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The Perspective of School Personnel in a Georgia School District Concerning the Recruitment of Minority Teachers

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THE PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL IN A GEORGIA SCHOOL
DISTRICT CONCERNING THE RECRUITMENT OF MINORITY TEACHERS

by

SHYLA D. RIDLEY

(Under the Direction of Denise Weems)

ABSTRACT

Recruiting and attracting minorities into the teaching profession is difficult. Given the competitiveness of the current job market and the heavy emphasis on standardized testing for all teacher candidates, the difficulties of attracting quality minority teachers are becoming more challenging. The lack of a racially and culturally diverse teaching staff remains a major issue in education nationally and locally, especially since projections indicate that the representation of minority teachers is declining while the number of minority students is increasing. This need for more minority teachers is even more critical in urban public schools characterized by large percentages of minority students and rural hard-to-staff schools.

The purpose of the study was to identify effective recruitment strategies used to recruit minority teachers. The researcher utilized qualitative methodology for this study. The study was a single case study. The research examined recruitment initiatives used by a school district utilizing interview questions administered to a select population of school and district level personnel. The participants of the study were individuals who had the authority to speak about the recruitment and selection of minority teachers in their district that included the human resource director, a school board member, and the

principal of an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school from the same Georgia public school district. The results of the interviews were examined for the similarities and differences in the recruitment initiatives for minority teachers as perceived by the participants. The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher and the data organized, classified, and developed by themes.

Several themes emerged from these interviews. It is important to recruit minority teachers because they serve as positive role models. However, participants focused on hiring the most qualified candidate regardless of race/ethnicity. The second prevailing theme was that no specific policies are in place regarding the recruitment of ethnic and minority teachers. The third theme was that a computerized recruitment system seemed to be the most effective recruitment instrument. Other strategies used to recruit minority teachers in the district included word of mouth, job fairs, and participation in the TAPP program. Therefore, recommendations from this study included, the school district conduct a similar study to determine if all principals are aware of and are using the tools at their disposal for recruiting and retaining minority teachers, the school district solicit best practices each year from principals who have successfully recruited minority teachers, the human resource department publishes an annual report on the school district website that depicts hiring patterns of each school in the district, and the human resource department provide annual reports to members of the board of education with the number of teachers and students in each school by racial and ethnic backgrounds.

INDEX WORDS: African American, Hispanic or Latino, Highly Qualified, and Racial/Ethnic group.

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Electronic Version Approved:
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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my mother, father, and siblings. To my mother, Mrs. Mary Jane Ridley, a very courageous, hard working, and loving woman, because of your inner strength, I am who I am today. To my father, Mr. Charlie Elmer Ridley, you are a man of few words but have a heart fit for a king. To my sisters and brothers, Shelia, Selenthya, Sharika, Elisa, Stanley, and Edmond, your encouragement and faith in me has sustained me. You're always in my heart because I think the world of you. To my aunts, Rosa and Ella, the both of you have also been like a mom to me. I thank you for your many prayers and words of encouragement. I pray that God continue to shine upon your lives. Finally, to my dear friend James, thank you for all your encouragement and support.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Recruiting minority teachers is a major concern in the United States. Over the last 15 years, the number of minority students entering public K-12 schools has increased drastically; but, the number of minority teachers entering the teaching profession has not kept pace with the growing trend (Howard, 2006). Nearly four out of every 10 students is a minority; but, more than half of the teaching profession is White (National Education Association, 2003). Because of this growing trend, school districts across the nation are desperately trying to hire and retain enough teachers to meet the needs of the diverse student population (Chiaka, 2004). In 2003-2004, the National Center for Education Statistics found that 84% of elementary and secondary teachers in public schools were White, 7% were African American, 6% Hispanic, and less than 3% were from other minority groups (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

The shrinking African American male teacher population is another often overlooked dimension. Male teachers make up 21% of the nation's teachers. African American and Hispanic male teachers make up approximately 14% of the male teaching population (Johnson, 2007). In 2003, the National Education Association reported that men make up only 9% of America's elementary school teachers and 35% of secondary school teachers, which is at its lowest in 40 years. The lack of African American male teachers is highlighted by Okezie (2003) in his description of the current trends of African American teachers missing from the nation's teaching force. Margrove College, an independent, Catholic, liberal arts college in Detroit, has established an African

American Male Initiative program known as the Margrove “Griots.” The program aims to train Black Males from diverse backgrounds to become teachers serving the students of metropolitan Detroit and beyond. The first three groups of Griots have already graduated and are certified and working in k-12 urban schools in Detroit.

Beyond the general shortage of minority and male teachers, there are specific priorities that must be considered when attracting, recruiting, and placing teachers. These priorities include high-need subject areas and hard-to-staff schools, particularly those located in urban and rural school districts (Education Commission of the State, 2002). One quarter of the nation’s children attend these schools (Beeson, 2001). In rural or small town schools, it is difficult to recruit highly qualified minority teachers. To recruit teachers for rural schools, administrators must target candidates with rural backgrounds or with personal characteristics or educational experiences that would encourage them to live in rural areas (Collins, 1999). In addition, school systems are also faced with meeting the Highly Qualified Teacher challenge mandated by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The NCLB Act of 2001 raises the stakes for recruiting and retaining Highly Qualified Teachers and presents unique challenges for rural school administrations (McClure, 2003).

Additional information from the report Meeting the Highly Qualified Teachers Challenge points out that “schools of education and formal teacher training programs are failing to produce the types of highly qualified teachers that the No Child Left Behind Act demands” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. viii). In addition to solving the problem of attracting and retaining teachers, school districts must now

contend with a federal mandate that all core academic subject area teachers be highly qualified by 2005-2006. To meet this challenge, experts suggested that states and universities consider transforming their preparation and certification systems to attract potential teachers from a variety of fields.

Congress' definition of "highly qualified" teachers focuses on teacher preparation in content knowledge rather than "pedagogy or teaching practicum" (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p.6). The report maintains that the current certification works against the recruitment of teachers who possess high content knowledge and verbal skills. Many states require an excessive number of education courses to earn certification.

Note the following examples from the U.S. Department of Education (2002):

1. Arizona – Teachers are required to complete 45 hours of education courses in addition to practice teaching for eight weeks,
2. Indiana – Initial high school and middle school teaching certificates require teachers to earn 64 semester hours in education courses, "40 hours of general education course work and 24 hours of professional educational and electives – over and above the other requirements for graduation, such as subject matter concentration" (p. 31).
3. New Jersey – Teachers must complete 200 hours of course in pedagogy, in addition to a subject area major.

To increase the pool of teachers, most states have developed and implemented alternative routes to certification. In comparison to traditional teacher preparation programs that colleges of education offer, the alternative route is a streamlined, fast

track method of training qualified candidates. Alternatively certified candidates who accept teaching positions are still required to pass the same certification tests as traditionally certified candidates; however, they are not required to take education foundation course or engage in practice teaching. These programs reduce barriers and enlarge the pool of potential teachers.

Contributions of Minority Teachers

Minority teachers make many contributions to students in public education. All students in racially diverse classrooms benefit from having minority teachers. Integrated education can have positive long-term benefits such as higher test scores on achievement tests. Dee (2001) analyzed achievement test scores from Tennessee's Project Start, an experiment designed to explore the relationship between class size and achievement. He found that having a teacher of the same race resulted in significant achievement gains in both Black and White students when taught by teachers with similar ethnic backgrounds.

Milner (2003) demonstrated this concept in a case study of how African American female teachers utilized what she called "cultural comprehensive knowledge" (pg. 175). This cultural comprehensive knowledge is composed of a person's cultural and gender understanding of his/her experiences and how that understanding alters his/her world views. Reflection about this knowledge, in turn, influences minority teachers' instructional planning and decision making. Talbert-Johnson (2001) agreed that the increasing number of ethnically diverse students in public schools requires an increased presence of minority teachers who are able to communicate with them within the context of their cultures and native languages. According to Quijano and Rios

(2000), there is nothing about being a member of a minority group that guarantees effectiveness in teaching. It is believed that the experiences minority teachers bring will help them to be empathetic toward and skilled in crossing cultural and linguistic boundaries in school contexts.

Another characteristic that distinguishes minority teachers and enhances their practice and effectiveness is their knowledge of the community. Monzo and Rueda (2000) studied Latino paraprofessionals and found that they help expand students' comprehension of the world in the communities where they work. Latino paraprofessionals were able to build relationships with Latino students and their families because they spoke the students' same language and were able to show empathy and support for the students. McAllister and Irvine (2002) believed that more needed to be known about the kinds of cultural knowledge; so, he suggested that case studies and content analyses of minority teachers' personal narratives be used to help identify the following: 1) styles of communication between adults and children; 2) standards of behavior as individuals or in groups; 3) valued cultural knowledge; 4) knowledge of children's communities; 5) goals for children's learning; and, 6) the forms and content of emphatic behaviors. These findings would yield new hypotheses about the characteristics of minority teachers' instructional planning, styles of interaction, classroom management skills, and effective instructional practices.

In addition, minority teachers tend to express higher expectations of minority students, do not misdiagnose special education students as frequently, and have fewer minority student disciplinary incidents. Expectations play a significant role in insisting that all students learn to a higher standard, which reflects a need for quality teaching. It

also means ending the common prejudice that a deficiency exists in minority students' backgrounds (National Collaborative, 2004). The assumption that minority students don't care is often another misconception of both White and minority teachers. They conveniently attribute a student's struggles to the student's family and community, overlooking the school's structure and teachers' practices. Communications breakdown may heighten a teacher's stereotypical beliefs regarding minority students. The views in the classroom often shared by White teachers mirror the prejudice that is often found in dominant cultures. Views of minority and poor students' culture often results in harm to minority students (Meltzer & Hamann, 2005).

To have culturally diverse and receptive schools for every child, there must be more minority teachers in every school. This will change the working and learning environment in the school. All students and teachers, regardless of race or ethnicity, need exposure to people and leaders of various cultural backgrounds in order to enhance their understanding of the world. Recruiting and hiring minority teachers is a way to expose all students to different cultures in a global society (Vail, 2001).

Multicultural education usually focuses on the relevance of the world and its culture to learning; but, this connection is usually not made for students in the ways schools currently operate. "It is important for all students that schooling becomes linked with their worlds and experiences in significant ways. For students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, this often does not occur, and the overt consequences can be tragic, including high absenteeism, poor performance on standardized testing, failing grades, and high dropout rates. Most important, students are denied an opportunity to learn" (Meltzer & Hamann, 2005, p.32). Astonishingly, it is

possible for a student to complete 12 years of public education without coming into contact with a minority teacher, denying the child successful minority role models and suggesting that teaching is off limits to minorities. Students from culturally diverse backgrounds often experience a false sense of self because they must function in an environment that is organized around the values of the dominant culture (Yeh & Drost, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

The problem of recruiting qualified minority teacher candidates is particularly difficult at the present time. The lack of a racially and culturally diverse teaching staff remains a major issue in education nationally and locally, especially since projections indicate that the representation of minority teachers is declining while the number of minority students is increasing. Accordingly, school districts are aggressively searching for ways to increase the minority teacher population, especially in urban and rural school districts.

Many studies of the factors influencing the recruitment of minority teachers have been conducted. Even though urban and rural teacher recruitment has drawn attention from government agencies, more research is needed to examine factors that affect the decisions of minorities to enter the teaching profession. Unless more attention is given to this topic, rural and urban school districts will continue to be unsuccessful in recruiting a diversified teaching workforce. Without more current research, districts may continue to be ineffective in their minority teacher recruitment efforts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine practices and policies used to recruit minority teachers in one suburban metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia, area. The research focused on the recruitment policies, practices, and recruitment strategies used to recruit minority teachers and how the plans were implemented.

