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TEACHER MOBILIZATION: A CASE STUDY ON ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS & THE MOVEMENT OF TEACHERS WITHIN AN URBAN DISTRICT

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This dissertation, TEACHER MOBILIZATION: A CASE STUDY ON ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS & THE MOVEMENT OF TEACHERS WITHIN AN URBAN DISTRICT, by JASON PATTERSON, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University.

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TEACHER MOBILIZATION: A CASE STUDY ON ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS & THE
MOVEMENT OF TEACHERS WITHIN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

JASON PATTERSON

Under the Direction of Nicholas J. Sauer, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Professional educators are known to have one of the highest attrition rates among the American professions. As a result, administrative personnel face financial hardships in the effort to attract, develop, and often replace large numbers of educators on a yearly basis. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), in a 2016 report, found that over 15% of the national education workforce either left or mobilized within the profession between 2011 and 2013. Another report from the Alliance for Excellent Education in 2014 indicated that school and district administrators spend on average 2.2 billion dollars annually to replace teachers. These expenses account for both attrition (48.7%) and mobilization (51.3%). This dissertation was conducted in an urban school district with a high enrollment of high-poverty minority students. For this study nine teachers were chosen from the K-12 grade levels with varying teaching experience. This case study examined the perceptions of full-time teachers who left one school yet remained

teaching within the same district. Using organizational theory based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the perceptions of teachers were explored in order to identify the possible factors that contributed to their decision to leave. A case study was necessary to determine why the decision to leave was made, given the specific context of the organization. Data was collected through surveys, interviews, and artifact collection. The interview protocol presented the interview process, the questions, and notes related to the interview experience (Creswell, 2002). Personal notes and digital voice recorders were used to capture participant testimony. Data analysis included a six-step process developed by Braun, Clark, and Terry (2012) to capture and code the data. Qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, was used to maintain a chain of evidence that recognized emergent themes from participant testimony. The key themes that emerged from the data were (a) perceived leadership support, (b) standardized testing pressures, and (c) quality and meaningful parental involvement. The findings aligned with current and historical research that the absence of teacher support, stressors related to standardized testing, and feelings of isolation contributed to teacher dissatisfaction.

INDEX WORDS: Attrition, Retention, Mobilization, Organizational Theory, Motivation, Urban School District, Full-Time Teacher

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MOVEMENT OF TEACHERS WITHIN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

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in

the College of Education and Human Development

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DEDICATION

It is with honor, humility, and gratitude that I dedicate this piece of work to those that endured the frustration and isolation yet remained in support of me in achieving this monumental accomplishment. First, I must thank God, for it is through him that all things are possible and there were a tremendous number of blessings bestowed upon me to get to and through this accomplishment. My wife, Afton Brittany Patterson, who persevered through lonely nights, having to fall asleep alone, waking up not knowing when I returned from the library. She provided the support and the motivation for me to continue to work hard and never to be overly concerned about her or the family. She demonstrated high levels of strength and patience. My father, Samuel F. Patterson II, who from the time I was a child held me to high expectations and high levels of achievement in anything I was involved. I could not have completed this journey without the thought of not letting him down. My mother, who has been my number one cheerleader in all aspects of life. You are the real MVP! To my son, Carter Anthony Patterson, who came into this world during the process. Every class attended, every paper written, every article read was to ensure I was laying a foundation for a better life for you. To my brother Tre and my sister Bria whom I never want to let down in anything I work towards. To my dear friends Johnny Taylor, Harold Brinkley, Samuel Ross, Dale, and Daniel Lomax, you all inspire me every day to be a better man than I was yesterday. Thank you for all your words of encouragement and motivation. Thanks to my administrative colleagues and friends at Atlanta Public Schools, Fran Warren, Audrea Bankston, Dr. Isaac Sparks, Kevin Maxwell, and many others. I appreciate your encouragement and support every step of the way. To Dr. June Erskine who constantly referred to me as Dr. Patterson two years before earning the title, she certainly reminded me where I was going, and she has no clue how instrumental she was on nights I wanted to quit. Lastly, I have to thank the members of my GSU Educational Leadership Cohort, Cohort V, "The Whole Handful." We truly are a family, and we have gone through so much together during this process. I experienced more personal challenges in my life during this process than I ever have and you guys never let the notion of quitting consume me. You were there for me, and I hope that we will continue to be there for each other in life after this journey.

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CHAPTER 1

TEACHING SHORTAGES/TEACHER RETENTION, ATTRITION AND MOBILIZATION

Education has a higher attrition rate than many occupations, including but not limited to child care, secretarial, and paralegal fields; surprisingly, the turnover rate is excessively higher than occupations such as nursing and other “traditionally highly respected professions, including law, engineering, architecture and academia” (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014, p.22). In a 2016 report, the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) found that over 15% of the national education workforce either left or mobilized within the profession between 2011 and 2013. As a result of this phenomenon, schools and districts face financial hardships due to the expenses incurred related to teaching shortages, having to attract, replace, and develop excessive amounts of educators every year (Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Felsher, 2010). The Alliance for Excellent Education estimated that schools and districts across the nation spend on average 2.2 billion dollars annually due to expenses involved in replacing teachers. This replacement of teachers focuses on those that both leave the profession entirely (attrition), accounting for 48.7% of movement, as well as those that mobilize within the profession, reflecting 51.3% of movement (NCES, 2016).

As a result of increased teaching shortages, teacher retention, attrition, and mobilization have become more common topics of educational research (Ingersoll, 2012). Much of the research, extant and current, identifies a vast range of factors that contribute to the phenomenon. Often, the results of these studies consider factors that are unique to a setting demographically, geographically, and or historically (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Hughes, 2012). Educational leaders experience challenges in their ability to create and maintain a culture of learning and refining individuals and programs designed to increase student achievement with the excessive rates of

teacher attrition and mobilization (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011). The proverbial revolving door operates as a barrier to school initiative continuity, staff collegiality, student-teacher relationships, and other components of a school that require time and cohesion (Ingersoll, 2012). This idea of “barriers” is supported by Hanushek, Rivkin, & Schiman (2016) who noted that replacement staff increases the workload of school leaders in that more support is required to develop the replacement staff’s capacity as educators.

Further supporting this idea, frequent new hires and replacement staff need to be supported in their immersion into school-based programs, and to increase their familiarity with the school and community, while leadership is simultaneously continuing to support and develop retained staff (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2014). Commonalities among the aforementioned authors suggest that time, resources, and manpower are being dedicated to frequently filling positions and developing professional and community-based knowledge for new hires and replacement staff, when those same resources could otherwise be devoted to deepening the understanding of content, building on modern instructional practices, and continuing implementation of established programs and initiatives within the school (Hanushek et al., 2016; Kukla-Acevedo, 2012; Hughes, 2012; Boyd et al., 2011).

The early research suggests that there have been decreased amounts of applicants and college entrants to the profession as a result of a lack of interest in or limited certification routes to education (Rumberger, 1987; Bogenschield, 1988; Macdonald, 1999). Consequently, incentivized and penalty-based policies were written and enacted to combat these shortages which included, but were not limited to, alternative certification programs, hiring exceptions through school autonomy, educator incentive and pay-for-performance programs, and increased penalties for contract breaches (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). The early research added to the profession by providing alternative routes to education which have allowed real-world perspectives to merge

with classroom instruction (Lee, 2001). Additionally, programs such as merit pay have had some positive impact on student achievement (Springer, Ballou, Hamilton, Le, Lockwood, McCaffrey, & Stecher, 2011). The policies from the early research, however, have not impacted teaching shortages significantly suggesting that work in staffing schools continues (Alliance of Excellent Education, 2014).

More modern research has adopted an alternative culprit to teaching shortages led by the research of Richard Ingersoll. In comparison to the early literature, the more modern research viewed teacher retention from a different lens. Given that attrition has continually risen, 12% to 16% from 1991 to 2013 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2014), the early research may have gaps. Thus the subsequent educational leadership decisions and policies may require reconsideration. Ingersoll & Smith (2003) claim in their work *The Wrong Solution to Teaching Shortages*, that school and district leadership have traditionally focused policy to combat teaching shortages incorrectly. The work asserts that much of the research on teaching shortages, and subsequent actions, were incorrectly focused on hiring new staff to fill vacancies as opposed to retaining current staff. Ingersoll (2013) noted:

The data suggest that school staffing problems are rooted in the way schools are organized and the way the teaching occupation is treated and that lasting improvements in the quality and quantity of the teaching workforce will require improvements in the quality of the teaching job (p.18).

Ingersoll insists throughout his work that the focus of school and district leadership requires intentionality on retaining quality human capital, re-focusing teaching shortage research on teacher retention, attrition, and mobilization. This approach, in opposition to determining creative strategies and initiatives to attract new applicants to fill empty positions.

Teacher retention, attrition, and mobilization have now become the dominant topic(s) of research pertaining to teaching shortages (Alliance of Excellent Education, 2014). Much of the current research places a primary focus on the retention of teachers and what makes teachers stay. This is evident in the 2012 work of Gail Hughes where she examined the characteristics of schools and organizations, and the impact each has on teacher retention. Similarly, Boyd et al. (2011) focuses on how leadership plays a significant role in retaining staff. This lens of focusing on those that stay could be the result of the relatively easy access to “stayers” versus the challenging access to “leavers” or “movers”, considering the collection of testimonial data and other forms of qualitative methods. This could also be the result of the glass-half-full perspective of optimism. Nonetheless, the vast majority of the current research aims to determine what systems are in place, organizational or leadership-based, that support a teachers’ decision to return each year.

