.
- You will be asked to participate in a face-to-face, semi-structured interview. The interview is expected to take approximately one hour, and will be scheduled at your convenience at an agreed upon location. The principal investigator, LaSonya Moore, will conduct the interview using open-ended guiding questions.
- The interview will be audio recorded to ensure that your contributions are adequately captured. A summary of the interview will be shared with you at a later date to check for agreement and allow you to contribute additional information if needed. The interview will be kept confidential.
- You will be audio taped during this study. If you do not want to be audio taped, you will not be able to participate in the study. Discuss this with the researcher. If you are audio taped, the tape will be kept in a locked, safe place, along with the interview transcript, for a period of three years. After the three years the tape will be destroyed. The tape and transcript will be kept confidential.

You must be 18 years of age or older to be included in the research study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints: LaSonya Moore, Graduate Student, College of Education and Human Performance, (786) 294-2798 or Dr. Suzanne Martin, Faculty Supervisor, Department of Child, Family, and Community Sciences, by email at suzanne.martin@ucf.edu.

IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.

APPENDIX D
COMMUNICATIONS WITH EXPERT PANEL (DELPHI)

DELPHI PANEL INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Dear (Expert Panel Member Name),

I am a doctoral candidate with the National Urban Special Education Leadership Initiative at the University of Central Florida. I am writing to request your assistance by participating in a panel of experts in a Delphi technique.

I will be using a Delphi technique to develop a set of interview and survey questions for teachers and principal who have successfully retained teachers in low-performing, high-poverty urban schools. The purpose of this study is to determine organizational procedures, dispositional attributes and contextual factors that support teacher retention through the essence of the teachers lived experiences.

The Delphi method is a process to collect and gather judgments of experts using a series of questionnaires and analysis techniques combined with feedback. The expert panel will consist of 5 - 6 members (identities will be kept anonymous). Members of the panel of experts will participate in three rounds where they will be offering feedback on the types of questions I should include in the teacher and principal surveys as well as the teacher interview questions.

In the first phase the panel will receive the overarching research questions and a list of sample question for the study. The panel will be asked to provide feedback on the questions.

During the second phase, the panel will receive the results the first phase and a will be asked to rate questions on a rating scale that will be provided by the researcher. Panels will be reviewing question for relevance, importance, and validity.

In phase three, the panel will review the questions and ratings from phase two and will be asked to revise any of their ratings or provide rationale on their decisions.

I hope you are able to be a part of the expert panel. Your expertise is of great value to the study. Please respond to the email if you are willing and able to participate. Thank you.

Sincerely,
LaSonya Moore
Doctoral Candidate
University of Central Florida
_____@Knights.ucf.edu

REMINDER EMAIL: DELPHI

Dear (Expert Panel Member Name),

Please accept this email as a friendly reminder.

I am respectfully soliciting the benefit of your informed judgment as I enter the dissertation phase of my doctoral program. I hope you will kindly consent to provide your expertise and assistance.

My study will focus on teacher retention in low-performing, high poverty urban schools.

You are recognized as someone who is familiar with the phenomenon of urban teacher retention, and have been nominated based on one or more of the following characteristics:

- professional educator (professor, supervisor, and/or researcher)
- knowledgeable and practiced in the phenomenon of teacher retention
- vested interest in the topic of teacher retention in education
- highly credentialed expert in the field of education (M.Ed., Ed.S. Ed.D. or Ph.D.)
- principal, administrator/executive administrator, who may be interested in the findings of this study

Your participation will involve evaluating two, short sets of questions that will be used in the study:

- survey questions
- individual teacher interview questions

The process we will utilize for evaluating the questions in the protocols is an iterative process known as a Delphi Technique.

In the first round, or iteration, you will be sent sample questions electronically, and will be asked to review questions for errors in syntax, bias, ambiguity, vagueness, etc. Responses will be collected via electronic submission. First-round responses will be coded and analyzed, and ALL individual responses will remain confidential.

In the second round, the process will be repeated. Depending on the level of consensus, the number of rounds may range from two to three. The panel will receive the results of

the first phase and will be asked to rate questions on a rating scale provided by the research, Panels will be reviewing questions for relevance, importance and validity.

In phase three, the panel will review the questions and ratings from phase two and asked to revise any of their ratings or provide rationale on their decisions.

It is estimated that your investment of time in this entire process, from start to finish, should be 2 to 4 hours. It is expected that the entire process will take approximately 2-3 weeks, and when complete, you will receive a report of the results.

I hope you are able to be a part of the expert panel. Your expertise is of great value to they study.

Please let me know if you will be willing to participate. You may simply hit reply and type YES or NO.