Research Questions

The overarching question that guided this research study was as follows:

How does a public school district located in a suburb of metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia ensure that the diversity of the student population is reflected in the teacher population?

The following are the two sub-questions that guided the study:

(a) How does a public school district located in a suburb of metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia, determine if there is a need for minority teachers in the district/school?

(b) How does a public school district located in a suburb of metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia, recruit minority teachers in the district/school?

Significance of the Study

This study is of particular importance because of the critical role minority teachers play in molding the lives of young minority students. It is also important because minority teachers can help their non-minority colleagues have a better perspective on racial and cultural issues that significantly impact education. Recruiting minority teachers is vitally important to all students. Hiring more minority teachers may help reduce the feelings of alienation and dislike of school that minority students often experience. Furthermore, increasing the minority representation on teaching staffs may

help improve the cultural awareness of all children, as well as improve the perceived status of minority professionals in the schools.

Due to the growing teacher demand, changing student demographics, and more ambitious school improvement goals, the United States needs more thoughtful, sustained, and systemic approaches to teacher recruitment, development, and support (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1999). Therefore, this study examined the existing research in order to increase the body of knowledge as it relates to minority recruitment practices.

This study, although exploratory in nature, provides qualitative data that may be useful to central office administrators, board of education members, school principals, teachers, legislators, and others concerned about the recruitment of minority teachers. This study holds implications for school districts and policy makers throughout the state of Georgia and the nation.

Methodology

The researcher utilized qualitative methodology for this study. This study was a single case study because only one school district participated in the study. A case study is one of several ways of completing social science research. Case studies are the preferred strategy when how or why questions are being asked, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon with some real life context. Interview questions developed by the researcher were used to gather participants' perspectives on the recruitment of minority teachers in their school district. The sample of participants was appropriate for this study because it represented a manageable number of participants. Having a small sample allowed the

researcher to complete the study in a timely manner.

Structured and open-ended interviews were utilized to conduct the study. Interviewing is a common means of collecting qualitative data (Merriam, 2002). The most common form of interviewing is a person-to-person encounter in which one person elicits information from another. The majority of the interviews were guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored. In depth interviews permit the researcher to get closer to the respondents' perspectives (Denzil & Lincoln, 2000).

According to Patton (1990) interviews allow the researcher to obtain data through the use of open ended questions. In addition to specific open-ended questions, follow up questions may be asked to help clarify responses. Interviews also permit the researcher to gather data that cannot be simply obtained from observation (Gay & Airasian, 2000). Interviews allow the researcher to gather information about the participant's thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, and feelings about the topic under consideration. The responses that the participants gave were tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), entire and partial audio tapes can be transcribed and field notes derived as the researcher listens to recorded interviews. This is dependent on what specific data the researcher is seeking.

Participant Selection

After viewing the data from the 2007-2008 Georgia Public Education Report Card, disparity was noted in the ratio of minority teachers to minority students in Public School A. Analysis of the report card data revealed that during this time the White student population totaled 48% compared to 81% White teachers; Black students totaled 36%, as compared to 17% Black teachers; the Hispanic student population totaled 4%,

as compared to 1% Hispanic teachers; and Asian students totaled 2%, as compared to 0.5% Asian teachers. Based on this information Public School A was selected for this study. The participants of the study were individuals who had the authority to speak about the recruitment and selection of minority teachers in their district that included the human resource director, a school board member, and the principal of an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school from the same Georgia public school district.

Data Collection

The instrumentation for the research study was interview questions developed by the researcher. The researcher interviewed the human resource director, a school board member, and the principal of an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school from the same Georgia public school district. The interview questions were given to the participants in advance. There were a total of 10 questions or statements that required the participants to give precise responses related to hiring minority teachers in their school district.

The interview questions developed by the researcher sought to collect data that reflects participants' perceptions of the practices used to recruit minority teachers in their school district. The interview questions were developed during August 2008. The window for interviewing and transcribing the data was September 2008. After the researcher transcribed all data, the researcher analyzed the findings and presented them in summary form.

Data Analysis

Data was collected in naturalistic settings such as board offices and school buildings after, during, and before working hours. The methods utilized in this study

included confirmation and collaboration with participants (Bogdan & Bilken, 2003). The data was organized by emergent themes into taxonomies and categories.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms apply.

African American – A person with origins in any of the black racial groups in Africa. Terms such “Haitian” or “Negro” can be used in addition to “Black or African American” (U. S. Department of Education, NCES, 2002).

Highly qualified teachers – a teacher who has obtained full state teacher certification or has passed the state teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the state; holds a minimum of a bachelor's degree; and has demonstrated subject area competence in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Hispanic or Latino – A person who is of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The term "Spanish origin" can be used in addition to "Hispanic or Latino" (U. S. Department of Education, NCES, 2002).

Racial/ethnic group – Classification indicating general racial or ethnic heritage based on self identification, as in data collected by the U. S. Bureau of the Census or on observer identification, as in data collected by the Office for Civil Rights (U. S. Department of Education, NCES, 2003a).

Delimitations

This study examines the recruitment practices and plans of one selected school district in Georgia. This study is delimited to the recruitment practices targeted to attract teacher candidates from minority groups. This study is delimited to the reported perceptions of the participants in the school district.

Limitations

The limitation of this study is that a case study may not be generalized to all public schools. The researcher creating the survey adds to limitations because of the lack of reliability and validity. In addition, the interpretation of verbal and non-verbal communication presented during the interviewing process can prove to be a limitation. The ability of the participant to respond accurately to the interview questions may possibly skew the results.

Chapter Summary

The goal of minority teacher recruitment is to ensure that school staff reflects the population of the student body and to provide positive role models for minority students. The most common recruitment challenge is hiring highly qualified teachers. Therefore, it is important to identify effective strategies used to recruit minority teachers.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature related to minority teacher recruitment in public schools. The chapter describes the review of literature on the philosophical consideration, the historical perspective, the minority teacher shortage, the teacher pipeline, barriers to minority teacher recruitment and local, state and federal recruitment strategies.

Philosophical Considerations

Recent literature on African American teachers has focused on teaching philosophies directed at empowering minority students to achieve academically (Foster, 1999). Ladson-Billings (2005) reported that academic success and resilience among African American students at risk of academic failure could be attributed to those African American teachers who took an interest in them and provided moral support. On this same note, African American teachers hold a philosophy which seeks to achieve pride, equity, power, wealth, and cultural unity among African American students. African American teachers accomplish this goal by going beyond the subject matter. They inspire African American students to value personal achievement as well as the importance of academic achievement rather than failure (Foster, 1999).

Minority teachers deliberately help minority students make the connection between what they know and experience in a structured, supportive, nurturing, family-like environment (Ladson-Billings, 2005). In short, minority teachers are needed so that all students can see that teachers of color exist, and because they can offer perspectives

those minority students can relate to (Brown, 2000). African American teachers often play a more important role than teacher and role model in the lives of minority students. They frequently assume the roles of surrogate parents, disciplinarians, and counselors (Brown, 2000). Teachers with racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds similar to their students have a positive impact on student achievement. Research with the National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (2004) found that minority students perform better academically, personally, and socially when taught by teachers from their own ethnic groups. In addition, a study conducted by Clewell, Puma, and McKay (2001) showed that for Hispanic and African American students (particularly for Hispanic), having a teacher of the same race or ethnicity resulted in increased test scores in reading and mathematics.

Historical Perspective

Prior to the Supreme Court's decision in the Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, approximately 82,000 African Americans were teachers (Hawkins, 1994). They were responsible for educating more than two million minority students. Between the years 1954 and 1965, after the Brown vs. Board of Education decision was handed down, more than 38,000 African American teachers and administrators lost their jobs (Tillman, 2004). From 1975 to 1985, the number of African American students majoring in education declined 66%. From 1984 to 1989, due to new teacher certification programs and admission requirements, another 38,000 teacher candidates lost their jobs. Of those 38,000 teachers, approximately 22,000 were African American teachers. In addition, students majoring in education continued to decrease to 62.2 % between 1988 and 1998. In 1997, White female teachers made up the vast majority of

the teachers in public schools and teacher preparation programs (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1999). By 2000, only 5% of the nation's teaching force was comprised of minorities. Ironically, the shrinking African American teacher pool is partly a fall out of how the Brown vs. Board of Education decision was implemented by White American policy makers.

When African American teachers were offered employment in the newly integrated schools, the African American students were sent to White schools but were placed in classrooms taught by African American teachers because African American teachers were believed to be inferior to White teachers (Foster, 1999). Torres, Santos, Peck, and Cortes (2004) explained the reason for the disproportionate displacement of African American teachers during this time as the belief that African American teachers were not qualified to teach their students. School officials reacted to this prejudice by removing African American teachers and administrators from positions of authority.

While African American students were transferred sparingly into majority White schools, African American teachers were transferred with far less frequency. No provisions were made to integrate school faculties, administrations, and staff. Instead, African American teachers and administrators were either fired or demoted, and the schools hired White teachers and administrators to deal with the increase in student population (Fultz, 2004). According to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) (1999), historically, White teachers have comprised 70% of the public school teaching population. In the 21st century, African American students make up 20% of the total student enrollment, while African American teachers make up 8% of the teaching force nationwide (Kunjufu, 2002).

Teacher Shortage

School systems across the nation are struggling to find and keep highly qualified teachers in the classroom (Thomas, 2002). The increase in student enrollment as well as state policies focused on reducing class size has contributed to the challenge of staffing schools (The Teaching Commission, 2004). It has been estimated that two million new teachers will be needed over the next decade to deal with these changes in America's public educational system (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). To further complicate things, statistics also suggest that nearly half of the teaching population will leave the profession within their first three to five years of teaching (Ingersoll, 2001). According to Ingersoll, 16 percent of teachers leave their current positions annually, and teachers in high-poverty areas leave twice as often as their colleagues who work in low-poverty schools.

Rising student enrollment levels and the possibility of a wave of teachers retiring has led some to fear that a teacher shortage is looming. More than one-quarter of teachers are at least 50 years old, and nearly half will retire over the next decade (Smith & Ingersoll, 2003). At the same time, student enrollment levels are increasing in most states, and some states, such as California, Nevada, and New Mexico, are projected to have double-digit enrollment increases in the next ten years (Hirsch, Koppich, & Knapp, 2001). Although the number of prospective teachers enrolled in teacher-preparation programs exceeds the number of teacher vacancies, many prospective teachers do not actually enter the teaching profession. Approximately 60 percent of those prepared to teach actually enter the profession (Hirsch, Koppich, & Knapp, 2001).

It is unclear whether increased student enrollment, attrition, and teacher retirement factors have led to an overall teacher shortage. Nevertheless, shortages exist now in certain subject areas and geographical locations. These staffing needs are generally most pressing in the nation's high-poverty and rural schools (Archer, 2002). Fewer teachers are available in subjects such as special education, bilingual education, mathematics, and science, and not enough teachers are willing to work in schools that are under-funded or in rundown or isolated areas ((Olson, 2000). In addition to geographical and subject-matter shortages, schools also face a shortage of minority teachers. Ethnic teachers currently represent about five percent of U.S. public school teachers. Meanwhile, ethnic students constitute 40 percent of the total student body in the United States, and this proportion is expected to increase significantly (Jorgenson, 2001). As our student population becomes more diverse, the teacher population is becoming less so, and in order to reverse the serious decline in the number of teachers of color, educational leaders must understand the complex roots of the problem and find solutions to it (Futrell, 1999).