A possible gap in much of the extant research may be the assumption, that knowing why stayers stay, will provide insight into why leavers leave or why movers move. Isolating research to the individuals that remain in the profession, such as the work of Hughes (2012), Boyd et al. (2011), and Darlington (2016) may limit the richness of possible testimony surrounding the phenomenon. Considering why leavers leave or why movers move could add to the research because the contrapositive logic may not apply in contextual cases. This alternative view could build on the studies that focus solely on teacher retention, attempting to determine why teachers are leaving or mobilizing within the profession at high rates. Many attrition studies examine the issue of attrition as a combination of those that leave coupled with those that mobilize (move), grouping the leavers and movers(inter-profession and intra-profession transfers) together providing additional possible gaps. Separating the groups could provide a more specified perspective. Further examination of attrition and mobilization, studied separately, could contribute to the field in that

much of the previous research fails to consider the possibility that mobilization may not be influenced by the same factors that contribute to retention or complete attrition.

For the purpose of clarity, and in order to allow for uniformity of definitions while reading this study, several words and phrases utilized within this study are defined below:

Teacher Retention describes the state of full-time teachers remaining in the same school of hire following one completed school year (NCES, 2013).

Teacher Attrition describes the state of full-time teachers leaving the profession following one completed school year (NCES, 2013).

Teacher Mobilization describes the state of full-time teachers leaving the school of hire after one completed school year, however, remaining in the profession continuing employment at a public school in same school district, a public school in a different school district, a charter school, or at a private school (NCES, 2013).

Urban School District refers to a school district located inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of 250,000 or more (NCES, 2013).

Purpose of the study.

The purpose of this study was to provide policy-makers, school districts, and school leaders with data in the form of teacher perceptions related to organizational factors that impacted their commitment to their setting. In a 2014 study, the National Center for Educational Statistics acknowledged the excessive number of teachers that either leave from or mobilizes within the profession each year and how this number has continually risen from 12% to 16% between 1991 and 2013. Consequently, schools are challenged in their ability to create and maintain a culture of learning and refining individuals and programs designed to increase student achievement (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011). To ensure that students are college

and career ready and can become contributing members to society, the onus is on school and district leaders to hire and retain quality teachers.

Guiding Questions

Available empirical research is limited on the concept of teacher mobilization in isolation of teacher retention and or mobilization. By examining mobilization as an independent idea, using a qualitative approach, this dissertation assessed complex questions as it relates to the movement of teachers within a district and the contributing organizational factors.

Two questions guided the overall work of this study:

1. What are participants' perceptions of the organizational factors that impact their decision to mobilize, leaving a specific school for an alternative educational setting at a lateral position within the same district?
2. How do participants perceive the impact of organizational factors on job satisfaction and their motivation to remain committed to a specific educational setting?

Review of the Literature

In reviewing the available research, the goal was to identify early and modern conclusions, coupled with subsequent policy changes and initiatives intended to address the phenomenon of teacher movement. Examining the early literature in comparison to more current literature allowed for an analysis of the evolution of the research, which could provide information regarding where future research could build on what has been asserted over time. The literature is represented by both quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative studies described the phenomenon from the perspective of identifying *who*, *what*, and *where* the problem has been observed to exist. However, it was the desire of this study to gain insight as to *why* the problem exists. Thus the brunt of the literature selection gravitated towards the qualitative studies.

The early research.

The selected early literature revealed conclusions pertaining to teaching shortages which included the idea that the profession has become unappealing for a variety of factors including but not limited to salary, working conditions, and preparedness. As a result, various policy changes have been suggested to counteract such factors in the form of initiatives and programs geared at replacing vacant positions with replacement staff.

One common factor among the early research included salary, supported by studies including Rumberger (1987) and Murnane & Olsen (1990). Rumberger (1987) found that among math and science teachers from 2,300 U.S. public and private schools, lower salaries compared to other professions requiring similar levels of education and skill sets, was a primary factor to teaching shortages. As a result of these findings, the authors suggested that higher salaries and varying forms of compensation would help reduce these shortages and increase the attractiveness of the profession. Ingersoll (2003) claimed that this was an ineffective remedy regarding salary increases, also citing monetary bonuses, teaching incentives, and performance pay as ineffective. The work claimed that incentive-based attraction would assist in filling positions, however, it will not work to retain or develop individuals if they don't find value in the positions which they are working. This supports the notion that the challenges at the foundation of teaching shortages does not reside in attracting employees, but rather retaining employees.

Another factor found within the early research was preparedness, examined in the work of authors such as Odell & Ferraro (1992) and Andrew (1990). Preparedness was viewed from the lens of traditional education programs as well as alternative routes to certification. Odell and Ferraro (1992) studied 160 teachers that had all experienced the same teacher preparation program offered by the district, without consideration to their educational background. The work noted that 96% of teachers that participated in the preparation program remained in the profession over five years. Similarly, Andrew (1990) found that significantly more five-year teacher

preparation program participants remained in the profession longer than four-year educational program participants. Each author suggested that the experience in a quality teacher preparation program may have positive impacts on increasing the educational workforce. Despite this claim, and the introduction of induction programs, teacher attrition has continually risen (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2014).

A third factor found in the early research on teaching shortages was working conditions, supported by Billingsley, Carlson, & Klein (2004) and Norton (1999). Norton claimed that a major contributing factor to the loss of talent were associated with the conditions of the working environment. This qualitative study found that teachers within their first five years of working in the profession, identified non-instructional responsibilities, evaluation of student performance, student behavior, and parental support as factors directly associated with the job satisfaction of teachers. Billingsley et al. (2004) found similar results in their study of the perceptions of 1,153 teachers and administrators, despite differences in the demographics of their samples. Both authors concluded that schools needed to implement induction programs to gradually immerse teachers into the unique working conditions of their settings with necessary supports. Neither study, however, addressed whether or not the working conditions needed modifications in addition to implementing such induction/immersion programs.

The authors suggested that there are decreased amounts of applicants and college entrants to the profession as a result of the various findings within the early research, (Rumberger, 1987; Bogenschild, 1988; Macdonald, 1999). Consequently, incentivized and penalty-based policies were written and enacted to combat these shortages which included, but were not limited to, alternative certification programs, hiring exceptions through school autonomy, educator incentive and pay-for-performance programs, and increased penalties for contract breaches (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). The early research has added to the profession by providing alternative routes to

education which has allowed real-world perspectives to merge with classroom instruction (Lee, 2001). Additionally, programs such as merit pay have had some positive impact on student achievement (Springer, Ballou, Hamilton, Le, Lockwood, McCaffrey, & Stecher, 2011). The policies from the early research, however, have not impacted teaching shortages significantly suggesting that work continues (Alliance of Excellent Education, 2014).

The modern research.

More modern studies have adopted an alternative culprit to teaching shortages led by the research of Richard Ingersoll. In selecting the most current literature in comparison to the early literature, the goal was to identify studies that viewed teaching shortages from a different lens. Given that attrition has continually risen, 12% to 16% from 1991 to 2013 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2014), the early research may have gaps. Thus the subsequent educational leadership decisions may require reconsideration. Ingersoll & Smith (2003) claim in their work *The Wrong Solution to Teaching Shortages*, that school and district leadership have traditionally focused policy to combat teaching shortages incorrectly. The work asserts that much of the research on teaching shortages, and subsequent actions, were incorrectly focused on hiring staff to fill vacancies as opposed to retaining staff in valued positions. Ingersoll (2003) also noted:

The data suggest that school staffing problems are rooted in the way schools are organized and the way the teaching occupation is treated and that lasting improvements in the quality and quantity of the teaching workforce will require improvements in the quality of the teaching job (p.18).

Ingersoll insists throughout his work that the focus of school and district leadership should be on retaining quality human capital, ensuring that they are working within organizations in roles they find value. This approach, in opposition to determining creative methods of attracting new applicants to fill empty positions. It is worth noting that some teacher turnover is beneficial for

schools and districts. In some cases, particularly those where less effective teachers are leaving, attrition is not necessarily a negative. On average, teachers who leave are indeed less effective than their peers, additionally, teacher success, or lack thereof, is a contributing factor in their decisions to leave (Papay, Bacher-Hicks, & Marinell, 2017).

Modern contemporaries of Ingersoll and those that support his work, have shifted to a more proactive approach of increasing the attractiveness and appeal of the profession by researching the retention and or attrition of quality employees. Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff (2011) support this new perspective in their work, claiming that educational leaders should shift their attention and their talent management responsibilities more towards teacher retention and attrition, and less of a focus on hiring practices. Teacher retention and attrition, and also teacher mobilization embedded within retention and attrition studies, have now become the dominant topic of research pertaining to teaching shortages (Alliance of Excellent Education, 2014). Much of the current research examines this new idea with a primary focus on the retention of teachers and what makes teachers stay. This is evident in the work of Gail Hughes (2012) where she examines the characteristics of schools and organizations and the impact each has on teacher retention. Similarly, Boyd et al. (2011) focuses on how the administration plays a role in retaining staff. This lens, in opposition to attrition, could be the result of the relatively easy access to “stayers” versus the challenging access to “leavers” or “movers”, considering the work involved with the collection of testimonial data through qualitative methods. This could also be the result of the glass-half-full perspective of optimism. Nonetheless, the vast majority of the retention research aims to determine what systems are in place that support a teachers’ decision to return each year.