Once I receive your affirmative reply, I will send a letter with further explanation of the study, the instruments, and instructions.

Please email or call me if you have any questions.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to improve teacher retention.

Sincerely,

LaSonya Moore
Doctoral Candidate
University of Central Florida
_____@Knights.ucf.edu
XXX-XXX-XXXX

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PARTICIPATION: DELPHI

Dear Members of the Delphi Committee,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the study: *Characteristics of Educators who are Successful in Urban Challenging Schools*. You are one of seven individuals being asked to help rate and improve the validity of the survey and interview questions.

You will receive approximately three to six separate mailings that focus on three central questions:

1. Are there specific cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational and administrative supports that contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?
2. What are the lived experiences that positively contribute to the development of an experienced, teacher's identity to remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?
3. Are there common themes between the experienced teachers' lived experiences and the administrators' lived experiences?

Once I receive all participants' responses it should take no more than 48 hours to return the results. By the third questionnaire I hope to reach consensus on interview questions that will be used for the study.

The below sample surveys are attached for your review and modification:

1. Teacher Survey Questions
2. Principal Survey Questions
3. Teacher Interview Questions

Your volunteer commitment will add to the body of research on teacher retention in urban challenging schools.

Again, thank you for agreeing to participate in the study.

Sincerely,
LaSonya Moore
Doctoral Candidate
University of Central Florida

@Knights.ucf.edu
XXX-XXX-XXXX

Teacher Interview Questions Delphi Technique Results

Teacher Interview Questions	Expert Panel Agreement
1. What is your highest education degree you have earned?	100%
2. How many total years have you taught in an urban school setting?	100%
3. How many years have you been teaching in general?	100%
4. How many years have you been a teacher at your current school?	100%
5. What leadership roles have you held within your current school?	100%
6. Did you attend an urban school (or one similar to your current school) as a student?	100%
7. How important is cultural competence in your current school?	80%
8. Define Cultural Competence	80%
9. What is your philosophy of teacher retention in urban schools?	100%
The following questions will address cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational and administrative supports	
10. In what way(s) would you say cultural competence relates to teacher retention in urban schools?	80%
11. In what way(s) would you say dispositional attributes relates to teacher retention in urban schools?	100%
12. In what ways would you say situational and administrative supports relate to teacher retention in urban schools?	100%
13. What supports can principals provide to retain teachers?	100%
14. What supports are currently provided to increase teacher retention?	100%
15. Why might it be important for teachers to be aware of the retention crisis?	100%
16. In what way(s) can the teacher /principal relationship be important for teacher retention?	100%
17. What supports do you feel are necessary but impossible to deliver to increase retention?	80%
18. How do you foster a culture of collaboration?	100%
19. What are some induction processes to supports new teachers?	100%
20. What does this process look like?	80%
21. What role does the teacher's attitude or personality play in the support process?	100%

22. How do you create a collegial atmosphere throughout your school?	100%
23. How are teacher leaders created?	100%
24. In what way(s) might administrative supports differ for General Education teachers versus Exceptional Student Education teachers?	100%

The following questions address lived experiences that contribute to teacher development

25. What are some experiences that might contribute to a teacher's willingness to remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban school?	100%
26. What role does retention play in improving teacher quality?	100%
27. What is the role of distributed leadership in teacher retention?	80%
28. How might you and your colleagues define support?	80%
29. How might you and your colleagues define empowerment?	100%
30. How might your two definitions above relate to teacher leadership?	80%
31. What practices have you implemented that improve teacher leadership and lead to retention?	80%
32. How would you describe the programs, policies and procedures that provide support to teachers?	80%
33. At the school level, what has been the most important thing you have done to impact the quality of teacher retention, as a teacher leader?	100%

The following questions address common themes between the teachers' lived experiences and the principals' experiences

34. Do you feel that teachers who work with high-poverty, low-performing Urban students suffer from occupational stress?	100%
35. If so, what are the causes of the occupational stress among teachers within high-poverty urban educational settings?	100%

APPENDIX E
TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Hello and thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is LaSonya Moore and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Central Florida. The purpose of this interview is to gain insight into your practices in respect to urban teacher retention.

This interview should take approximately an hour. Our discussion will be kept confidential.

I really appreciate that you have taken time out of your busy schedule to talk to me about your experiences regarding characteristics of urban educators that remain in low-performing, high-poverty urban schools.

This research study may help identify organizational procedures and support for a culture of increased teacher retention. Information from this interview will be combined with other data and used in my dissertation.

My questions will focus on your lived experiences as an urban elementary school teacher, concerning practices and support for teacher retention.