Mitchell, Scott, and Corvig (2000) identified attrition, not lack of interest, as the reason for the shortage of African American, Native American, Hispanic, and Asian American teachers. These groups tend to drop out of the education system before getting to or through the teacher pipeline. The interest expressed by minority students in social professions such as teaching indicates that recruiting minority students is not just a matter of increasing general interest in the profession. Rather, the challenge lies in preparing a wider pool of well prepared minority students who can be recruited into a long-term career in teaching. If more minorities were successfully completing high

school and college, the problem of under-representation would be of less concern (Vegas, Murname, & Willet, 2001). In the meantime, the insufficient supply of minority candidates means that teaching will continue to compete with other professions for qualified minority graduates.

Other reasons for teacher shortages may include cumbersome hiring practices, redundant requirements for qualified and credentialed teachers from other states, late budget decisions, and teacher transfer provisions. A lack of pension portability across states and a loss of salary credit for teachers who move also contribute to the shortage of highly qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2001). States are addressing some of these concerns by creating uniform hiring and application processes statewide and establishing centralized state education employment databases on the Internet (Hirsch, Koppich, & Knapp, 2001).

Jorgenson (2001) associates this shortage, in part, with educational inequities in today's schools. He argues that underprivileged and minority students who attend the nation's most impoverished schools are not prepared to aspire to teaching careers and have little incentive to return to the schools they attended. To attract more minority candidates to the profession, Jorgenson suggests that districts

1. make the recruitment of minority teachers a top priority,
2. look for nontraditional sources of teacher recruitment,
3. speed up processing of application materials of ethnic applicants,
4. offer hiring bonuses for ethnic candidates,
5. design a paraprofessional-to-teacher program,
6. learn how ethnically diverse employees see the district, and

7. provide a support network for educators of color.

The Teacher Pipeline

Before becoming a teacher, there are certain steps an individual must complete. Mitchell, Scott, and Covrig (2000) reviewed the theory and nature of the teacher labor market as part of a comprehensive process of conceptualizing the work of teaching and of how to build an effective pipeline for preparing minority teachers to fill the growing need. They also looked at developing proposals for policy and programmatic strategies to increase the cultural diversity of the teaching workforce. Vegas, Murname, and Willett (2001) created a model for a conceptual teacher pipeline in order to assess the impact of race, ethnicity, and academic ability at each juncture of the teacher pipeline. Vegas et al. (2001) identified the following benchmarks a person must reach before becoming a teacher: (a) high school graduation, (b) entry into an institution of higher education, (c) attainment of a Bachelor of Arts degree, and (d) entry into teaching.

Mitchell et al. (2001) documented how attrition in the potential pool of minority teachers starts in the high schools. Vegas et al. (2001) focused on a later part of the process. This reality was supported in their findings which revealed that once students graduated from college, Native Americans, Hispanics, and African Americans had the highest percentages of leaving the teaching profession. In fact, Mitchell et al. found that the drastic decrease in the number of minority teachers could not be attributed simply to the social movements of the 1960s and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which opened other occupational fields to minorities; it also could be attributed to the inability of minorities to make it through the teacher pipeline.

Barriers to Minority Teacher Recruitment

Recruiting minority teachers is not just a matter of social interest in the profession. The challenge to recruit minority teachers lies in preparing a broader range of well prepared minority students who can be recruited into the profession and keeping them throughout their careers. If more minorities successfully completed high school and college, then the problem of under-representation of minority teachers would be of less concern (Vegas, Murname, and Willett, 2001). Most minority students are attracted to the teaching profession because of the inequalities they experienced in the educational system. They entered the teaching profession with the intent of correcting the existing inequalities in the system. In a case study of Asian American, African American, and Hispanic teacher candidates enrolled in a one-year MAT program, minority teacher candidates expressed concerns for the poor and minority children and what they could do for them as teachers. The responses of the minority candidates reflected how their personal experiences affected their perspectives as teachers (Milner & Hoy, 2003).

African American teachers often entered teaching for the socio-psychological benefits and intrinsic reasons. However, the number of minority teachers entering the profession today has decreased. Several reasons help to explain this decrease and subsequent shortage of minority teachers. Most barriers are related to recruitment. First, other disciplines aggressively recruit minority students. The demand for talented people in private industry is great in fields with chronic teacher shortages, such as math and the physical sciences (Claycomb & Hawley, 2000). Minority students entering college are attracted to business, science, or math degrees that can lead to more lucrative jobs in the

future. “According to Williams, prestigious professions meant lucrative careers like medicine, engineering, and computer science...They [Williams’ school teachers] believe that a young African American girl who was good in science and math shouldn’t waste her time teaching” (Torres, Santos, Peck, & Cortes, 2004, pg.31).

A second recruitment factor is that fewer minority students go to college and graduate from college than their White counterparts. African American and Hispanics are less likely than Whites to attend college. Total minority enrollment at the nation’s colleges and universities rose by 50.7 percent to 4.7 million students between 1993 and 2003, according to the *Minorities in Higher Education Twenty-second Annual Status Report* (2006) released by the American Council on Education (ACE). Students of color made up 27.8 percent of the nearly 17 million students on America’s college campuses, up from 21.8 percent in 1993. Although students of color have made significant gains in college enrollment, African American and Hispanic students still lag behind their White peers in the rate at which they enroll in college. In 2002-04, 47.3 percent of White high school graduates ages 18 to 24 attended college compared with 41.1 percent of African Americans and 35.2 percent of Hispanics. The number of minority pre-service students graduating from colleges and universities is approximately 14% of the total number of students who graduated in 2000 (U.S. Census, 2005). Only 63 percent of full-time students at four-year colleges graduate within six years. Graduation rates are especially low for minority students and those from low-income families. Only 46 percent of Black students, 47 percent of Hispanic students, and 54 percent of low-income students graduate within six years (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

A third recruitment barrier is the low salary offered by many school districts.

The average salary for beginning teachers in 2004-2005 was \$31,753 (American Federation of Teachers [AFT], 2007). In 2004 – 2005, Georgia ranked 18th in the nation for teacher pay. The average teacher salary in Georgia for the 2004-2005 school year was \$46,437. The national average for teachers' salaries in 2004-2005 was \$47,602 a year. Between 2003 and 2005, the buying power of the average teacher's salary decreased by almost \$800 (AFT, 2007).

In accordance with the American Federation of Teachers (2007), to make teacher pay competitive with the pay of other professions by the end of the decade, teachers need a 30% pay increase. Teachers continue to lose ground when their pay is compared with the pay of America's workforce as a whole. For the first time since 1982, teacher salaries are less than the average earnings of government workers, making teachers one of the lowest paid public employees. According to the 2005 Salary Survey, Connecticut had the highest average teacher salary, at \$57,760, while South Dakota posted the lowest, at \$34, 039.

A fourth recruitment barrier is that education depends heavily on tests for screening, evaluation, and hiring decisions (Gordon, 2000). Testing is a barrier for minority teachers. Minority teacher candidates face many challenges when it comes to competency testing. Most states have created policies that require potential teachers to take tests throughout the pipeline, beginning in some states with elementary, middle, and high school.

Minority students tend not to perform well on standardized tests; therefore, they are screened out of teaching. One way Georgia screens teachers is with the PRAXIS exams. The PRAXIS Series assessments provide educational tests and other services

that states use as part of their teacher licensure and certification process.

The Educational Testing Service developed the PRAXIS I and II competency test for teachers. A policy report was generated by the Institute for Higher Education Policy describing the Professional Assessment for Beginning Teachers (PRAXIS) series. The PRAXIS is the most commonly administered test given by the majority of states to determine teacher competency. There are three PRAXIS tests that determine the careers of aspiring teachers:

1. PRAXIS I measures basic reading, writing, and mathematical skills and screens students for entrance into teacher training courses.
2. PRAXIS II is usually taken at the end of college and measures knowledge of content areas such as math, science, history, and English.
3. PRAXIS III assesses first-year classroom pedagogy and theories currently being tested across the country.

The PRAXIS failure rate was particularly high among minority college students who attended high-poverty rural and urban secondary schools in the South (National Education Association, 2003). In 2006, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) initiated the development of the Georgia Assessment for the Certification of Educators (GACE), a new program used to assess the knowledge and skills of individuals seeking certification in Georgia public schools.

In response to a request to raise the cutoff scores of teaching and licensure examinations, Memory, Coleman, and Watkins (2003) examined scores on the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) given in Massachusetts. They concluded that increasing

the cutoff scores by one point for teacher certification severely reduced the size of the pool of qualified African Americans.

The Examination for the Certification of Education in Texas (ExCET) was studied by Justice and Hardy (2001) to determine the effects of performance-based testing on minority candidates. They studied the factors that led to success or failure on the test. They found that grade point average was a statistically significant but weak predictor of success and that test-taking skills and practice sessions led to positive outcomes. Clewell, Puma, and McKay (2001) found that minority students had many needs and concerns regarding teacher testing. Concerns included the following:

1. The representative samples were not standardized.
2. The tests assume that all test takers have the same experiences.
3. Tests were not a good indicator of success in the classroom.
4. Tests frequently were culturally and linguistically biased.
5. Times limits created the pressures of competition.
6. Some examiners had attitudes and appeared to be biased towards different races.

Lemberger (2001) conducted a case study on the effects of raising certification standards on three experienced teachers in New York State who were not native English speakers. Lemberger pointed out that the test created demands that put minority language teachers, who otherwise had excellent teaching records, at a disadvantage. After reviewing research on competency testing for teachers, it is safe to say that colleges and universities need to do a better job preparing minority teacher candidates for content area and teaching and learning pedagogy assessments.

Fifth, it is important to have cultural and social groups in the teacher preparation programs in the community in which minority teachers teach. Fenwick (2001) believes that the lack of support groups usually deters minority teachers from applying in certain districts. Community contacts can be helpful in identifying minority candidates. Contacts may help by linking schools with minority networks such as church groups, fraternities, and sororities on campuses, and alumni in the communities. Recruiting New Teachers, as cited in Haselkorn (2000), also recommends seeking out minority interns from neighboring teacher education programs and sending a multi-ethnic team to attend career days at predominantly minority colleges.

A sixth recruitment barrier is working conditions. Everyone likes to feel appreciated, respected, and safe while working on their jobs. Some teachers do not have these luxuries, particularly in urban schools. Minority teachers who work in urban schools contend with poor working conditions such as crowded classrooms, lack of resources, high numbers of discipline problems, and students' lack of respect for teachers. All of these elements discourage minority and White teachers alike from entering and staying in the profession (Fenwick, 2001).

Several factors are unique to minority teachers' satisfaction with teaching. Because minority teachers are more likely to work in urban schools where behavior problems tend to be more frequent and resources scarcer, they are usually less satisfied than their White counterparts (Shen, Wegenke, & Cooley, 2003). Student problems tend to be more challenging in urban schools, demanding greater classroom management and teaching skills. In a study conducted by Liu and Meyer (2005), they found that minority

teachers reported less satisfaction than non-minority teachers with student behavior and work conditions in the schools.

A final recruitment barrier is the perception of teaching. In many communities of color, teaching was once held in high regard. This high status usually resonated in the African American communities. Gordon (2000) emphasized the high status bestowed upon teaching in the homeland and traditional cultures in the Asian communities. He used a two phase study to examine the changing perception of the teaching profession within the Asian community in California. The investigation concluded that the status of teaching in traditional Asian American cultures created a sense of personal inadequacy among Asian Americans. Students expressed concern that they could never live up to the expectations of teachers in many traditional Asian cultures. Prestige is a common theme identified as a reason why minority teachers do not enter into the teaching profession. Consequently, researchers for Phi Delta Kappa International reported that teaching is no longer considered a prestigious or respected profession for minority teachers (Walling, 2000).