Regardless of the retention or attrition perspective, the researchers view possible factors contributing to teacher movement from two lenses: personal characteristics including but not

limited to age, race, gender, or certification route (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010; Bakker, Leiter, & Maslach, 2014; Freedman & Appleman, 2008) and organizational factors including but not limited to school climate, testing expectations, leadership support, or salary (Hughes, 2012; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Neal, 2011; Pogodzinski, 2014).

Organizational factors.

A more specified perspective to view teacher attrition, retention and or mobilization is from the lens of the organizational structures and practices. The factors described in this section will examine the conditions and the circumstances related to a particular setting or responsibilities of an educator. Throughout this section, factors such as leadership support, salary, compensation, professional learning, collegiality, students, and teacher preparation were examined. These factors were generalized from a variety of ideas related to the teaching experience outside of those personal factors that an educator brings into the profession. As mentioned earlier in the review, some factors may overlap the constraints of personal and organizational factors, such as the case with teacher preparation, professional learning, and compensation.

Leadership support.

Experiencing support from leadership, or the lack thereof was a common trend within the literature pertaining to teacher retention, attrition, and mobilization. Though much of the literature focused on teachers that were new to the profession, the same ideas are applicable across varying experience bands when you consider curriculum shifts, school transformation, and other modern programs that impact the responsibilities and expectations for all educators in a setting, no matter their experience as noted by Wegner (2000).

Leadership support describes the extent to which school leaders, which may include principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders facilitate and how they support the instruc-

tional responsibilities and the comfort levels teachers experience in executing these responsibilities (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011). This perceived support presents itself in the form of professional growth and capacity building or more protective circumstances such as mediation between teacher and parent, teacher and colleague, or even teacher and district (Brown & Wynn, 2009). Much of the existing research establishes the connection of these types of supports and teachers' commitment to a setting or the profession. Tickle, Chang, & Kim (2011), for instance, noted that school climate survey questions related to leadership support in North Carolina were direct predictors of teacher commitment and were more reliable than all other factors. Additionally, school leadership is said to affect teacher satisfaction due to the influence on building a sense of community, providing teachers with necessary materials and resources to be successful, and mediating issues between teachers and other stakeholders (Boyd et al., 2011).

Willis, Crosswell, Morrison, Gibson, & Ryan (2017) studied testimony from educators in their third year of experience, examining what they perceived as essential supports from leadership that might ensure their commitment to the profession. They found that when school leadership provided teachers with a mentor, provided opportunities to observe veteran teachers, and protected sacred common planning times, this assisted teachers in their abilities to cope with the challenges of the profession. Martin, Andrews, & Gilbert (2009) supported this idea that leadership support, such as ensuring teachers can plan together and collaborate routinely, was rated high in value among teachers committed to the profession. In addition to this finding, they also noted that this was a luxury not often experienced among their participants.

Leadership support is generally associated with reactive measures used to combat teacher attrition. There were however studies that examined such support as a proactive measure aimed at retaining teachers. Shirrell & Reininger (2017) observed that teachers who were encouraged to

engage in collegial and collaborative relationships through club sponsorship, coaching sports teams, or engaged with school function committees were more satisfied, more likely to commit to the profession, and more likely to return to their jobs. Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, (2011) share this idea that leadership bears the responsibility to establish a welcoming and retaining culture within the school. In their study, they found having leadership that supported a collaborative culture mitigated some of the challenges that teachers endured throughout the year.

They also found, similar to Algozinne et al. (2000), that teachers who received support from peers were more likely to persevere through challenges that may overwhelm a teacher experiencing professional isolation. Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, (2012), took a slightly different approach while reaching similar conclusions in that the role of leadership is to create a culture that is student-focused, but in order to achieve such, measures must be taken in creating a culture that encourages teachers to commit to the profession and the building.

The idea that leadership assumes the responsibility of establishing a “retaining culture” comes with its challenges. One question that emerged within the literature asked: how is “leadership support” defined and are all parties aware of this definition? (Schaefer et al., 2012; Shirrell & Reininger, 2017; Beltman et al., 2001). These authors identified inconsistencies in understandings as to what teachers perceived as leadership support versus the perceptions of school leaders. Supporting teachers by establishing opportunities for teachers to be more collaborative and collegial may not be perceived as support based on the role of the teacher in the building. In the context of a physical education teacher who is involved in coaching and other non-instructional activities, he or she would require multiple or varying sources of support which may not include collegiality (Banville & Rikard, 2009).

In other roles, where using mentorship as a form of building collaboration among teachers has been integrated into the job as support, teachers may feel neglected in curriculum support

or other instructional areas (Carter & Keiler, 2009), thus presenting additional challenges in expectations. Furthermore, leadership must examine if all mentorship is good mentorship. Mentorship can be a complex relationship that offers teachers support in areas of need while also having negative impacts in other areas. Valencia (2009) describes this circumstance in her work *Complex Interactions in Student Teaching: Lost Opportunities for Learning* suggesting that when one teacher functions as a mentor to another teacher, leadership must expect that the mentee teacher will absorb the good and the bad.

Leadership support has shown evidence among various researchers to be effective in retaining teachers. The literature suggests that it builds the resiliency necessary to cope with the varying challenges within the nature of the profession. Despite the challenges associated with leadership support, the literature suggests that its absence has far more detrimental results when considering teacher retention, attrition, and mobilization.

Compensation and salary.

The idea of return-on-investment is a common theme among all professions. There is a belief, and research to support the idea, that increased salaries are associated with increased investments, and subsequently, increased retention of teachers. Kukla-Acevedo (2009) found that higher salaries were associated with higher retention. Hughes (2012) shared this conclusion from her research article *Teacher retention: Teacher characteristics, school characteristics, organizational characteristics, and teacher efficacy* where she found that among English teachers that left the profession, the only factor that displayed statistically significant data was compensation. In comparison to retention, there have been observations that suggest teacher mobility is also impacted by compensation. Clotfelter, Ladd, & Holbein (2017) noted that teachers that responded most strongly to transfer from one district to another nearby district were motivated by salary gaps. A subset of teacher attrition is referred to as exit attrition or retirement. Although

the individuals that qualify for this label are seldom the focus of research, it should be noted that increases in compensation have been attributed to deterring their decisions to exit via retirement as analyzed through feedback and testimonial (Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009).

In studying the organizational factors, it becomes increasingly difficult to examine them in isolation of specific contexts. Increased salary is often accompanied by increased challenges or what Derek Neal refers to as “Hazard Pay” in his 2011 article *The Design of Performance Pay in Education*. Also, we must consider the financial constraints of a school or school district. Increases in compensations oftentimes results in decreases to the budget in other areas such as teacher induction programs which have been linked to retaining teachers, especially early career teachers. In most studies related specifically to retention, you will not find compensation as a contributing factor, however in studies with a focus on attrition and mobilization, ex-teachers or mobilized teachers will cite compensation as such. Nonetheless, leadership should be mindful of compensation, not solely in the context of salary, but also benefits, resources, work-based physical and emotional conditions and how this generic concept plays a role in retaining teachers.

Collegiality and collaboration.

Working in education, as with other professions, requires that individuals involve themselves in various collaborative interactions with colleagues and superiors in order to execute their responsibilities effectively. Research has shown that collaboration among colleagues will result in positive gains in student achievement (Moolenaar, Slegers, & Daly, 2012). The converse is supported by the assertion: that a lack of collaboration can have adverse effects on student achievement including residual effects in the form of teacher attrition (Rubin, 2011).

Collegiality is often the result of frequent and results-based workplace collaboration opportunities (Littles, 1982). This collaboration may not always lend itself to content specific goals.

In the absence of collaboration, a culture of collegiality will suffer and can be attributed to a variety of factors. Shernoff, Mariñez-Lora, Frazier, Jakobsons, Atkins, & Bonner (2011) explored how educators perceived their work experiences with their colleagues and found that the majority of the teachers interviewed described themselves as lone practitioners. In a 2015 report, many participants identified relationships with collaborative team members as contributing to how idealized the teaching profession. This collaboration assisted teachers realizing the importance of team meetings, professional learning, common assessments, and planning which also contributed to their feelings of value to the organization (Clandinin, Long, Schaefer, Downey, Steeves, Pinnegar, & Wnuk, 2015).

This connects to the work of Schaefer et al. (2012) where they described this circumstance as the “egg-crate structure” analogizing the egg-crate to teacher isolation when teachers are thrown into the field with inadequate resources and support towards professional success or personal goal acquisition. The research appears to imply that conditions where teachers are working in organizations where collaboration is not encouraged or supported, they are denied the platform to lean on peers or superiors for advice or resources, especially new teachers, thus retention is negatively impacted. Because of this isolation, teachers go unsupported in meeting job-specific expectations, as well as meeting personal goals. Pogodzinski (2014) examined the career decisions of a group of teachers across three categories: majority seasoned teachers, majority early career teachers, and a mixed population. This research found that teachers in each category were more likely to remain in the profession if they were integrated into a culture where teachers were encouraged to collaborate and be collegial. Ronfeldt & McQueen (2017) and Banerjee, Stearns, Moller, & Mickelson (2017) both acknowledged that teachers working in collaborative groups with shared responsibility for a group of students were more likely to remain in the profession when expectations were clear.

The research pertaining to collegiality and collaboration seems to suggest that teachers are more likely to remain in the profession if they are a part of a collaborative team. Furthermore, if said collaborative teams are a part of the culture of the school, teachers are more likely to remain in that setting. Working collaboratively provides teachers a platform to request support and access to resources, but also serves as a foundation of collegiality assisting in teachers feeling welcome and a part of an organization, contrary to Schafer's "egg-crate" analogy. This sharing of experience, resources, and responsibility has shown to have a positive influence on a teacher's decision to remain in the profession (Griffin, 2009; Ronfeldt & McQueen (2017).