There is no right or wrong way to answer. Measures will be taken to ensure confidentiality. There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this interview.

With your permission, I will be audio recording the interview and taking notes to ensure that I don't miss anything. The interview will be transcribed, and a summary will be shared with you to check for agreement and allow you to contribute additional information if needed.

There is no compensation or direct benefit for participating in this research. You may decline to participate in this interview without any consequences. You may also choose not to respond to any question without explanation.

If you have any questions regarding participant's rights, you may contact the UCF-IRB Office. I will provide you with the contact information.

Do I have your permission to record the interview?

If the participant agrees, the researcher will turn on the audio recorder and continue as follows:

Again my name is LaSonya Moore. Today is _____, and I am speaking with _____ . This interview is being electronically recorded. Do I have your permission to record our conversation?

Do you have any questions before I begin our conversation

Interview Protocol

DATA	QUESTION(S)	PROMPT(S)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ice Breaker ❖ Personal and Professional Inquiry <p>(Demographics)</p>	Please tell me a bit about your educational and professional history leading up to the current school year.	Name Gender Undergraduate degree Graduate degree(s) Work experience Position on faculty Grade levels taught Certifications held
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Beliefs about how cultural differences play a role in the learning environment? <p>(Cultural) (Student Learning)</p>	How would you describe a supportive work environment?	Demographics Classroom diversity Classroom supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Perceptions about the achievement of students who come from (poverty) diverse socio-economic backgrounds <p>(Perceptions)</p>	How do you meet the needs of your teachers/peers and students who come from different backgrounds?	The difference between students of color (low socio-economic) achievement and their White peers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Experience using Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies with students of color and their White peers <p>(School Processes)</p>	<p>Could you describe your experience with strategies that pertain to teacher retention?</p> <p>How would those strategies differ from those used suburban, high performing, wealthy?</p>	<p>Strategies that have worked for urban students and students of color.</p> <p>Strategies that have not worked for urban students and students of color.</p>

Guiding Teacher Interview Questions

Research Question 1:

Are there cultural competencies, dispositional attributes, situational and administrative supports that contribute to teacher retention?

1. What is your philosophy of teacher retention as it relates to cultural competencies?
2. What is your philosophy as it relates to teacher retention and dispositional attributes (individual internal characteristics)?
3. What is your philosophy as it relates to situational and administrative supports?
4. What actions can principals take to retain teachers?
5. What supports are provided to increase teacher retention?
6. What supports do you feel are necessary but impossible to deliver to increase retention?
7. How do you foster a culture of collaboration?
8. Is there an induction process that supports new teachers?
9. How do you create a collegial atmosphere throughout your school?
10. How are teacher leaders created?

Research Question 2:

What are the lived experiences that contribute to the development of an individual teacher's identity to remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?

1. What experiences contribute to a teacher's willingness to remain at high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?
2. What role does retention play in improving teacher quality (both over the span of a single teacher's career and over time for a school faculty as a whole)?
3. What is the role of distributed leadership in teacher retention?
4. How might your teachers define support?
5. How might your teachers define empowerment?
 1. What might the above two definitions have to do with teacher leadership?
 2. What practices have you implemented that improves teacher leadership and leads to retention?
 3. How would you describe the programs, policies and procedures that provide support to teachers?
 4. At the school level, what has been the most important thing you have done to impact the quality of teacher retention, as a teacher leader?

Research Question 3:

Are there common themes between the teachers' lived experiences and the principals' experiences?

1. How can principals' best support teacher leadership in an effort to retain teachers in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools?
2. Do you feel that teachers who work with high-poverty, low-performing urban students suffer from occupational stress?
3. If so, what are the causes of the occupational stress among teachers within high-poverty urban educational settings?
4. If so, what do you do, as a principal, to reduce occupational stress among your teachers in an effort to retain them?
5. What types of supports are necessary to work in high-poverty, low-performing schools?
6. With regards to your induction process for new teachers, what does the data tell you about the retention rate, and how has this data informed your practices as a school based principal?
7. What experiences might teachers and principals face that support retention.
8. What experiences have been effective in retaining teachers?
9. Are there common themes among teacher and principal supports?
10. If so, what are those themes?

APPENDIX F
PERMISSION TO ADAPT INSTRUMENT

From: "Bernhardt, Vickie" <VBernhardt@csuchico.edu>
Subject: Re: Teacher Belief Survey Usage Request
Date: December 31, 2014 at 12:22:54 PM EST
To: LaSonya Moore <_____@Knights@ucf.edu>
Cc: "Schutz, Patsy" <pschutz@csuchico.edu>, "Geise, Brad" <BGeise@csuchico.edu>

Dear LaSonya,

Thank you for your interest in using the Education for the Future teacher questionnaire.