Local Recruitment Strategies

High School

In order to recruit more minority students in to the teaching profession, programs must be started at the middle and high school levels. There is rigorous evaluation of effective high school programs designed to recruit young minority students into teaching. Clewell, Darke, Davis-Googe, Forcier, and Manes (2000) recommended that secondary students be offered teaching-related clubs, general career awareness activities, and visits to college campuses with teacher preparation programs

to encourage high school students to enter the teaching profession. Because the largest potential supply of minority teachers is found in urban public schools, identification and systematic study of high school programs is clearly needed.

According to Mitchell, Scott, and Covrig (2000), the demographic distribution of minorities at various points along the teacher pipeline are lost before college preparation even begins. This finding supports the contention that recruitment programs must reach into the middle and high schools to strengthen awareness and promote interest in teaching as a career. To do this, colleges and universities with teacher education programs across the country have created partnerships with the local school districts. Some aspects of successful partnerships include

1. creation of future teachers clubs in the schools,
2. awareness programs that focus on teaching as a career,
3. after-school tutoring programs,
4. visits to college campuses for middle and high school students,
5. summer enrichment residential campus experiences,
6. financial incentives for graduating seniors, some with reciprocal agreements built in,
7. career counseling,
8. assistance with critical-thinking and test taking skills,
9. workshops to promote cultural awareness and an understanding of African American, Hispanic, and Native American history,
10. internship placement,
11. funding to finance teacher recruitment programs, and

12. magnet schools with a concentration on teaching careers.

A study was conducted by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) on recruitment programs initiated in their 13 member states. The study found that many SREB states had school-to-college partnerships to introduce middle and high school students to careers in teaching. South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment (SCCTR) was one of the states that had vigorously addressed the minority teacher shortage by appropriating funding from the state to create recruitment programs on many fronts. The percentage of minority education graduates of all certified candidates increased by 9% to 21.4% between 1989 and 2000. In 2001, the overall percentage of minority teachers in the state was just over 16%.

Vegas, Murnane, and Willet (2001) examined the persistence of high school students from racial, ethnic, and academic backgrounds to predict whether they would enter the teaching profession. They used the High School and Beyond Data of 10th graders in 1992 to predict the probability of this cohort graduating from high school, entering college, graduating from college, and entering into teaching. They found that there were differences in high school graduation rates by racial and ethnic groups for high school sophomores with the same 10th grade test scores. Native American, African American, and Hispanic high school sophomores were less likely to obtain a high school diploma than Whites and Asian Americans. Interestingly, African American females were more likely to graduate from high school than White females with the same test scores. In fact, they had the highest probability of attending college, followed by Hispanic students, then White students. Among the college graduates in the sample, Native Americans, African Americans, and Hispanics had the highest percentages of

teacher entry. The groups with the lowest rates of teacher entry were Asian American females and males. They concluded that most minority high school students who graduate from high school have weak academic skills, resulting in their inability to matriculate into college.

College and University Programs

Once students enter college and are accepted into teacher education programs, very little emphasis is placed on cultural diversity. The lack of diversity in the staff and curriculum often deters minority students from entering or staying in the field. To help combat the problem of the shortage of minority teachers, colleges and universities must examine their present policies in regard to recruitment and training of minority teacher candidates and create new strategies to meet the current shortage. Based on his research, Zeichner (2003) argued that colleges of education are not adequately preparing students to meet the needs of the diverse student population in public schools. He claimed that: (a) teachers are not being prepared to teach across lines of ethnicity and race, language, and social class in most preparation programs, and (b) the typical response of teacher education programs to the growing diversity of K-12 students is to add a course or two on multicultural, bilingual/ESL, or urban education to the curriculum and leave the rest of the curriculum intact. Zeichner (2003) made several recommendations designed to help strengthen these schools of education which included diversifying staff, where possible, and providing hands on experiences in diverse schools.

Claycomb and Hawley (2000) reviewed literature on teacher preparation programs in New Mexico, Cincinnati, Ohio, Texas and California. They noted that most teacher preparation programs did not adequately train teacher candidates to work

effectively with students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Because there is little diversity in the faculties of schools of education, professors do not have the firsthand knowledge to draw from.

Recruiting Through Partnerships

More than 21% of all teacher candidates started their preparation to become a teacher at a community college (Gederman, 2001). Minority students made up 30% of the community college student body nationally. In some rural and urban areas where the minority teacher shortage is the greatest, they make up 50% of the student body. Because community college students are often of lower socioeconomic status and are more likely to belong to minority groups than four-year college students, they require a strong academic and social support system (Gederman, 2001).

Ng (2003) and Gederman (2001) suggested strategies for collaboration based on program reviews calling for program articulation and collaboration between two- and four-year colleges in order to fund recruitment efforts and instructional programs. Ng (2003) suggested building communication and collaboration between universities, secondary schools, and public school districts around clear goals for joint program development. Specific recommendations from Gederman (2001) included:

1. Establishing agreements with four year institutions to ensure a smooth transition for students.
2. Creating formal partnerships with four year institutions. The participants would require that the partners agree on a shared mission and develop a joint curriculum. Students would then take coursework along with a field

experience at the two-year college and continue the degree program in their junior and senior year at the four-year college or university.

3. Developing traditional teaching education programs as well as alternative route certification programs.
4. Involving students in local schools and actively recruiting in the service area.

South Carolina Minority Access to Teacher Education (MATE)

This program began as a teacher recruitment initiative in 1987 and is designed to motivate rural, minority high school students to attend college and to pursue degrees in education. A secondary goal is to increase the supply of teachers in critical geographical areas. Students are recruited primarily from 21 rural districts that have high rates of poverty and low academic scores. Students must have maintained a 2.75 academic average and must pass a qualifying test.

South Carolina created a Pre-MATE Club which provided high school students with numerous motivating classroom activities. Each Pre-MATE club received \$250 to offset the cost of club activities. Students who were interested in teaching joined the club and met after school and during activity time during the school day. The program offered a three-week summer residency program to its members that included classes in mathematics, foreign languages, communication arts, and test-taking skills. In addition, students visited college campuses. Topics such as college financial aid and teaching as a career were offered to students in the program. They were also given a \$300 stipend. Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina participated in the Minority Access to Teacher Education program. The school also participated in a forgivable loan program available to minority education majors (Clewel et al., 2000).

Urban Teaching Partnership Program

Clark County School District (CCSD) in Las Vegas partnered with the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) to develop a program to recruit teachers for their urban schools. The program served as a prototype for preparing teachers to work in diverse contexts and served as a model for other teacher education program initiatives. This collaboration between CCSD and UNLV serves as an alternative route to licensure in the state and is a one-year, full-time, field-based teacher education program. This model was unique because of the focus on the diverse learner, the hands-on experiences in urban schools, and the crucial mentoring component. Preliminary evaluation results indicated that the benefits were significant for mentors, interns, and the children they taught (Odell, McKinney, Perkins, & Miller, 2001).

State Recruitment Strategies

The states have taken action to address the need to recruit more teachers (Darling-Hammond & Dilworth, 1997). The state legislatures, state boards of education, and teacher education boards have come up with several initiatives. State initiatives include organizing a task force to conduct a needs assessment, hiring state employees to oversee the task of minority teacher recruitment, mandating that school districts and state teacher education programs develop minority recruitment plans, and providing the necessary funds to implement the programs. Most states also provide funds for the recruitment of students for newly designed programs (Clewell & Villegas, 1998).

Alternative Routes to Teaching

One solution to the minority teacher shortage has been the development of alternative route certification programs. These programs differ from state to state and

from one program to another. Forty-four states currently have alternative certificate programs including Georgia (Blair, 2002). Supporters of alternative certificates believe that it will diversify the teaching workforce by attracting more men, minorities, and mature workers whereas opponents argue that it will lower standards and negatively affect student learning (Darling-Hammond, 1999).

In general, these programs recruit individuals specifically to teach in struggling urban schools (Hamberman, 2002). Program requirements may vary but may include a two-week course, a pre-internship, evening seminars, and teacher mentors. Participants are usually individuals who want to make a career change or are already in the school system as non-certified personnel such as teacher aides or secretarial staff. Alternative routes to certification include a wide range of programs. The Southern Regional Education Board (Bolich, 2003) reported that such programs tend to target a population that is already in the teaching field or is interested in changing careers. Many states require candidates to pass certain basic skills tests or subject area knowledge exams such as PRAXIS or the GACE in order to be accepted into the programs. Candidates often join programs offered by colleges, universities, or local education agencies that teach them essential teaching skills. The programs often must be structured differently to accommodate working participants. Weekends and late afternoon classes are usually the norm (Ng, 2003).

Teacher Bonuses

National Board Certification is a voluntary credential available to teachers who possess a bachelor's degree, a state teaching license, and have taught for at least three years. To obtain this credential, teachers must demonstrate their knowledge and skills

through a series of performance-based assessments. Several states provide bonuses to teachers who obtain National Board Certification including North Carolina with a 12% annual salary increase; Florida with an additional 10% of the statewide average teacher salary; South Carolina and Mississippi with \$7,500 and \$6,000 annual supplements, respectively; and California with a one-time \$10,000 bonus plus \$20,000 for teachers in low-performing schools. Georgia teachers who complete the requirements for certification receive a 10% salary supplement. These incentives may be motivated by evidence that Board certified teachers outperform comparable non-Board certified teachers on a number of pedagogical and student outcome measures (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

It has been suggested that signing bonuses be offered to help lure teachers into the profession. Along with a handful of states, Massachusetts established a signing bonus program in the late 1990s. The program operates through a subcontract from the Teach for America Initiative. The Massachusetts Institute for New Teachers (MINT) gave a \$20,000 signing bonus to more than 400 mid-career switchers to address the state's teacher quality and supply problems. About one-third of these individuals were either already certified or had some teaching experience. The rest, though they may be considered subject matter experts, were given a six-week teacher training program. Teachers in the program also attended weekly mentoring sessions. An early evaluation of the program revealed that 20% of the candidates recruited in the first year of the program's existence had left by the end of the second year. On the other hand, principals who have hired MINT graduates have been very happy with the program and would continue to hire MINT graduates without reservations (Fowler, 2003).

Transition to Teaching

The third Elementary Secondary Education Act program specifically aimed at addressing teacher recruitment and retention is Transition to Teaching. This program authorizes competitive five-year grants to partnerships and eligible entities to establish programs to recruit and retain highly qualified mid-career professionals and recent college graduates as teachers in high-need schools. This includes the recruitment of teachers through alternative routes to certification under state-approved programs that enable individuals to be eligible for teacher certification within a reduced period of time. An ESEA and a high-need Local Education Agency (LEA) partner with (a) each other, (b) a consortium of other ESEAs and/or high-need LEAs, (c) for profit or nonprofit organizations that have a proven record of effectively recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers, or (d) institutions of higher education. Eligible activities include financial incentives to participants, pre- and post-placement induction or support activities, placement in high need schools or short staffed subject areas, collaborations with institutions of higher education to develop and implement long-term teacher recruitment and retention strategies including teacher credentialing (Kuenzi, 2004).

Federal Recruitment Strategies

The problem of minority teacher recruitment has been addressed by offering competitive grants to institutions that encourage minority students to enter teacher preparation programs. The Consortium for Minorities in Teaching Careers has been the largest national effort to provide funding for such programs. This consortium formed a collaboration to design a national model for the recruitment and preparation of minority

teachers which consisted of 10 universities and colleges (Yasin, 1999). The Department of Education also offers smaller grants for minority recruitment through the Teacher Partnerships and Teacher Placement programs.