Teacher Mentoring/Induction Programs

Callahan (2016) describes mentorship as an individual, specifically a teacher, that is wiser and more experienced who provides guidance to less experienced teachers during a probationary period of time. This more experienced teacher assumes the responsibility of providing support related to planning, instruction, and or organization assisting the less experienced teacher through the learning curve. Pirkle (2011) notes that "The experienced teacher understands the plight of the new teacher, so is best able to anticipate obstacles and dilemmas" (p. 44). Mentoring, thus becomes a responsibility, as opposed to a choice, by the more experienced teachers in that they must develop vested interests in the growth and success of the less experienced teacher.

Mentoring programs are said to be only as strong as the mentors (McCarthy, 2017). Throughout the research, several characteristics of mentoring programs have been cited as necessary for effectiveness. Brinia & Psoni (2018) claimed that highly qualified veteran teachers are necessary to advocate for the lesser experiences teachers which requires effective and systematic training for mentors. Mena, García, Clarke, & Barkatsas (2016) suggested that teacher mentoring programs must establish clear goals and expectations for mentors such that they may provide basic information and provide effective feedback for their mentees. When considering the

reasons that teachers, specifically new teachers, leave the profession, not having a voice or ownership in the development of school culture, feelings of low impact on student achievement, and challenges with classroom management are all issues to examine (Callahan, 2016).

Students and behavior.

Teachers' experiences with students and the dynamics of the student-teacher relationship have emerged as factors in teacher retention, attrition, and mobilization research. Within the variety of literature, a common trend among the theme of student issues is classroom management. Multiple research articles, specifically those focusing on beginning teachers, cite classroom management as a challenge, and aside from salary, student discipline is the most cited reason for teacher attrition (Hughes, 2012). Redman (2015) found that even in the circumstances where teacher attrition was low, classroom management was the most common challenge for teachers. Classroom management as a challenge is not uncommon and is a typical course in traditional and non-traditional teacher preparation programs, however until teachers are immersed into the profession, they are not exposed to this reality in practicality (Redman, 2015). Also, as noted by McDougall (2009), that until teachers experience this reality, they are unable to connect this challenge to the contextual challenges of delivering content, working with special populations, developing individual education plans, and other teacher duties and responsibilities.

Papay, Bacher-Hicks, & Marinell (2017) noted in their research that schools with high minority populations and or high levels of economically disadvantaged students also displayed high levels of attrition. Other studies have also found high positive correlations between teacher attrition in the school and community economics (Rosaline, 2016). Clotfelter et al., (2011) found that poverty in the community was related to teacher attrition, and Achinstein et al. (2010) claimed that teachers are more likely to leave a school, or mobilize, when the school is located

in a high-poverty area or if the school has a high-poverty population. There have been associations established between poverty and violence, poverty and attendance, and poverty and special education which all have also been associated with teacher attrition and mobilization (Shernoff, Mariñez-Lora, Frazier, Jakobsons, Atkins, & Bonner, 2011).

Throughout the literature related to student issues, it seems as though low attrition is consistent with low disciplinary events. Many teachers enter the profession with a desire to help children, but the realities of student discipline and its effects on a teacher's self-worth adversely impact retention (Achinstein et al., 2010). When teachers doubt their self-worth, they doubt their impact on students and begin to question their choice of profession (Brown & Wynn, 2009). Research has found that in settings where student success is a focus, this creates higher perceived notions of student motivation, and retention is prevalent (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Wadell, 2010). Thus, the actions of students impact the school environment and factor into a teacher's decision to remain or stay in the profession, or a specific setting.

The bulk of the existing literature, considering personal characteristics and organizational factors, focus specifically on high-needs and or low-income settings with the implication that this phenomenon is not a concern for settings that do not meet these criteria. Much of the literature seems to suggest that the presence of such organizational factors such as leadership support and mentor programs, or personal challenges such as salary, attrition and or mobilization would be minimal. Attrition numbers, however, negate this assertion, in that the phenomenon is not isolated to high-needs and or low-income settings and is a concern for all educational agencies (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014; Rosaline, 2018). The literature also suggests that reactionary measures have not proven to be effective, and that leadership bears the responsibility of managing organizational structures and practices that encourage quality teachers to remain as opposed to a focus on incentivizing replacements (Ingersoll, 2003).

Teacher mobilization as an independent focus.

The early and modern research on teaching shortages have initiated much dialogue and debate among school and district policymakers. According to Sass, Seal, & Martin (2011), the concept of teaching shortages has become a national crisis. In a 2016 report, the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) found that more than 15% of the national education workforce either left or mobilized within the profession between 2011 and 2013. As a result of this phenomenon, schools and districts face financial hardships due to the incurred expenses related to teaching turnover, having to attract, replace, and develop excessive amounts of educators every year (Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Felsher, 2010). The (AEE) estimated that schools and districts across the nation spend on average 2.2 billion dollars annually due to expenses involving replacing teachers. This replacement of teachers focuses on those that both leave the profession entirely (attrition), accounting for 51.3% of movement, as well as those that mobilize within the profession, representing 48.7% of movement (NCES, 2016). Given this, the majority of available research tends to study mobilization coupled with attrition (or retention).

Mobilization has taken on many definitions depending on the aim of the research. In some studies, researchers include mobilized teachers within retention definitions since that teacher has remained within the profession despite leaving a school or a district (Hughes 2010; Buchanan, Prescott, Schuck, Aubusson, Burke, & Louviere, 2013). In other studies, researchers include mobilized teachers within attrition definitions since that teacher was lost and must be replaced by the school or district despite remaining in the profession (Elfers, Plecki, & Knapp, 2006; Clotfelter et al., 2011). Although there are increases in teaching shortage research, seldom does the research focus specifically on mobilization as an independent entity separate from the stayers or leavers.

The study of teacher retention, attrition, and mobilization as a root cause of teaching shortages has proven to be complicated in the inconsistencies in which researchers, district leaders, policymakers and other stakeholders are defining the terms (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011). Studies define retention as the result of teachers retained after one year, three years, or five years. Other studies define attrition as the result of teachers leaving the profession entirely, those that have left the district/state in which they worked, or those that have transferred within the district. Sedivy-Benton & Boden-McGill (2012) defined attrition as a teacher's decision to transfer to a preferable setting when given the opportunity. Reporting data in the various ways of existing research are associated with how the issue has been addressed through policy (Elfers, Plecki, & Knapp, 2006). Consider educators that decide to explore employment in an alternative district yet remain within the state workforce. This move has implications on both the district and the school, in that losing the educator results in incurred replacement expenses. Also, the district or school gaining the educator incurs onboarding expenses. This transition of employment has been defined as attrition in some studies, coupled with those individuals that decide to completely leave the profession, and also as mobilization in other studies separated from the leavers. For this reason, identifying the root causes of teaching shortages continues to be puzzling. Gaps in the research are resulting from how individual studies are reporting their data and defining their terms.

As the research modernizes, organizations should focus more on understanding teacher mobilization. Since the work of Richard Ingersoll and his contemporaries, and the consistent claims that teacher turnover research has had an incorrect focus on hiring and staffing strategies, the phenomenon has been examined more from the lens of retaining teachers and combatting teacher turnover through the study of teacher retention (stayers), attrition (leavers), and mobiliza-

tion (movers) (Ingersoll, 2003). Much of the early literature only focuses on the stayer and leavers, heavily focusing on the stayers and providing assumed conclusions about the leavers. However, in considering those that transfer within the profession, researchers can gain a better understanding of organizational, environmental, and personal factors related to working conditions and educator experiences. Future research thus has the responsibility to examine movers in more detail, by avoiding the coupling of movers with stayers and or movers with leavers.

Numerous organizations have collected data and tracked trends within the education workforce dating back to the mid-1980s. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) has utilized the Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS) and Teacher Follow-Up Surveys (TFS) to conclude that with the increase in student population was an increase in the educator population. However, the stability of the workforce has been relatively unchanged. Despite significant changes in the workforce population, teaching shortages have varied insignificantly between 1987 and 2011 (Kena, Hussar, McFarland, de Brey, Musu-Gillette, Wang, & Barmer, 2016). The issue with studies similar to the NCES, is that they only identify what the issues are from one perspective. They have identified that school staffing is an issue with the quantitative data associated, however, they don't reveal much information as to why teacher turnover and teaching shortages exist.

Ingersoll (2003) has guided his work noting that organizations can combat building-level turnover by focusing specifically on the characteristics of the school or the organization. Like the NCES, Ingersoll utilized SASS and TFS data to examine teacher turnover as a consequence of the organizational structures of the school. He concluded that teachers are leaving for reasons other than retirement in much higher numbers. Ingersoll (2003) also noted that [building-level] teacher shortages are represented more from movers (7.2%) than from leavers (6.0%), thus coining the phrase "the revolving door" (Ingersoll, 2001, p.14).

The proverbial revolving door operates as a barrier to initiative continuity, staff collegiality, student-teacher relationships, and other components of a school that requires time and cohesion (Ingersoll, 2012). Although, teachers that exit the profession can be the result of natural transitions including but not limited to relocation, retirement, or promotion, some instances of this movement of teachers can support change and innovation (Awang, Ibrahim, Nor, Razali, Arof, & Rahman, 2015). Teachers have cited personal reasons such as interest in alternative professions and family, however, Ingersoll insists that even still organizational factors play a role in such decisions. Many studies have found that leadership support, collegiality, students, salary, autonomy and inclusion, expectations, and undesirable placement have played a role in the departure of teachers (Ingersoll, 2003). What typically is unaccounted for, is where these individuals go once they leave and if they remain in the profession.