You may use the questionnaire, and make adjustments, with this caveat. You must show us how you have changed the questionnaire and use our suggestions on improving your questions.

Sincerely,

Victoria L. Bernhardt
Executive Director
Education for the Future
400 West First Street
Chico, CA 95929-0230
530-898-4482
Fax 4484
vbernhardt@csuchico.edu
<http://eff.csuchico.edu>

APPENDIX G
TEACHER SURVEY ITEMS

TEACHER SURVEY ITEMS

Survey Item #	Item	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither Disagree or Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
1	<p>I FEEL:</p> <p>Like I belong at this school.</p> <p>That the staff cares about me.</p> <p>That the learning can be fun at this school</p> <p>Recognized for good work</p> <p>Intrinsically rewarded for doing my job well.</p> <p>Clear about what my job is at this school.</p> <p>That others are clear about what my job is at this school.</p>					
2	<p>I WORK WITH PEOPLE WHO:</p> <p>Treat me with respect.</p> <p>Respect each other.</p> <p>Collaborate with each other to make learning consistent across grade levels.</p> <p>Are committed to continuous improvement.</p> <p>Provide one another feedback on their teaching.</p>					
3	<p>MY ADMINISTRATORS:</p> <p>Treat me with respect.</p> <p>Are effective instructional leaders.</p> <p>Communicate effectively.</p> <p>Support me in my work with students.</p> <p>Support shared decision-making.</p> <p>Allow me to be an effective instructional leader.</p> <p>Are effective in helping me reach our vision.</p> <p>Actively encourage staff to collaborate.</p>					

Survey Item #	Item	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither Disagree or Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
5	I LOVE: Working at this school. Seeing the results of my work with students. To teach.					
6	I BELIEVE: Every student can learn. The instructional program at this school is challenging. This school provides an atmosphere where every student can succeed. Quality work is expected of all students at this school. Quality work is expected of me. Quality work is expected of all the adults working at this school. The vision for this school is clear. The vision for this school is shared. We have an action plan in place, which will get us to our vision. This school has a good public image. It is important to communicate often with parents. I communicate with parents often about their child's progress. Student outcomes for my class(es) are clear to me. Student outcomes for my class(es) are clear to my students. Learning is fun in my classroom.					
7	I WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH: Students with learning disabilities. English language learners. Ethnically/racially diverse students. Students who live in poverty. Low-achieving students.					

Survey Item #	Item	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither Disagree or Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
8	MORALE IS HIGH ON THE PART OF: Teachers. Students. Support staff. Administrators.					

Note. Adapted from Education for the Future (Bernhardt, 2004).

APPENDIX H
PRINCIPAL SURVEY ITEMS

PRINCIPAL SURVEY ITEMS: CULTURAL COMPETENCIES

Item #	Item	Principal			
		P-1	P-2	P-3	P-4
23	There are positive interactions on my campus between teachers and administrators.				
24	There are positive interactions on my campus between administrators and students.				
27	School should set aside time to teach all urban educators how to relate to urban cultures (cultural proficiency).				
45	Teachers are offered support to ensure they are teaching the standards.				
46	I feel like I belong at this school.				
47	I believe my teachers work effectively with ethnically/diverse students.				
48	I believe my teachers work effectively with English language learners.				
49	I believe my teachers work effectively with low-achieving students.				
50	I believe my teachers work effectively with students who live in poverty.				
51	Teachers are offered support to ensure they are teaching the standards.				

**PRINCIPAL SURVEY ITEMS:
DISPOSITIONAL ATTRIBUTES, SITUATIONAL SUPPORTS,
AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORTS**

Item #	Item	Principal			
		P-1	P-2	P-3	P-4
	DISPOSITIONAL ATTRIBUTES:				
34	Willingness to participate in interview elaborating on urban principal experience Yes No Maybe				
	SITUATIONAL SUPPORTS				
10	Rank the organizational structures, programs, supports and policies you feel are most implemented on your campus(1=least, 6=greatest) Effective administrative support Effective administrative feedback Cooperative groups Mentoring and induction Collegial/collaborative communication Effective professional learning communities				
	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORTS				
11	Rank the organizational programs, supports, and policies you feel are most implemented on your campus (1=least, 11 = greatest) Principal support Assistant principal support Peer support Working conditions Salaries Teacher preparation Teacher certification Internal reward (such as student success) External rewards (such as awards and public/private recognition Program support Support/assistance with low-performing students				

Note. Adapted from Education for the Future Questionnaire (Bernhardt, 2004).

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