Troops to Teachers

The Troops to Teachers program is a federally funded teacher recruitment program started in 1994. The purpose of the program is to assist and enable qualified active duty and reserve military personnel to enter the teaching profession after leaving the military. The program is a joint effort of the United States Departments of Education and the Department of Defense. This program targets the recruitment of minorities and male role models to teach in high need schools and high need subject areas, such as mathematics and science (Stephens, 2003). The program provides retired and displaced military personal with assistance in pursuing a career in public education; it also helps to fill the teacher shortage.

Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant

These grants, authorized in Higher Education Act (HEA), Title II, consist of three competitive awards: state grants, partnership grants, and recruitment grants. Although the last are targeted at teacher recruitment, the first two also contain objectives and activities meant to improve recruitment and retention. Each is awarded on a one-time basis of limited duration; three years for state and recruitment grants and five years for partnerships. Recruitment and retention activities in these programs include creation of alternative routes to traditional teacher preparation and certification. Between fiscal years 1999 and 2003, all but nine states and territories received state grant funding under these programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

Loan Forgiveness for Teachers

Additional federal programs intended to encourage individuals to enter and continue in the teaching profession are authorized in the Higher Education Act (HEA), Title IV. For certain student loan recipients employed as teachers in low income schools or subject matter shortage areas, these programs provide for full or partial cancellation, deferment, or forbearance, or reduced payment obligation. Eligibility for the program is restricted according to the type of loan, the year in which it was dispersed, years of teaching service, and teacher qualification. Two sections of HEA provide payment relief for Federal Family Education Loans and Direct Loans. Teachers are also eligible for forgiveness of Perkins Loans under HEA Section 465. Loans made after June 30, 1972 may be cancelled based on years of qualifying service as a full-time teacher in either a low-income school or a high demand subject area including special education, mathematics, science, foreign languages, and bilingual education. Repayment is made at a rate of 15% for the first and second years of service and 20% for the third and fourth years of service (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

Teacher and Principal Training and Recruitment Fund

The Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) program (Title II, Part A) provides grants to states and sub-grants to LEAs on a formula basis. The formula consists of a base guarantee in an amount derived from two antecedent programs (Eisenhower and Class Size Reduction). This program supports numerous activities at the local, state, and national levels including a national teacher recruitment campaign along with local recruitment, assistance, mentoring and training that improve professional development particularly for special education and early childhood

teachers, grants to promote advanced certification as well as reforms in teacher certification and tenure, and a clearinghouse for teacher recruitment and placement (Kuenzi, 2004).

Chapter Summary

Minority teachers play an important role in minority students' lives. They often serve as positive role models, surrogate parents, disciplinarians, and counselor. Having Minority teachers may also impact minority students' academic achievement. Prior to the Brown vs. Board of Education decision, there were an abundance of minority teacher, since then that number has dwindled. Due to the new state mandates, increased student enrollment, attrition, and teacher retirement, it has become a challenge recruiting teachers, particularly minority teachers. Before a person becomes a teacher, he/she must first go through the teacher pipeline. A person must graduate high school, enter an institution of higher learning, attain a Bachelor Degree, and enter teaching. There are several barriers that might deter a person from becoming a teacher. They include: (1) Other professions recruit minority students, (2) Fewer minority students are attending college, (3) Low salary, (4) Inability to pass competency tests, (5) community support, (6) working conditions, and (7) perception of teaching. Local, state, and federal agencies are trying desperately to find ways to recruit more minority and male teachers.

The literature suggests that there is a need for individuals with similar characteristics to address the needs of the increasing minority student population. In addition, the literature suggests that a concerted effort by all stakeholders is needed to locate and recruit more minority teachers. Chapter III will describe the methodology

that will be utilized to research the minority recruitment practices of a suburban public school district.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Qualitative methodology was used in this study. A single case study design was applied to address minority teacher recruitment practices and policies. This chapter consists of the following sections: research questions, description of the research design, description of the sample, procedures and data collection, data management, data analysis, and summary of the chapter.

The purpose of this study was to examine the practices and policies used to recruit minority teachers in one selected Georgia public school district. The researcher focused on recruitment practices and policies and how these plans were implemented.

Research Questions

The overarching research question was: How does a public school district located in a suburb of metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia ensure that the diversity of the student population is reflected in the teacher population?

The following are the two sub-questions that guided the study:

- (a) How does a public school district located in a suburb of metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia, determine if there is a need for minority teachers in the district/school?
- (b) How does a public school district located in a suburb of metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia, recruit minority teachers in the district/school?

Research Design

Qualitative research is useful for describing or answering questions about particular, localized occurrences or contexts and the perspectives of the participants toward events, beliefs or practices (Gay & Arasian, 2000). Qualitative methodology was appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher the opportunity to answer the hows and whys. Furthermore, the case study design also allowed the researcher to interact with the selected participants in order to receive the input needed to develop a sense of feeling regarding the phenomenon under study. The methodology explained the causal link in real life interventions that are too complex for survey or experimental strategies (Yin, 2002).

Case Study

Case study methods were utilized in this investigation. Case study research is a time-honored, traditional approach to the study of topics in social science and management. The strength of case study research is that it has the capability of uncovering paths and mechanisms and, through richness of detail, identifying causal influences and interaction effects which might not be treated as effective variables in a statistical study. In recent years, there has been increased attention to implementation of case studies in a systematic, stand-alone manner which increases the validity of associated findings (Jensen & Rogers, 2001).

A case study is one of several ways of completing social science research. Case studies are the preferred strategy when how or why questions are being asked, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon with some real life context. Two other types of case studies, exploratory

and descriptive, also can complement such explanatory case studies. Regardless of the type of case study, investigators must exercise great care in designing and conducting case studies to overcome the traditional criticisms of the methods (Yin, 2002). It is the opinion of Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin (1993) that a case study is an in-depth investigation. Accordingly, it uses different methods to collect various kinds of information and to make observations.

This study was a single case study because only one school district participated in the study. Case studies can be single or multiple case designs, where a multiple case design must follow a replication rather than sampling logic. When no other cases are available for replication, the researcher is limited to a single case design. Yin (2002) pointed out that generalization of results, from either single or multiple designs, is made to theory and not to populations.

Participant Selection

This research project involved a total of five participants. The participants of the study included the human resource director, a school board member, and a principal from an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school from the same Georgia public school district. Participants were purposively identified and invited to participate rather than selected randomly. By participating in this study, participants helped identify things that are being done to help their schools recruit minority teachers. The results of the study should provide Georgia educators with valuable information to use when enhancing their minority recruitment plans.

The participants shared common characteristics which included (a) employment in same school district, (b) serving as top administrators in the school building or

central office, (c) and having the authority to speak on recruiting and selecting minority teachers. The participants were very cooperative and willing to assist the researcher with the study in any way they could.

Role of the Researcher

Any study involving human subjects requires Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. An application was submitted to the Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board in August 2008. After approval was received from the IRB and the participating school district, the researcher contacted possible participants, asking them to volunteer in the study. Upon receiving verbal commitment to participate in the study, an email was sent to confirm their participation.

Prior to participating in the interviews, the interviewees received a letter from the researcher informing them of the purpose of the study and expressing appreciation for their time and commitment (Appendix A). After the participants signed the informed consent form, interviews were conducted by the researcher.

The instrument used in the study was a list of interview questions developed by the researcher. Vigor in qualitative research largely depends on how carefully the instrument is designed and constructed (Patton, 2002). During the interviews, the researcher presented the interview questions to the district-level administrators and school-level administrators that were relevant to their position (Appendices B, C, and D). However, these questions led the moderator to delve further and ask other questions to clarify the participants' responses. The most important and difficult component in collecting qualitative data using interviews was applying good listening skills. Engaging

in the data collection setting allowed the researcher to hear, see, and experience reality through the participants' responses to the questions (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Responses to the interview questions were tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The researcher used open ended interview questions to generate responses that allowed the researcher to value and capture the points of view of the interviewees (Patton, 2002). The tape recorder offered a record that was complete and allowed the researcher to give the attention needed to stay focused during the interviews (Glesne, 1999). Marshall and Rossman (1999) stated that, "The process of preserving the data and meanings on tape and the combined transcriptions include grammatical errors, changes in focus, digressions, and other indications of mood" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The findings were reported in summary form using themes.

Data Collection

Prior to conducting the research, the researcher retrieved copies of board minutes and board policies on recruitment from the county's website. The examination of the district's minority recruitment policies and practices provided more data to use as an instrument for comparison. To understand a phenomenon, the researcher needs to know the history. The researcher asked the research participants to produce documents. Documents and other unobtrusive measures provided both historical and contextual dimensions to the observation and the interviews (Glesne, 1999)

Each participant was interviewed in a neutral setting. Each principal was interviewed at his or her school. The human resource director was interviewed at the central office. The school board member was interviewed at his place of employment in the community, a real estate company. The researcher was also given a copy of the

county's recruitment schedule for the 2007-08 school year.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis is moving from raw interviews to interpretations that are evidence-based and guide the foundation for published reports (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Qualitative analysis was used to determine recurring themes related to the research questions. Following the procedures, the researcher drew conclusions related to the results. In the research study, data analysis consisted of the researcher comparing and contrasting responses to interview questions given by the participants and reporting the findings in narrative form. Qualitative researchers use personal interpretation to analyze data collected and provide an explanation of the information and specifically what it means to the participants (Gay & Arasian, 2000). The researcher has presented portraits of each school which serve to provide background information about each school.

Data Management

All of the data collected during the research process was stored in a secure location. The only individuals allowed access to the information were the researcher and the dissertation committee members. The audiotapes and transcription notes were stored in one location. The data was entered into the researcher's computer and stored on the hard drive and a thumb drive. A hard copy of the information was also stored in a secure location.

Chapter Summary

An overarching research question and two guiding questions were used by the researcher in this study. Research questions were used to determine the perception of

school- and district-level personnel in a public school district located in suburb of metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia on minority teacher recruitment in their district. The research design used in the study was qualitative. The qualitative study was appropriate for the investigation and allowed the interviewees to respond to the researcher's questions. The research questions served as the instrument of study. The data collected for this study was the responses from the interview questions and information gathered from the review of documents (Appendix B, C, D, & E). The rigor of the instrument was determined ensuring that interview questions measured the desired topics. After receiving approval from IRB at Georgia Southern University, the researcher conducted the interviews. Responses to the interview questions were taped recorded and findings were reported in summary form using themes.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to examine practices and policies used to recruit minority teachers in one suburban school district in metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia. No specific practices or policies were identified that were unique to the district or that were not required by law. Interviews with three school-level personnel and two district-level personnel who had the knowledge and authority to speak on the recruitment and selection of minority teachers were conducted and findings were analyzed. This chapter describes the research findings of the study as follows: the general description of the sample followed by results of the data relating to the research question.

The researcher collected and analyzed data using transcriptions of school-level and district-level interviews for this qualitative study. The names of the schools and district-level personnel were coded alphabetically (A – D) and a fictitious name (pseudonym) was assigned to each school and the district to protect the privacy of the participants of this study. The findings stem from the study's research questions.

Description of the Sample

The sample consisted of four male administrators and one female administrator who work in a suburban school district within the metro Atlanta area. Other demographics, such as age, gender, and ethnicity, were not collected as they were not deemed relevant to the current study. The following provides a detailed description of each participant.