New research suggests that teachers that leave a specific building are going to an alternative location within the same district in higher numbers (Shirrell & Reininger (2017). Considering the educators that left one setting for another educational setting in a study of teacher mobility between the 2012 and 2013 school years, 59% moved from one public school to another public school in the same district (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014). Examining previous school years, 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, SASS and TFS data reflected 45% of educators that transferred landed in schools within the same district while 53% had gone outside of the district (NCES, 2015). This high percentage of teachers that are transferring within the district indicates that organizational factors may be affecting teacher motivation and job satisfaction. Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond (2017) asserted that such transitions can be reduced when considering intentional improvements to working conditions.

Early career teachers are more inclined to move than other teachers (NCES, 2015). Teachers within their first five to ten years of teaching are significantly more likely to mobilize

than those outside of this subset (Heyens, 1988 as cited in Elfers et al., 2006) claiming that “Forty percent of the sample had taught in more than one district, and twenty-five percent had taught in more than one school within the same district” (p.99). Similar studies have found that experiences within the organization heavily influence new teachers’ decisions to remain in their current schools (Simon and Johnson, 2015; Skaalvik, E. & Skaalvik S., 2015; Desimone, Hochberg, Porter, Polikoff, Schwartz, & Johnson, 2014). The claim is that the structure of the organization including working conditions impacted teacher satisfaction and that supporting these teachers through building collegiality, professional growth, desirable and appropriate assignments, resources, and manageable expectations led to perceived professional success ultimately resulting in teacher commitment (Shah, Akhtar, Zafar, & Riaz, 2012).

Summary

An abundance of current and historical research has been conducted on the problematic issues of teacher attrition and subsequent measures to increase retention. Federal initiatives such as Race to the Top and the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) which includes signing bonuses, loan forgiveness, tuition assistance, and higher salaries have proven ineffective in retaining quality teachers (Glennie, Coble, & Allen, 2004.). Consequently, teacher mobility as a result of organizational factors appears to be a current factor for the increase or stabilization of teacher movement rates (Berry et al., 2002; Ingersoll, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2013). Although there are varying reasons that teachers choose to move within and out of the teaching profession, this literature review focused specifically on organizational factors that impact teacher retention: administrative support, collegiality, mentoring, professional learning, compensation, and parental involvement.

Research on effective schools suggested successful student learning is linked to the following school characteristics: alignment of instruction and assessment, professional development, effective monitoring of instruction, reduction of teacher attrition, and positive school culture (Suber, 2011). Therefore, the onus is on school and district leaders to develop initiatives and programs that promote teacher retention with a focus on organizational factors.

It was evident throughout the research cited in the literature review that effective and supportive school leaders are instrumental in teacher motivation. Positive and sustained support from school leaders has positively impacted teacher retention (Shaw & Newton, 2014). School leaders were viewed as supportive by teachers when they provided encouragement, professional development, enforced consequences for student misbehavior, assigned teachers a mentor, and created a culture of collaboration (Matsko, 2010; Shaw & Newton, 2014).

An experienced and qualified teacher in every classroom, every day, is essential for increasing student achievement (Ado, 2013). Overwhelmingly, many researchers (Berry et al., 2002; Ingersoll, 2012; Kardos & Moore – Johnson, 2007) confirmed that working conditions, including teacher autonomy and voice, class size, collegiality, shared understandings of administrative support, and fewer discipline problems are indicators which function as predictors of teacher morale, subsequently leading to retaining quality teachers. Ultimately, schools and districts must implement strategic programs and effective leadership practices that support the growth of quality teachers, supporting their commitment to the profession if we are to prepare all students for college and career.

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CHAPTER 2

ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY AND THE MOTIVATION OF TEACHERS TO COMMIT

Despite years of research, teacher movement specifically teacher mobilization, continues to plague schools and school districts across the nation (AAE, 2014). The NCES (2016) defines teacher mobility as the result of a full-time teacher leaving the school of hire after one completed school year, yet remaining in the profession, continuing employment at a public school in same school district, a public school in a different school district, a charter school, or at a private school. This mobility is especially significant in urban schools located in communities that serve high populations of low-income and minority students (Rosaline, 2018). Reasons for this movement include personal factors such as retirement, relocation, promotion, and childbirth as well as organizational factors including stress, resignation, collegiality, and leadership support (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ladd, 2011; Ingersoll 2003).

Teachers across varying experience bands have cited reasons such as limited or nonexistent support from leadership, a limited voice in decision making, an absence of parental involvement, testing pressures, and student behavior as factors for this movement (Darling-Hammond, 2003). As a result, students are more likely to experience teachers that have minimal experience which in turn has adverse effects on student achievement (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). Urban districts then face the challenge of staffing schools with untrained teachers when Darling-Hammond portends that urban schools need experienced, culturally competent teachers to work with the high number of diverse students.

The existing data acknowledges that teachers that are not retained by schools identified administrative support as a reason for leaving (Smith & Ingersoll, 2003). This support describes a teacher's expectation of consequences for unruly students, a leader's inclusion of teacher-voice

in decision making, providing teachers with a mentor to overcome professional challenges, and providing teachers with adequate time to collaborate and plan with peers (Martin, Andrews, & Gilbert, 2009). Brown & Wynn (2009) assert that these actions on behalf of leadership build trust and confidence in teachers in that leadership would be accessible for timely and meaningful feedback.

The goal of this study was to identify the existence of certain events, behaviors, and/or programs related to the organizational structures within an urban school district that interfered with the job satisfaction of teachers and their commitment to their settings. Often, this topic of research aims to study why teachers either stay or leave the profession. However, in efforts to build on the existing research, it was the goal of this study to search for insight into reasons why teachers voluntarily changed settings, given that similar hiring expenses, time and monetary-based, are incurred in mobilization. If school and district leaders are aware of possible contributing factors to teacher mobilization, they can be more proactive and more intentional in establishing a culture of retention.

Statement of purpose.

The purpose of this study was to provide policy-makers, school districts, and school leaders with data in the form of teacher perceptions related to organizational factors that impacted their commitment to their setting. In a 2014 study, the National Center for Educational Statistics acknowledged the excessive number of teachers that either leave from or mobilizes within the profession each year and how this number has continually risen 12% to 16% from 1991 to 2013. Consequently, schools are challenged in their ability to create and maintain a culture of learning and refining individuals and programs designed to increase student achievement (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011). To ensure that students are college and career

ready and can become contributing members to society, the onus is on school and district leaders to hire and retain quality teachers.

Significance of the study.

Data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) found that more than 15% of the national education workforce either left or mobilized within the profession between 2011 and 2013. This case study sought to add to the existing literature related to teacher mobilization within a specific urban school district, specifically examining those that voluntarily forfeited employment in one setting and opted for employment within the same district. Also, the findings from this study will suggest recommendations to school and district policy and/or practices and future research. Furthermore, the profession as a whole can gain a deeper understanding of the salient practices of schools and districts with low teacher retention.

Ingersoll (2003) noted that “school staffing problems are rooted in the way schools are organized and the way the teaching occupation is treated” (p.18). He claimed that improvement in the quality and quantity of the teaching workforce required improvements within the organization. Retaining teachers within the workforce is critical if we expect the educational system to produce students that are college and career ready and prepared to be contributing members to society (Robertson & Earl, 2014). Teacher movement has adverse impacts on student achievement due to frequent disruptions to students' learning experiences (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). The culture of the organization is also adversely impacted from this movement of teachers, as teacher movement operates as a barrier to initiative continuity, staff collegiality, student-teacher relationships, and other components of a school that require time and cohesion (Ingersoll, 2012).

In response to the existing research, policymakers have designed and implemented various initiatives aimed at improving the desire of teachers to remain committed to the profession.

In most cases, such initiatives are monetary-based including salary increases, signing bonuses, student loan forgiveness, and pay-for-performance programs (Ingersoll & Smith, 2013). These initiatives, however, have proven to be unsuccessful as teacher retention has not been impacted significantly and schools and districts continue to face financial hardships due to the incurred expenses related to teaching shortages, having to attract, replace, and develop excessive amounts of educators every year (Ingersoll 2012; AAE, 2014). The AEE estimated that schools and districts spend on average 2.2 billion dollars annually due to expenses involved in replacing teachers.

This study was significant in that it aimed at identifying the existence of certain events, behaviors, and/or programs related to the organizational practices within schools inside of an urban school district that interfered with the motivation of teachers to remain committed to that setting. In efforts to build on the existing research, it was the goal of this study to identify *why* teachers voluntarily changed settings in the same district since similar hiring expenses, time and monetary-based, are incurred in mobilization. If school and district leaders are aware of possible factors that contribute to teacher mobilization, they may be more proactive and more intentional in establishing a culture of retention. The structures developed or the initiatives implemented could then work in favor of fiscal responsibility and talent development considering organizational leadership. This study suggests additional research opportunities related to teacher retention, attrition, and mobilization beyond the scope of this study considering alternative subsets of individuals and settings.

Guiding questions.

The purpose of this case study was to examine the organizational factors that may have motivated teachers within an urban school district to forfeit their employment at a specific school voluntarily yet continuing to work in a lateral position within the same district. It sought to specifically identify factors that influenced teachers to mobilize within the same school district.