Interview Participants

Principal A

The first interview was with a female principal, Dr. Susan Love (pseudonym), who was the only female African American participant in the study. She is a principal of an elementary school and has worked in the county for 17 years. More than 50% of her student population comes from minority groups. Dr. Love has been successful in selecting minority teachers to teach in her school, maintaining a healthy racial balance between teachers and students. Dr. Love makes a conscious effort to make sure that each grade-level in her building has at least one minority teacher and one male teacher.

Principal B

The second interview was with a male principal, Mr. Ken Brown (pseudonym). He is a White male, serves as the principal of a middle school, and has worked in the county for 26 years. More than 50% of his student population comes from minority groups. Mr. Brown relies on the county computerized recruitment system to select teachers to teach in his school. He feels that maintaining a racial balance of minority teachers to represent the student body is important; however, he believes that hiring the most qualified teacher is most important.

Principal C

The third interview was with a White male principal, Mr. John Smith (pseudonym), who is a principal of a high school and has worked in the county for 12 years. Less than 25% of his students come from minority groups. Mr. Smith has not experienced a racial imbalance between teachers and students in his school, but feels that it is important that staff is representative of the student body.

Human Resource Director

The fourth interview was with a White, male human resource director. Mr. Steve Jones (pseudonym) has worked in the county for 17 years and has served in his current position for two years. Mr. Jones is responsible for making sure that principals have certified teachers. He is responsible for making sure that hiring practices and policies are followed. Once potential teaching candidates have completed the process, the names of the candidates are made available to the principals who have vacancies in their schools. School principals are encouraged to select candidates who will help maintain a racial balance between students and staff. However, there are no policies that require administrators to do so. Mr. Jones is also responsible for terminations, grievances, employee discipline problems, helping with retirement, and providing guidance and assistance.

School Board Member

The fifth interview was with a member of the school board, Mr. Terry Long (pseudonym), who represents one of the five districts in the county. He has served on the board for seven years. He also works in the county in the real estate industry. His job as a board member is to develop policies, rules, and regulations to control the operation of the schools, including system organization, school site location, school finance, equipment purchase, staffing, attendance, curriculum, extracurricular activities, and other functions essential to the day-to-day operation of schools within the district's boundaries. Mr. Long's responsibility for recruiting and hiring teachers is limited. His job is to vote on the candidates recommended by the superintendent.

School Portraits

The portraits consisted of an elementary school, a middle school, a high school, and the local school district located in a suburban school district within the metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia, area. As context plays a role, the following presents *portraits* of each school or school district within which the participants are employed.

School A

Peach Elementary School (pseudonym) is located in the west side of the district and is one of 26 elementary schools in the district. It serves pre-K through 5th grade, with an enrollment of almost 500 students. The demographic profile of the student population is 34% White, approximately 47% African American, 7% Hispanic, and 5% Asian. The principal noted a steady increase in the Hispanic student population in the last three years. Approximately 13% of the student population is identified as student with disabilities. Approximately 13% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Approximately 6% of the student population is identified as Limited English Proficient. The school has a staff that consists of two administrators, four support staff members, and 30 certified members. The school has a student to teacher ratio of 14:1.

School B

Show Me Middle School (pseudonym) is located in the south side of the district and is one of nine middle schools. It serves the traditional 6th through 8th grade levels, with an enrollment of more than 800 students. The demographic profile of the student population is 33% White, 47% African American, 8% Hispanic, and 4% Asian. The principal has noted a decrease in the White population and an increase in the African American population over the last three years. Approximately 14% of the student

population is identified as students with disabilities. Approximately 40% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Approximately 2% of the student population is identified as Limited English Proficient.

School C

Happy High School (pseudonym) is located in a rural area of the district and is one of 11 high schools in the district. It serves the traditional 9th through 12th grade levels with an enrollment of approximately 1,400 students. The demographic profile of student population is 75% White, approximately 20% African American, 3% Hispanic, and 1% Asian. The principal has noticed an increase in the African American population of the students over the last three years. Approximately 10% of the student population is identified as students with disabilities. Approximately 20% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Approximately 1% of the student population is identified as Limited English Proficient. The school has a staff that consists of six administrators, seven support staff members, and 75 certified staff members. The school has a teacher student ratio of 18:1.

School District D

Willing School District (pseudonym) is located in a suburb south of metro Atlanta, Georgia. It is a rapidly growing county consisting of five cities. There are 43 schools in the district including one alternative school and one evening academy. The demographics of the county have undergone tremendous changes over the last 10 years. It currently has a population of approximately 178,000 residents according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2006). Willing School District has been identified as one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. This growth is reflected in the number of students

entering the school system. The school district has approximately 39,000 students enrolled.

The demographic profile of the student population is 46% White, 42% African American, 5% Hispanic, and 2% Asian. There has been an increase in the African American student population over the last three years. Approximately 12% of the student population is identified as students with disabilities. Approximately 38% of the student population qualify for free or reduced lunch. Approximately 2% of the student population is identified as Limited English Proficient.

Findings of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine practices and policies used to recruit minority teachers in one suburban Metropolitan school District in the Atlanta, Georgia, area. As is the practice in a qualitative study, the researcher sought to address the overarching research question and subsequent sub-questions that guided the study through in-depth constant-comparative data analysis. The findings are presented as emergent themes in response to the research questions and sub-questions.

Importance of Diversity in Recruitment and Selection of Teachers

All participants (100%) agreed that it is immensely important that the diversity of the school and the school community be reflected in the diversity of the teaching staff. The overarching theme that emerged from this study could be classified as *Balance*. Participants believed that there should be a balance in representation of all groups in order that students have appropriate role models. Interestingly, the majority of participants cited the literature on the importance of a diverse teaching staff to student success. In addition, one participant believed that there should be a balance in

representation of the teaching staff according to gender statistics in the school. However, participants indicated that hiring the most highly qualified individual superseded the need and/or desire to hire based on diversity needs. The following reflects participants' perceptions regarding the topic. Direct quotes from each participant are presented in order to establish the trustworthiness of data.

Principal A. Principal A responded by stating that it was important that there was a balance of diversity between students and teachers. She stated:

“I think it is very important. I don't think it's the most important, I don't think they have to be exactly parallel, that an African American child has to have an African American teacher and so forth, but I think and I have looked at some research that has proven that some children, especially minority children, do better academically. I think the issue is that it is a great opportunity for a teacher to be a positive role. I've read that there is also research that shows that in some instances White teachers expect less of minority children, and the expectations are not there.”

The principal found that it helps to bridge the relationship with parents and community members who have children in her school and who are from minority groups. In addition, Dr. Love noted the importance of having minority teachers on her staff. She also stated: “I try to make sure each grade level here has at least one minority teacher and one male teacher on each. Minority teachers serve as positive role models for those students who might not otherwise have one.” Dr. Love expressed that her staff was racially balanced and was not in need of any additional minority teachers at the

current time, but when a minority staff member leaves her staff she tries to replace the minority teacher with another minority teacher.

Principal B. Principal B responded by stating that the first thing that should be considered when hiring any teacher was his/her qualifications, not race. Mr. Brown, the middle school principal, stated that “hiring minority teachers is not the answer to everything.” He stated:

“Well, I have mixed feelings on this one. Partly because I think that it shouldn’t matter what color a person is in the classroom. But, I also know that for some kids this may be the one person that is their role model for the future. So I have mixed feelings back and forth. I don’t care, as long as it is the best teacher we can get; I don’t care what teacher is in that class. But, I do know that we do have some parents that do care and want somebody in the classroom that is the same ethnicity as their child. So, for me, I would say I want the best teacher; that is number one. Secondly, I would like to get a good balance of ethnicity and I might add, male/female, because we need more male teachers.”

This principal noted that having a diversified staff that reflected the student population was important; but, “If you’re a Ruby Payne fan, that’s more of a socioeconomic issue, not a skin color issue.”

When Mr. Brown hires teachers, he stated that he tries to get the best person qualified for the job. He looks at how the person will fit into the position that he has available. He believes that it’s important that the teacher is able to connect with the students and that depends on their previous experience.

Principal C. Principal C responded by stating that he felt that it was important to have minority teachers on his staff that reflect the student body. He stated, “Well, I think it is important that you have some balance there. It’s important that students of all races or genders are able to see people of their race and gender who assume leadership roles in society, that gives them an opportunity to see positive role models.” However, he expressed that he didn’t believe that we were ever going to achieve that particular balance in terms of equality with numbers. Mr. Smith also stated: “I think the biggest problem in recruiting minority teachers has been that there are so many occupations that have opened up to minorities, and with the pay scales that we have in education, minorities are choosing other professions, particularly women.” Mr. Smith stated that “Despite these challenges, we should continue to strive to recruit as many minority teachers as we can.” He believed that minority teachers understand the culture of minority students. “They understand the culture in working with that population and aspects of their social struggle. They understand many times the politics that are involved with various groups.”

Human Resource Director. The human resource director responded to the importance of having diversity between students and teachers as a district. Mr. Jones gave a slightly different perspective but still in accord with the responses of Dr. Love, Mr. Brown, and Mr. Smith. Mr. Jones stated:

“I think that it’s very important to have diversity within and I think that our schools should reflect that. I think you have to try your best to have a racial balance between teachers and students so that the kids see that balance and I think you need that in every area and not just with teachers but you need it with

your secretarial staff, the custodial staff, the food service workers and bus drivers. Every department needs to have that diversity.”

School Board Member. The school board member responded by stating that a racially balanced staff was important when trying to meet the needs of minority students. Mr. Long stated:

“It’s important that the staff mirrors what the world looks like as closely as possible. Oh, I think it is important, not only to see people like you, but to see people from all various cultures. I think it is important that with my African American background that I know there are African Americans that could serve as role models. So, I think it is extremely important that we have as much diversity as we can among our teacher workforce.”

Mr. Long also expressed concerns about the community. He felt that one of the goals of the board is to make sure that the schools are reflective of the community and look like society.

Policies Addressing Minority Recruitment and Selection

Each participant was asked to identify any policies the county had for hiring and recruiting minority teachers. Each participant (100%) indicated that, while no specific policy existed in the district or at the school level, federal law prohibits discrimination based on race in hiring practices throughout the US. However, participants were aware of the importance of a need for minority representation within the teaching staff. Hence, the second theme that emerges from this study was *Commitment*. While no formal policies and/or procedures/practices were in place, participants recognized the importance of the teaching staff that reflected the diversity of the student body. As such,

they were committed to hiring and retaining teachers who reflected the diversity of the school community. Again, participants were committed to this practice only if it was aligned with hiring the most qualified individuals. Participants suggested that they were not willing to trade quality for diversity; however, the optimum situation would be to have both.

Principal A. Principal A responded by stating that there were no specific policies in place that addressed the hiring or recruitment of minority teachers. Dr. Love stated:

“We don’t have policies, we have practices. There is no board policy mainly because if you put a policy in place, then your hands are tied and you might not get the best teacher in the classroom and I don’t ever want to do that. I am reluctant in hiring teachers based on race. Instead, I am more concerned about hiring the most qualified teacher for the job. There seems to be fewer qualified minority teachers.”

Principal B. Principal B responded by stating that he was not aware of any specific policies for recruiting minority teachers. However, Mr. Brown did refer to a standard equal opportunity policy that emphasizes that the county is an equal opportunity employer as far as hiring.

Principal C. Principal C responded by stating that he was not aware of any policies that the county had. He stated:

“We really don’t have specific policies that address that issue. I think it has been more of a goal and a strategy of our district that we want to have the best instructional environment for our children and we feel that is it. But, there is

nothing in policy. In terms of policies, I know that we follow federal guidelines in terms of everybody having equal opportunity for employment; you cannot discriminate based on sex, religion, and all of those others.”

Human Resource Director. The human resource director responded by stating that, “The county had no policies in place for recruiting minority teachers, but there is a policy on hiring. Well, I think in our policy we say that we encourage ethnic minorities to participate and we are still under the equal opportunity for them and saying that we cannot hire based upon color.”

School Board Member. The school board member, Mr. Long, stated, “I cannot recall any direct policy that is strategically geared towards minority teacher recruitment, but we do have an equal opportunity policy.”

Minority Recruitment Practices

Each participant was asked to identify practices and strategies used to recruit minority teachers and explain how they are implemented. Participants indicated that the school principal is the individual ultimately responsible for the selection of teachers; respondents indicated that principals attempt to be mindful of the need for minority representation in the teaching staff and at the same time hiring the most highly qualified individual. While no true theme emerged from the data, two distinct patterns were found: online resources; and, direct marketing. Participants reported the use of PATS, a paperless applicant tracking system commonly used to recruit teachers.

Principal A. Principal A responded by stating that the first thing she considers when hiring teachers is the make up of her student population and then she determines if there is a need for minority teachers. Dr. Love stated, “Each principal is given the

liberty of hiring individuals based on the needs of his/her school. I try to make sure that my staff reflects my student body. I look for the best teachers for my students.”

Principal B. Principal B responded by stating that he usually relies on the county computerized recruitment system to select teachers for his school. Mr. Brown stated: “Individuals who are interested in working in the county apply online. I choose from those applicants based on need, experience, and references. Upon selecting a candidate I call the person in for an interview. Once I finalize my choice, I make a recommendation to the board for hiring.”

Principal C. Principal C responded by stating that he uses the Paperless Applicant Tracking System (PATs) to select teachers when he has a vacancy in his school. Mr. Smith stated: “Principals have access to the electronic PATs online system. They can view all the applicants online without having to go down to the central office and go through all the applications and paperwork on file.” The responsibility of recruiting minority teachers is left up to the principals. According to Mr. Smith,

“Our charge is to do the best we can to have our staff mirror the demographic make-up of our student body. That presents challenges in a rapidly changing demographic area, but you do the best you can. At the end of the day, my job is to hire the best people for the classroom I can. I keep in mind the ethnic profile of our students versus the staff and try to meet that need whenever I have the chance to. But I’m not going to hire a weaker teacher versus a more qualified teacher based on race.”

Human Resource Director. The human resource director responded by stating that his job is to make sure that principals have qualified applicants to choose from

when they have vacancies. Mr. Jones stated:

“In my position, it is more of overseeing the general operation of the HR department. Applicants apply using the county’s online system. As jobs occur, they apply for specific jobs. Once they move from applicant to candidate status, their information is made available to principals who select candidates to interview. Principals know what is needed on their campuses to create a high impact instructional situation for their students so they are given the liberty to select teachers based on their needs.”

School Board Member. The school board member responded by stating that he plays a minimal role in hiring teachers. Mr. Long stated that, “The board votes on the candidates who are recommended for hiring.” He also noted that the Human Resource Department puts together a monthly report and presents it to the board. “Principals are ultimately responsible for staffing their schools by selecting minority teachers who can be viewed as positive role models and are highly qualified. One of our seven goals is to increase diversity of our work force. And I think in that general topic, my rule of thumb and in conversations I’ve had with Human Resources, is that -- that’s our general guide, is to try to match the -- the make-up of our student body.”

Participants indicated a degree of innovation in strategies used to recruit teachers in his/her school/district. Strategies included snowball technique and outreach to targeted organizations/institutions that cater to minorities.

Principal A. Principal A responded by stating, “I have had teachers who have told me about friends of theirs who would like to come and work for me. If they are anything like the teachers that I have, I would hire them if I had a position available.”

Dr. Love also stated that she worked with community organizations, such as the church and civic organizations, and sometimes she encounters individuals who are looking for teaching jobs. “Before a teacher is hired, he/she must apply using the online application system.”

Principal B. Principal B responded by stating that he did not use any of the recruitment strategies listed (Appendix E). Mr. Brown stated that he had very little turnover at his school and that he didn’t have to go out and recruit. “When I do have an opening in my school, I use PATS; a Paperless Applicant Tracking System the county has in place to recruit teachers.”

Principal C. Principal C responded by stating that, “I use the online website to find teachers. I also use other methods such as job fairs and word of mouth. However, each candidate must still submit an online application in order to be considered for a position.” Mr. Smith also stated that the high school has a club at his school, Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), that works exclusively with students who have an interest in early childhood education. The students who participate in the program receive additional academic preparation helping them to develop leadership skills and orient them to the teaching profession. All efforts are aimed at encouraging the participants to explore and consider the teaching profession.

Human Resource Director. The human resource director responded by stating that the county uses several different strategies to recruit teachers.

“The county participates in the TAPP (Teacher Alternative Preparation Program) program in partnership with the Griffin County RESA (Regional Educational Service Agency). The county also posts jobs on the Teach Georgia

website and in professional organization journals, and participates in local and statewide job fairs. Members from the personnel department participated in more than 40 job fairs during the 2007-2008 school year and five of the job fairs were held on the campus of Historically Black Colleges and Universities.”

Example: They included the following schools: Alabama State University, Clark Atlanta University, North Carolina A&T State University, Florida A&M University, and Alabama A&M.

Mr. Jones also stated, “I am not familiar with the Teacher Enhancement Grant, nor do we participate in the Loan Forgiveness program for teachers. We do receive funds through Title II which is a part of the Teacher and Principal Training and Recruitment Fund.”

School Board Member. The school board member responded by stating, “I’m not sure what strategies the county uses to recruit minority teachers. I know one thing the district has done is look at minority colleges to recruit teachers.”

Chapter Summary

Chapter IV presented information about the teacher recruitment plans and policies as seen from the perspective of principals and district-level personnel in one school district in a suburb of metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia. This study allowed participation from leaders in all school types, including elementary, middle, and high school and district-level personnel. This data is reported in narrative form.

The research study produced a large and diverse number of responses to the open ended questions. Participants were willing and appeared honest when providing their views and opinions on strategies that are used to attract minority teachers. The

participants provided a substantial amount of information as it pertains to the importance of diversity in recruitment and selection of teachers, policies addressing minority recruitment and selection, and minority recruitment practices. Several themes emerged from these interviews. Participants believed that it is important to recruit minority teachers because they serve as positive role models and there should be a balance in representation of all groups in order that students have appropriate role models. All participants (100%) agreed that it is immensely important that the diversity of the school and the school community be reflected in the diversity of the teaching staff. The overarching theme that emerged from this study could be classified as *Balance*. Participants believed that there should be a balance in representation of all groups in order that students have appropriate role models. However, participants indicated that hiring the most highly qualified individual superseded the need and/or desire to hire based on diversity needs. The second theme that emerges from this study was *Commitment*. While no formal policies and/or procedures/practices were in place, participants recognized the importance of the teaching staff that reflected the diversity of the student body. As such, they were committed to hiring and retaining teachers who reflected the diversity of the school community. Again, participants were committed to this practice only if it was aligned with hiring the most qualified individuals. The third theme was that a computerized recruitment system seemed to be the most effective recruitment instrument. Other strategies used to recruit minority teachers in the district included word of mouth, job fairs, and participation in the TAPP program.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This section presents a summary of findings related to the practices and policies of one suburban metro Atlanta, Georgia, school district. This discussion explains the significance of the findings and their relevance to previous research as well as study limitations. The conclusion addresses implications of the results and recommendations for future studies.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine practices and policies used to recruit minority teachers in one suburban school district in the metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia area. This study is of particular significance because of the important role the presence of minority teachers plays in molding the lives of young minority students. Minority teachers help minority students make the connection between what they know and experience in a structured, supportive, nurturing, family-like environment (Ladson-Billings, 2005). It is important to have minority teachers who work in communities where minority students attend school because they help reduce the feeling of alienation and dislike of school that minority students often experience (Fenwick, 2001). All students and teachers, regardless of race or ethnicity, need exposure to people and leaders of various cultural backgrounds in order to enhance their understanding of the world. Recruiting and hiring minority teachers is a way to expose all students to different cultures in a global society (Vail, 2001). Due to the growing teacher demand, changing student demographics, and more ambitious school improvement goals, the

United States needs more thoughtful, sustained, and systemic approaches to teacher recruitment, development, and support (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1999).

This study, although exploratory in nature, provides qualitative data that may be useful to central office administrators, board of education members, school principals, teachers, legislators, and others concerned about the recruitment of minority teachers. This study holds implications for school districts and policy makers throughout the state of Georgia and the nation.

The researcher utilized interview questions designed by the researcher in order to obtain information for this study. Participants were purposively identified and invited to participate rather than randomly selected. The research project was driven by one overarching question and two sub-questions. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews and analyzed vis-à-vis the constant comparative method in order to discover emerging themes. Findings were presented in the narrative.

Several themes emerged from these interviews. It is important to recruit minority teachers because they serve as positive role models. However, participants focused on hiring the most qualified candidate regardless of race/ethnicity. The second prevailing theme was that no specific policies are in place regarding the recruitment of ethnic and minority teachers. The third theme was that a computerized recruitment system seemed to be the most effective recruitment instrument. Other strategies used to recruit minority teachers in the district included word of mouth, job fairs, and participation in the TAPP program.

Limitations

The most significant limitation to this study was that the sample selected for this study was a purposively selected population which included only five participants from one geographic location. Therefore, the results of the study may not be generalized to all public schools in Georgia. In addition, the study was limited by design in that the use of one interview protocol may limit findings.

Discussion of the Findings

The observation that most of the participants reported in the study was the importance of having a diverse teacher population to reflect their student populations. Participants believed that it was important to recruit minority teachers because they serve as positive role models and there should be a balance in representation of all groups in order that students have appropriate role models. The finding that students who have teachers of the same racial and ethnic background perform better academically is consistent with research conducted by Dee (2004) of the National Bureau of Economic Research, which suggests that students perform better on reading and math assessments when they have been taught by teachers of their own race. This was consistent with a study conducted in Tennessee involving 6,000 students that suggested that both Black and White children score higher on mathematics and reading tests when the teachers are the same race as the students (Viadero, 2001).

Findings indicated that there were several themes that emerged from the interviews. Participants believed that it is important to recruit minority teachers because they serve as positive role models and there should be a balance in representation of all groups in order that students have appropriate role models. The second theme that

emerges from this study was *Commitment*. While no formal policies and/or procedures/practices were in place, participants recognized the importance of the teaching staff that reflected the diversity of the student body. As such, they were committed to hiring and retaining teachers who reflected the diversity of the school community. Again, participants were committed to this practice only if it was aligned with hiring the most qualified individuals.

District policy regarding employment was found on the county's website. The policy stated that the county was an equal opportunity employer. As such, employment procedures and practices are to be nondiscriminatory in regard to sex, age, race, color, handicap, disability, religion, national origin, or veteran status. Findings showed that the county had practices, not policies, in place that are used to recruit teachers, which were wide in scope.

The principals are responsible for hiring in their schools. They are given the discretion of deciding the teachers they need at their individual schools. Each principal expressed a desire to hire teachers so that the teaching staff reflects the ethnic and racial make up of the student body when possible. The human resource director is responsible for making sure that candidates who are hired are qualified. Once the need is determined and a recommendation has been made to the board, the school board members are responsible for confirming selection of the candidates by voting.