Guided by organizational theory, the study attempted to identify the extent at which perceived organizational factors within these schools, within this district, influenced teachers' decision to discontinue teaching at a specific setting. The research aimed to accomplish this by answering two research questions:

1. What are participants' perceptions of the organizational factors that impact their decision to mobilize, leaving a specific school for an alternative educational setting at a lateral position within the same district?
2. How do participants perceive the impact of organizational factors on job satisfaction and their motivation to remain committed to a specific educational setting?

Theoretical Framework

The focus of this study was the mobilization of teachers within an urban school district. The sample identified in this research included full-time public-school teachers that have taught for at least one full school year within the specified school district who voluntarily opted to leave this setting for lateral roles within the district. The reason for their voluntary choice to leave a specific setting is unknown. However organizational theory based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs served as the theoretical framework in guiding the research.

Organizational theory is the study of organizations and its members, focusing on the relationships between the two, given the environment in which they are intended to coexist (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton, & Luppescu, 2010). Lawson & Lawson (2013) describe this relationship as the organization functioning as an entity assisting in meeting human needs and motivations. The authors also claim that the organization has needs to be met by the employees as well. While the organization provides employees with careers, compensation, and future opportunities, the employees in return provide the organization with talent, knowledge, and energy (Lawson & Lawson, 2013).

Thus, the decisions of the employees may be influenced by their needs and motivations which ultimately dictate the level and frequency that their talent, knowledge, and energy are committed to the organization, impacting how problems are resolved, and how needs are met. Developing structures that support the relationship between organization and employee may also support the relationship between the mission and goals of the organization with the motivation and needs of the employee. Supporting the growth of this relationship could impact teachers' decisions to choose to commit to the organization, in creating the perception that the organization is in return committed to the employee.

Maslow, in his study of human's hierarchy of needs, focused on influences from within an organization and how such influences impacted individual motivations. Maslow insisted that individual needs and desires were the primary motivations for individuals to commit to the mission, vision, and goals of the organization (Larkin, 2015). Maslow's earliest contentions were that humans had five sequential needs: physiological, safety, love/affection/belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1985). Over time, his idea evolved such that this view no longer identified the basic needs as following the originally proposed sequential order. Maslow (1966), viewed the varying types of needs as unfixed (O'Connor & Yballe, 2007). McLeod (2014) later claimed that Maslow's stance evolved such that individuals could fluidly transition from one set of needs to others depending on varying organizational factors and experiences within the individual's life.

Supporting Maslow's needs theory and connecting it to the teaching profession, authors such as Moores-Abdool and Voigt (2013) studied reasons that special education teachers needed mentors. The work found that these specific teachers had a perception that their challenges stemmed from a lack of administrative support, thus they were overwhelmed with instructional duties and paperwork, and or they felt isolated in their work. These ideas aligned with Maslow's

claim that the psychological needs of teachers are important because addressing them will impact their desire for higher level needs and assist them in transitioning through the various levels of needs reaching satisfaction. The idea is that if employees are psychologically engaged, they desire higher level needs and when those needs are met they reach satisfaction, ultimately, committing to the organization. Moores-Abdool and Voigt (2013) also asserted the significance of Maslow's fifth level within the hierarchy and claimed that the need for growth is defined on the self-actualization level. At this level, the teachers can exhaust their "tool boxes" in solving problems and incorporating individual knowledge and creativity in their positions. Once fully through the progression of the sequence of needs reaching self-actualization, teachers are more likely to commit to the profession (Moores-Abdool and Voigt, 2013).

Winger & Norman (2010) and McCleod (2014) both interpreted Maslow as saying that individuals would flow fluidly between various combinations of needs depending on the factors presented in everyday life. Maslow describes self-actualization as a living and ongoing process that will evolve as individuals embark upon new opportunities and take risks in current positions (Winger & Norman, 2010). Huitt (2007) described individuals fitting the description of "self-actualized" as those that are solution-oriented, optimistic, concerned with personal advancement, and able to process peak experiences. Huitt, in his work, believed that these peak experiences were those that met the needs of an individual that was transcending. Through this transcendence, an individual becomes more intelligent and can adapt and perform in a vaster range of situations. The implication appears to be that once an individual reaches this point, there exists an intrinsic motivation to perform and execute their responsibilities.

Given that organizational theory, based on Maslow's needs theory, aligns to the goals of this study, it guided the research to identify the organizational factors that motivated teachers within a specific school district to forfeit employment in their respective settings yet remaining

in the profession and within the same district. The motivational factors that impact a teachers' decision to move within the profession should be examined from the perspective of the organizational structures and practices of these specific schools. The idea behind this theory at its foundation is that individuals can coexist, and through shared responsibility, they "can accomplish more as a group than as individuals through their own strengths" (Ingersoll, 2003, p.17). Ingersoll also believed that combatting the "revolving door" phenomenon and understanding attrition requires organizations to view the problem through this organizational theory lens.

In conclusion, organizational theory using Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a framework provided a foundation for the research in this study. Considering the factors that the literature review described as influencing the motivation of teachers in this specific school district and their decisions to move, the guiding questions aimed at identifying the unmet needs of those participants within the sample. It is the hope that with the data acquired from this study, school and district leaders can adjust their organizational designs to more intentionally and proactively meet the needs of teachers, motivating them to remain committed to their current settings.

Methodology

A case study has been defined as identifying a specific case as a concrete entity such as an individual, a small group, or an organization (Creswell, 2013). Yin (2013) adds to this notion as this work defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that examines a phenomenon within its context. Yin proceeds to claim that case study design is most appropriate when the focus of the study is to determine how and or why things are when the context is relevant, and behaviors cannot be manipulated. The research suggests that a case study is recommended when researchers want to investigate the effectiveness of a program or certain structures of an organization within

context(Yin, 2013; Creswell, 2013). This qualitative case study investigated why specific teachers decided to forfeit employment within specific settings for organizational reasons and opted to explore future employment at lateral positions within the same school district.

An urban school district, defined as a school district located inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with a population of 250,000 or more (NCES, 2013) included the study sites within this research. This specific district represents multiple urban school districts across the nation. Although many schools within this district would typically be categorized as high-risk for attrition based on Rosaline (2018), I intended to identify possible contributing organizational factors to identify why teachers are leaving these sites yet remaining within the district. This study builds on the existing research on teacher attrition in that it investigated specific teacher perceptions that may have led to their dissatisfaction and motivated them to mobilize: leadership support, standardized testing pressures, and parental involvement and how improvements in these areas could lead to teachers remaining committed to their settings. Therefore, teachers participating in this case study described their perceptions of the organizational structures that impacted their decision to forfeit employment at their specified settings.

A qualitative case study examines the patterns of understanding acquired from participant testimony in their own words (Merriam, 1998). The researcher seeks to understand the meaning that participants have constructed using their experiences and supporting artifacts to examine emerging patterns related to the phenomenon of study (Merriam, 1998). The researcher then, can present these patterns for others to review. Interviews allowed me the opportunity to discover commonalities in testimony related to the organizational factors that motivated the decisions of participants, without any influence from the researcher. Therefore I, as much as possible, attempted to construct meaning of the experiences of the participants as close to their reality as possible to maintain the credibility of my research as suggested by Yin (2013).

Creswell (2013) acknowledged the frequency in which qualitative research methods are used to gain insight into contextual matters within the school setting. In addition to interviews as a data source, I provided a platform for participants to offer follow-up commentary and other artifacts related to their experiences beyond the limits of the interview. The extended testimony and any accompanying artifacts assisted in capturing the perspectives of the participants to strengthen the study further.

I interpreted the study from a constructionist epistemology. Yin (2013) claimed that constructionism is determining truth completely dependent upon the perspective of the person. Constructionism is the way in which people, or groups of people, construct the meaning of their experiences (Walker, 2015). Furthermore, constructionism examines how people attain knowledge and how that knowledge impacts society. Given this, my case study aimed to identify the truthful perspectives of the participants regarding their lived experiences related to the organizational factors impacting their commitment to a school setting.

A case study investigates the effectiveness of programs or organizational structures by utilizing research strategies to address how and why things are when the context is relevant, and behaviors cannot be manipulated (Yin, 2013). This single case study describes how organizational factors impact a teachers' commitment to a setting by examining the culture and perceived levels of support teachers experience. The study was bound by time, given the research was performed over three months. An additional constraint was that it only sought qualitative data from one teaching experience when teachers may have had other more satisfactory experiences. The research was also limited to nine of ninety-seven possible study sites within the district. Each of these constraints may have impacted my ability to gain a full understanding of the organizational factors that impact a teachers' commitment to a specific setting. The following sections of the

dissertation will describe the inclusion criteria for this study, the obligations of the participants, and the processes used for data collection and analysis.

Sampling.

Sampling is a key component of qualitative research design (Mason, 2017). To address the theoretical and practical concerns involving sampling for the interviews, Robinson (2014) suggests following a four-step process: (a) setting a sample universe, (b) selecting a sample size, (c) devising a sampling strategy and (d) sample sourcing.

Setting the sample universe.

Considering step one, the researcher must identify the sample universe. The sample universe could also be referred to as the target population. The sample universe is the collection of each individual from which testimony can legitimately be utilized to add value to the research (Etikan, Musa, S. & Alkassim, R., 2016). In identifying the sample universe, I determined a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria designated for the study (Bernard, Wutich, & Ryan, 2016). Inclusion criteria identified what qualified participation while exclusion criteria disqualified participation. Working together, these criteria created objective limits around who was included in the sample. For the purpose of this study, the sample universe involved both site selection and participant selection.

Site selection.

The designated site selection for this study was an urban school district, defining "urban" as a school district located inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of 250,000 or more (NCES, 2013). This district included 98 learning sites including two single-gender campuses and 17 charter schools. This specific district represents multiple urban school districts across the nation (Rosaline, 2018). There is one school within this district that was eliminated from the study, thus the individuals that opted out of employment from this school were

disqualified from participation. There was an issue of bias involved with this school within the district due to my employment position. I believed that my role in this school could impact the willingness and candidness of testimony from participants, thus I disqualified former employees from this site. The remaining schools within the district included 97 learning sites (two single-gender schools) and 17 charter schools within the sample universe.

Participants.

As it relates to this study, I selected participants using a homogenous form of purposive sampling where the participants shared certain characteristics based on pre-determined criteria related to the research questions. Due to the level of inclusion and exclusion criteria that were used to define the sample universe, the homogeneity of the sample universe was more apparent (Robinson, 2014). The criteria included full-time, certified teachers of any content area. These teachers must also have voluntarily forfeited their position within any of school sites while remaining in the district at a lateral position. Lastly, the teachers must have cited that their decisions to leave were the result of reasons other than personal circumstances. Full-time teachers, defined by the district as a teacher employed for at least 90 percent of the normal or statutory number of hours of work for a full-time teacher over a complete school year was necessary for the study in efforts to eliminate those that had a higher propensity to leave for alternative employment options for reasons not valuable to the study. The selected participants reflected teacher from elementary, middle, and high school. There was only one teacher that taught a non-core subject. Each teacher affirmed that their decision to leave the school within this study was the result of personal reasons via survey and that they had all received contracts for future employment. In three cases the teachers did not sign the contract and applied for re-hire within the district. In six cases the teachers noted that they entered the intra-district transfer portal at the designated time. A description of the participants can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Information and Experiences

Participant	Age Range	Total Experience (In Years)	Setting Experience (In Years)	Role
Ms. Moore	22 - 40	11-15	3	HS Teacher
Tre' Franklin	22 - 40	6-10	3	HS Teacher
Ms. Maishall	22 - 40	11-15	4	ES Teacher
Coach D.	22 - 40	1-5	2	HS Teacher
Dr. Marilyn	22 - 40	11-15	5	MS Teacher
Mr. Marcel	22 - 40	11-15	3	HS Teacher
Miss Brittany	22 - 40	6 -10	4	HS Teacher
Mr. Ponto	22 - 40	11-15	3	ES Teacher
Ms. Tesa	40+	16+	7	HS Teacher

Setting a sample size.

Theoretical and practical factors both drive the sample size of qualitative studies. I had an obligation to be practical and consider the reality of time and resources allocated to the research. Identifying a predetermined sample size allowed for finiteness and making planning possible. Conflicting recommendations for identifying a finite sample size created a challenge for me. Instead, I identified an approximation with a minimum and a maximum window of eight to twelve participants as suggested by Robinson (2014).

In theory, the researcher wants to achieve a point of data saturation. In qualitative case study research, it is said to be good practice to collect data until the researcher observes redundancy or oversaturation of information gathered (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). Lathem (2013) asserts that the saturation of data occurs around twelve participants. Bernard (2012) asserts the data saturation, specifically, for interviews, was an unquantifiable number and that the researcher should get whatever he or she can get.

Data saturation occurs when the further collection of testimony provides no additional value regarding themes, information, or individual perspectives (Suri, 2011). According to Suri

(2011), purposeful sampling increases the likelihood of data saturation. This work states, “the more precise a question, the quicker it tends to reach data saturation” (Suri, 2011, p.9). It is also worth noting that with open-ended questions, each interview likely provided new information (Paterson, Thorne, Canam, & Jillings, 2001). To ensure I was conscious of data saturation and when this moment arose, it was imperative that I collected and analyzed data simultaneously to make this determination.

There was an intended maximum of twelve interviews intended to be held to increase the likelihood of exceeding saturation, preventing no new emergent ideas. Eleven participants were selected to participate in the interview even after recognizing data saturation after nine. Given that Lathem (2013) claims saturation occurs at twelve and Bernard (2012) claims this number is unquantifiable, selecting a pool of eight to twelve candidates provided a safe estimation given the many circumstances that could have arisen and prevented the intended number of interviews from being completed.

Devising a sample strategy.

After determining the sample universe and sample size for the data collection, I identified how participants would be selected. Robinson (2014) states that generally, this selection falls into two categories: (i) random (convenience sampling) or (ii) purposive sampling. For the purposes of qualitative research, random and convenience sampling presented the challenge of generating a broad or generic sample universe (target population) thus allowing for overgeneralized results. Purposive sampling, however, ensured that a specific set of cases were examined using a more specific criterion-based sampling process (Robinson, 2014; Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). In utilizing criterion sampling strategies, I relied on my theoretical understanding of the case and considered the unique aspects of the phenomenon, ensuring their presence in the sample identified (Tongco, 2007).

Sample sourcing and recruiting.

Once I identified the sample universe, a sample size, and a sampling strategy for the participants within the study, I recruited the actual participants. This step required more ethical considerations than the others and higher levels of transparency and open communications with study subjects (Bernard, 2012). Topics such as the goals of the study, details pertaining to interviewee commitments and obligations, and how to protect the anonymity of the participants were all critical in this stage. It was essential that once I identified the participants, they were privy to all information that would assist them in reaching informed consent to participate, with all necessary documents.

Jin (2017) notes “ways of recruiting participants for interviews are only limited by a researcher’s ingenuity in how to disseminate the message of his/her research study to the sample universe” (p. 11). One way of disseminating this message was through advertising. Advertising traditionally has been in the form of print messages but can also be through digital dissemination which has become more popular with modern technology (Amon, Campbell, Hawke, & Steinbeck, 2014). Amon et al. (2014) support the use of social media and social networking in disseminating information and advertising research because of the wide range of exposure. However, they caution that the responses could be biased or skewed towards higher income and educational levels of respondents. Other forms of advertising reflect email, workplace intranet, internal mail, or notice boards, given that I acquired permission to utilize these platforms.

The specific form of advertising for this study was print advertisement placed in teachers’ work mailboxes and on notice boards at the study sites at the discretion and with the approval of the school-based leadership. There were also electronic versions of the same print advertisement used via social media networks, specifically, open Facebook educator groups. These options al-

lowed potential candidates to self-select for participation in the research or refer additional candidates. The advertisement contained information about the study (who, what, when, why, and how) and contact information for the researcher allowing the potential candidates to volunteer participation in the study and points of contact. Those that opted to participate, through responding via email to the advertisement, received a follow-up email with a link to Qualtrics survey. This survey began with the informed consent details and inquired as to whether or not the possible study subject reviewed the documents and consented via radio transmission to further participation. After reading the information within the informed consent document, and deciding to consent to participation, study subjects were immediately directed to the next set of qualifying questions within the Qualtrics survey. If they did not consent to participation, the survey ended.

Chain Referral sampling was another method of gathering and recruiting participants for this study. This method of sampling involved using current participants that have already met the inclusion criteria, or those that had information from the advertisement, as a referral service for additional participants that had the potential to make valuable contributions to the research (Tongco, 2007). Generally, the referrals often are of acquaintances or colleagues of current participants, and this form of recruitment provided me with access to individuals that I may otherwise not have been able to access. Chain referral sampling proved to be beneficial given that the study sample included teachers that had mobilized, making them more difficult to identify. This form of recruitment also may have been more effective given potential study subjects are less likely to respond to research advertisements sensitive in nature such as this study (Heckathorn, D., & Cameron, C., 2017).

When gathering or recruiting participants for interviews, I had to consider the idea of incentive-based participation. Theoretically, incentives increase the likelihood of participation by adding motivation for participants looking for a trade-off for their time and information (George,

S., Duran, N., & Norris, K., 2014). Conversely, Miller (2017) contends that financial incentive for interview participation could lead to coerced testimony. I also had to consider and avoid the concept of undue influence and coercion. Thus, it was recommended by both studies that if I could acquire participation without financial incentive, it would have been preferable. The incentive does always need to be financial. Fugard & Potts (2015) claimed that providing participants with transcripts and reports of the study's findings functioned as an incentive, though this may not qualify as an incentive to all. Additionally, communicating the potential benefits of what could result from the findings may have incentivized some, yet again, I needed to be sensitive in identifying who this may be incentive to and who this may cause further distress.

For the purposes of this study, incentive was in the form of the benefits to the profession that the study may identify. Participants volunteered participation in the study due to dissatisfaction with the organizational structures and the environment in which they were expected to perform, as noted from the qualifying surveys. Thus, it was assumed that they may have had some investment in what the findings suggested. I provided participants with copies of the results, maintaining anonymity in all documents.

In conducting the research, it was imperative that I considered several assumed risks associated with participation. I recognized that I needed to refrain from the use of deception or concealment, intentionally or unintentionally. The informed consent document provided to participants ensured that they were completely informed of any potential risk, giving them the option not to participate. I informed the participants that this study would not expose them to harm that is greater than that ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Previous research concludes that urban schools with higher percentages of minority at-risk students are typically associated with high levels of teacher movement (Darling-Hammond,

2014). Many researchers have concluded that organizational factors function as a primary indicator to teacher satisfaction and ultimately teacher movement (Ingersoll, 2012; Hanushek, Rivkin, & Schiman, 2016; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2014). The school sites and participants represented other urbanized school district. Each of the nine school sites from where I recruited participants, met the inclusion criteria established. Each participant met the designation of voluntary transfers given that they all received employment contracts to continue employment which was forfeited. Nine teachers, with varying experience levels ranging from three to nineteen years, participated in this study, providing a broad perspective of the perceptions related to organizational factors contributing to teacher motivation and commitment.