The county recognizes that the first step in implementing a quality instructional plan is the employment of qualified professional personnel. The board further believes that this can be best accomplished through the implementation of recruitment procedures that utilize all appropriate resources, both in and out of the system, to

identify qualified professional personnel for employment. The third theme was that a computerized recruitment system seemed to be the most effective recruitment instrument. Other resources include an online application system, teacher training institutions in this state, job fairs, local school and system personnel, and the Georgia Department of Education. Recruitment activities are conducted to assure that certification and employment requirements are met by personnel selected for employment. In addition, recruitment activities are conducted in a manner that maintains the board's position of being an equal opportunity and nondiscriminatory employer.

Findings indicated that several strategies and programs are used to recruit minority teachers in the district. An essential component of developing an effective minority recruitment plan is increasing the level of awareness regarding the exact nature of the problem. This requires a purposeful examination of the many variables that may affect sufficient attainment of minority teachers.

Hiring teachers is a process that must be developed carefully. A school's future depends on it. It was determined from the interviews and visiting the county's website that this school district has gone online into an electronic recruiting mode. The online application system is called the Paperless Applicant Tracking System (PATs). PATs helps determine who meets the qualifications for the positions posted on the website based on their recommendations and certification. The mode of placing an application online allows the district access to many teacher applicants including minorities. The county also advertises on teachgeorgia.org. The selection process involves a review of applicant qualifications and recommendations as well as interviewing. On the county

application for teaching positions, there are no questions in reference to race/ethnicity.

In addition to online applications, participants indicated innovation in recruiting minorities vis-à-vis intern programs with Clayton State University, Mercer University, and Georgia State University are utilized by the district. These programs offer flexibility to meet scheduling needs of the students. This allows the district an immediate opportunity to recruit these students directly out of college. Partner-building activities of this nature have gained popularity among the nation's recruiting professionals and college placement centers, and are being used by an increasing number of school systems according to the American Association of Employment in Education (2003), a professional organization that links colleges and schools. In addition, a public school district located in a suburb of metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia established a partnership with an area college to train and increase the number of minority teachers by encouraging existing paraprofessionals and substitute teachers to enter the teaching profession. Principals and teaching staff also are involved in the recruitment process.

Conclusions

The purpose of this research study was to identify effective strategies used to recruit minority teacher into the teaching profession. Using a format of structured guiding questions, various themes emerged from the interview and field notes. In the following section the themes will be identified. During the course of examining the responses to the interview questions shared by the participants in this study, the following themes emerged regarding:

1. The result that arose fairly consistently in the research regarding the importance of having minority teacher in their school or district were as follows:
 - Minority teachers serve as positive role models.
 - Minority teachers have a positive impact on student achievement.
 - Minority teachers' personal experiences help build trust and a sense of community with minority students.
2. There were several themes that emerged with a strong degree of consistency regarding policies for recruiting minority teachers. They were the following:
 - There is no policy in place for hiring minority teachers.
 - Having a policy for recruiting minority teachers would limit the ability to hire the most qualified teachers.
 - Hiring the most qualified teacher is more important than hiring a teacher of color.
3. Regarding strategies used to recruit minority teachers in the district included the following:
 - Most participants have the autonomy to select teachers to work at their school or district.
 - Online application seems to be the most effective used in the district to recruit teachers.
 - Other useful resources used to recruit minority teacher include recruiting teachers at minority colleges, friends, community and civic organizations, job fairs, word of mouth, and websites.

While each participant acknowledges the importance of achieving a balance across racial groups, each principal was adamant about hiring the most qualified teacher to fill positions that become vacant in their school.

An electronic online application system tracks the number of teachers who apply in the county. When job fairs are held, each candidate is asked to sign in before talking with a recruiter; but, this information is not tracked by race/ethnicity. Traditional recruiting activities conducted by the school system are typically limited to college job fairs. Members from the county do recruit at minority institutions. However, teachers entering the profession still have the luxury of shopping around and being selective in their career decisions.

Implications of the Findings

Implications of the findings are that the principals, human resource director, and school board member believe having a racial balance of minority teachers to students is very important. Principals are ultimately responsible for making sure that their school has racially diverse staffs reflecting their student population. Their goal is to practice equal and fair employment opportunities regardless of race. The most effective practice for recruiting teachers to their school and county is the use of the electronic online application system. Two additional recruitment strategies currently used in the county include word of mouth and the TAPP Program.

It is recommended that counties in Georgia continue or begin to evaluate their teacher recruitment programs in order to attract new teachers, especially minority teachers. Some districts in Georgia are more affluent than others, which causes the concern about teacher recruitment to be less apparent. For school systems that have

more challenging circumstances, it is important that they make themselves more marketable in order to attract the same quality of teachers as the next system. In order to compete with other professions, local, state, and national agencies should consider raising teachers' salary to make teacher pay more competitive with the pay of other professions.

Local education agencies should build on state policies and programs in developing their initiatives for recruiting minority teachers. State education agencies should then build on the national comprehensive plan to design strategies and programs at the state level that are responsive to the needs identified by local districts.

It is recommended that the school district conduct a similar study to determine if all principals are aware of and are using the tools at their disposal for recruiting and retaining minority teachers. The researcher recommends that the school district solicit best practices each year from principals who have successfully recruited minority teachers.

The researcher recommends that the human resource department publish an annual report on the school district website that depicts hiring patterns of each school in the district. The annual report should include the number of students and teachers by racial and ethnic background. It is also recommended that the human resource department provide annual reports to members of the board of education with the number of teachers and students in each school by racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Recommendations for Future Study

Since the study was limited due to sample size, it is recommended that the study be replicated in a future study that includes a larger sample, randomly selected from

multiple geographic locations. The study was also limited by choice of the interview and interview protocol. It is recommended that a future study use multiple instruments to assess multiple aspects of the issue. For example, instruments can be used to assess principals' and teachers' perspectives of the best practices related to the recruitment of minority teachers.

As the purpose of a qualitative study is to explore a phenomenon about which little is known (Patton, 1990, 2002), the researcher recommends that the findings of this study be used in the refinement of quantitative instrument designed to address the hiring policies and practices of minority teachers. The findings of this study suggest that while school administrators are aware of the importance of hiring minority teachers to reflect the diversity in the school and school community, no formal policies and/or practices have been established in the school district. It is important to explore if this finding would be substantiated and school districts across the United States.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
LETTER OF CONSENT

Letter of Consent

Dear:

My name is Shyla D. Ridley, and I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program at Georgia Southern University. Currently, I am an Assistant Principal at Morrow Middle School in Clayton County Public Schools. To complete my dissertation, I am conducting interviews to examine school and district-level administrators' perceptions of the effectiveness of recruitment of minority teachers in your County. This information can be used to identify ways that are the most effective in recruiting minority teachers.

This letter is to request your assistance in gathering data for making recommendations for schools and school systems to use in regards to enhancing their minority recruitment policies and procedures. If you agree to participate, the researcher will tape record and transcribe your information to be compared and contrasted with other findings in the study. Completion and participation in the interview will indicate permission to use information you provide in the study. Please be assured that your responses will be held confidential. The data from this section will be reported in summary form and will be reported to individuals by school or school system so most of the information will be blinded. The data gathered from this study will be included in my dissertation which will be on public file.

If you have questions or concerns about the interview questions, you can contact me at

(678) 479-1307 or (404) 808-4631. My email address is srshylaridley@aol.com. My academic advisor is Dr. Denise Weems. You can contact her at (912) 486-0045 or dweems@georgiasouthern.edu. Your rights and concerns as a participant are available at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 681-5465.

Thank you for your participation in this study. I realize that your busy schedule may make it difficult to set aside time to participate. This interview should take no longer than 30 minutes to complete. The results of the study should provide Georgia educators with valuable information when enhancing their minority recruitment plans.

Respectfully,

Shyla D. Ridley

Georgia Southern University

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for School-level Administrators

1. What position do you hold in the school district?
2. What duties are involved with the position of _____?
3. How many years have you worked in the Henry County School System?
4. How familiar are you with the county's policies and procedures for recruiting minority teachers?
5. How do you recruit minority teachers at your school?
 - _____ Family/Friends
 - _____ Sorority/Fraternity
 - _____ Newspaper Ads
 - _____ Paraprofessionals
 - _____ High School to College Partnerships
 - _____ Teacher Cadet Program
6. How important do you feel it is to have a balance of diversity between student and teacher populations? Why?
7. During the 2007-2008 school year, how many teachers were hired in your school, and how many were minorities?
8. What percent of your student body is ethnic/minority?
9. What percent of your teachers is ethnic/minority?
10. How were you recruited into the Public School A?

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for Human Resource Director

1. What position do you hold in the school district?
2. What duties are involved with the position of _____?
3. How many years have you worked in the Henry County School System?
4. Have you been involved in the recruitment of minority teachers? If yes, when and how?
5. What policies and procedures do you have in place for recruiting minority teachers?
6. Does your county participate in the following recruitment programs?
 - _____ TAPP
 - _____ Teacher Enhancement Grant
 - _____ Loan Forgiveness for Teachers
 - _____ Signing Teachers
 - _____ Teacher and Principal Training and Recruitment Fund
7. What factors are most effective in attracting minority teachers to Public School A?
8. How important do you feel it is to have a balance of diversity between student and teacher populations? Why?
9. What percent of the county's teachers is ethnic/minority?
10. What percent of the county's students is ethnic/minority?

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for School Board Member

1. What position do you hold in the school district?
2. What duties are involved with the position of _____ related to recruiting teachers?
3. How many years have you worked in the Henry County School System?
4. What specific policies are in place that addresses minority teacher recruitment?
5. How familiar are you with the county's policies and procedures for recruiting minority teachers?
6. How long have recruitment polices been in place?
7. How important do you feel it is to have a balance of diversity between student and teacher populations? Why?
8. What kind of information do you receive regarding recruitment of teachers?
9. How do you assure that the recruitment practices are implemented?
10. How is the effectiveness of the recruitment policies and procedures evaluated or monitored?

APPENDIX E
REVIEW OF RECORDS FORM

Review of Records Form

Date _____

Position Elementary Principal _____

Middle Principal _____

High Principal

Human Resource Director _____

Board of Education Member _____

Dimension	Evidence	Satisfactory
Establishes Minority Recruitment Plan _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Agendas	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Board Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Develops Minority Recruitment Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Implement Recruitment Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Minutes from Meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participates in Local/Private Recruitment Programs	Church/Community	

<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Organizations</p> <p>Local Colleges/University Programs</p> <p>Friends/Family</p> <p>Partnership with High Schools</p> <p>Recruitment Scholarships</p> <p>Signing Bonuses</p> <p>Teacher Cadet Programs</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Participates in State Recruitment Programs</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>TAPP</p> <p>Transition to Teach Program</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Participates in Federal Recruitment Programs</p>	<p>Troops to Teach</p> <p>Teacher Enhancement Grant</p> <p>Loan Forgiveness Programs</p> <p>Teacher and Principal Training and Recruitment Program</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

APPENDIX F
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD LETTER

Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs Institutional Review Board (IRB)	
Phone: 912-478-6813	Monze Hall 2001
Fax: 912-478-0719	P.O. Box 8005 Statesboro, GA 30460
IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	

To: Wyla Ridley
270 Elm Forest Way
Greenville, Georgia 30209

CC: Charles D. Peterson
Associate Vice President for Research

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(ASOUC/IRB/IRB)

Date: September 10, 2008

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Conduct Human Subject and Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered **H09010** and titled **"Recruiting Exhume and Minority Teachers"**, it appears that (1) the research subject is not a minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are all feasible.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. At the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol, you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, whether or not it is believed to be related to the study, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB's Coordinator prior to executing any such changes or modifications. A subsequent amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a Research Study Termination form to notify the IRB's Coordinator, as your file may be closed.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Hagnes
Coordinator/IRB