Data collection.

This case study involved data collection from personal interviews either face-to-face or by telephone, with telephone interviews being an as-necessary option. The interviews were held in a public location, collaboratively determined by the participant and researcher, keeping in mind that the location must have been one that was conducive to private conversations that would be captured via digital voice recording devices. Data collection also included a secondary form of extended interviews, which allowed participants to provide follow-up responses and the option to upload artifacts to a password protected Google Drive. Each participant was given access, via email, to one folder within the drive and I was the only other person with access to the folder.

Within the participant designated folder was an additional folder entitled “artifacts” for participants to upload any documents that they felt would provide additional and relevant data to the study. There was a Google Word Document in the folder that allowed the participant to notate any further testimony that may not have presented itself during the interview. The Google Drive was monitored daily for any updated information, as this was necessary in seeking data

saturation. The extended interview and artifact collection was protected through this private cloud drive with encrypted passwords. This provided participants with the option to present rich and valuable information outside of the interview to a safe and autonomous location. Once the information was uploaded or shared to the cloud-based drive, it was not forwarded or downloaded to any other locations.

Interviews.

Research suggests that an interview site “embodies and constitutes multiple scales of spatial relations and meaning, which construct the power and positionality of participants in relation to the people, places, and interactions discussed in the interview” (Elwood & Martin, 2000, p. 649). The authors seem to suggest that the researcher be intentional about where the interviews take place. Alternative research such as that of Knox & Buckard (2009) suggests the most informational conversations and effective interviews are the results of ensuring participants feel comfortable enough to candidly and transparently delve into difficult experiences with a relative stranger. In determining these locations, participants were allowed to propose options that were public, safe, and conducive to collecting interview data. I respectfully declined locations such as participants’ homes, diners, food courts inside the mall, and lounges.

The interview locations included school-site libraries and public libraries which supported the special relations and meaning claims from the literature. I also utilized coffee shops, but I restricted the use of public locations such as this to times when one could expect low volumes of patrons. The hope was that giving the participants some level of autonomy, by allowing them to propose preferred interview locations, would support their comfort level in being open and candid. Also, I believed that this would serve as a means to eliminate inconvenience as a barrier to engaging in information-rich discussion. I recorded the interviews via personal notes and using three forms of digital voice recording software including an iPhone, and iPad, and a

Sony digital voice recorder used simultaneously. The interviews were then transcribed using Cogi, and data transcription service, then uploaded to N'Vivo for coding. This ensured that I captured every detail of the participant's experience.

Creswell (2002) recommended that researchers establish an interview protocol containing specific instructions for the process of the interview, the selected questions (with possible probes), as well as space for the researcher to capture notes from participants responses and emergent follow-up questions. Additionally, the protocol provided a script for the researcher follow before posing the questions to gain further participant consent and in conclusion of the participants answering each question to close the interview (Dikko, 2016). I followed this protocol in each interview and noted any follow-up questions that emerged through conversation. This allowed the participants to engage in deeper conversation related to the pre-determined questions.

Prior to creating the interview questions, I reviewed various literature on the interview process in qualitative students related to teacher retention, attrition, and mobilization, specifically, the interview questions. From this literature, I was able to establish a foundation for my own questions and develop more insightful questions pertaining to the specifics of my study. In generating my own questions, I also leaned on the guiding questions as the impetus for generating mobilization-specific interview questions. The interview questions were specific to the perspective of the teacher.

The initial questions were created to identify motivating factors that guided the participants into the profession. It was critical that I gain insight into what motivated teachers to enter the profession to gauge later where this motivation may have been disrupted. The remaining questions centered on teacher experiences related to the organization, where they found success and experienced challenges, and how these experiences informed their beliefs and practices. The interview questions were categorized in accordance to the definitions of leadership excellence as

defined by the district: instructional leadership, talent management, building culture, and managing operations. Some additional questions were created based on those used in previous research studies on teacher attrition, retention, and mobility to glean more information related to working conditions, school climate, the role of leaders within the school.

The interview questions for the participants were created to identify their perceptions of organizational factors that impacted their decision to forfeit employment in their settings. Before conducting the interviews, I engaged in mock interviews with classmates to familiarize myself with the process, the questions, and how to manage the recording devices. This was beneficial in that some questions appeared to be redundant based on feedback and were later modified to gain more insight into the experiences of the participant prior to conducting the interviews. This experience also provided more potential probing questions. Interviews lasted no more than one hour, supporting the necessity of accuracy in completing the subsequent transcriptions. I deleted all voice recordings once I transcribed the interviews and after I sent a copy to the participants for verification. The interviews were scheduled such that they did not interfere with the teachers' obligations to their current educational settings.

The interviews took place over a seven-week period of time, following a predetermined script with open-ended questions. The open-ended questions allowed for follow-up probing questions developing a conversational-style interaction between myself and each participant which was recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each of the interviews were held face-to-face with the exception of one interview which was completed over the phone. This telephone interview was held in my personal office after hours, where no other individual could overhear the conversation or interrupt me as I posed the interview questions and captured my notes. The audio recorded interviews were uploaded into Cogi, an electronic transcription program which charged a fee based on the amount of time needed to complete the transcription. Once returned, the transcriptions

were edited for minor mistakes, unrecognized words and sounds, acronyms, and teacher jargon, as the service only claimed to be 99% accurate. Emails of the transcriptions were sent to each participant to review for accuracy. In one case, a follow-up conversation was necessary with one participant to clarify misinterpretation of testimony. I believe this supported my goal to be as unbiased as possible while also ensuring I captured the essence of the participants' reality (Merriam, 1998).

Documents and artifacts.

Yin (2013) acknowledged the critical role that supporting artifacts and documents play in collecting data for case study research. I collected artifacts from participants related to their experiences that they believed to be valuable to the research. I collected these items via Google Drive, a password-protected digital drive of which only I and the participant had access. I gave participants access to these drives via email, that identified every person that had access which only included the participant and myself. I encouraged the participants to upload any documents in portable document formatted (pdf) versions to prevent any inappropriate manipulation. I also informed participants that some documents may be modified to protect any identifiable information from becoming public and that I would share any modifications with them before including the documents in my study.

The documents included excerpts of teacher emails between parents and leaders, visuals of "who to call" reference guides, a leadership hierarchy guide, and teacher professional learning schedules with samples available in the appendix. These documents functioned as additional sources of information about the teachers' experiences within their organizations. For example, the "who to call" reference guide identifies who teachers should contact when there is a need, and in some cases, teacher's specific needs were not referenced, or those needs went unsupported by the designee. There was a need to establish accuracy in using these documents as data as

noted by Creswell (2002). However, there was a certain level of trust given the investment of the teachers.

Data analysis.

In qualitative research, data analysis is the process of organizing, classifying, and making sense of your data set (Merriam, 1998). Braun, Clark, and Terry (2012) discussed a six-step process for analyzing data. The six steps required that the researcher, familiarize themselves with the data, search for themes, review potential themes, define and name themes, and produce the report. Coding is essential to capturing the essence of an individual's story (Mason, 2017). Mason believed that proper coding required a grouping of similar and frequent elements of a story, which would facilitate in the development of their connections, thus the creation of codes. Because of this, coding was a significant portion of the data analysis, in that it provided me the opportunity to make sense of the findings (Yin, 2015). Coding served as a land bridge between data collection and data analysis (Saldana, Miles, & Huberman, 2013).

I entered interview transcripts and personal notes into N'Vivo, an electronic coding program. The use of this program provided a means of increasing the reliability of the study in that it created a chain of evidence to support my findings (Yin, 2014). In the initial phases of data analysis, I reviewed the transcripts against the recordings for accuracy and read the transcriptions multiple times to build familiarity. I was able to create codes from the continued use of words and phrases from participant testimony. N'Vivo organized the codes and sub-codes that I created into varying categories based on those repeated words and phrases extracted from the transcripts. In the next phase of data analysis, I sorted the coded transcripts in Microsoft Excel on two sheets, color coding them based on the participant and the category. I then established three broader categories, or themes, from the seven codes: leadership support, standardized testing, and parental involvement (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This process provided a framework for me

to capture the overarching themes intended to answer the guiding questions of the research (Clarke & Braun, 2014).

I followed the six-step process, proposed by Braun, Clark, & Terry (2012), allowing me to organize, classify, and make sense of the data collected. The open-coding process provided a means of identifying patterns from the testimony of the participants. Themes emerged as the various codes were further examined and categorized. N'Vivo, the coding program, provided the platform for me to organize and sort the codes according to the emergent themes relative to answering the guiding questions of this study. Comparing the participant testimony against artifacts and documents collected assisted in developing the themes that emerged to identify organizational factors related to teachers' decisions to forfeit their employment in one setting, opting for an alternative setting within the same school district.

Findings

The goal of this research study was to identify the existence of certain events, behaviors, circumstance, or programs related to the organizational practices within specific schools inside of an urban school district that interfered with the motivation of teachers to remain committed to their settings. Furthermore, it sought to understand how these practices disrupted the teachers' desire to remain in one educational setting and choosing to mobilize to an alternative setting within the same school district at a lateral position. The findings within this dissertation reflect claims within the literature pertaining to organizational factors and how these factors influenced a teachers' decision to mobilize. Qualitative data collected from interviews were coded, and three themes emerged: leadership support, pressures from standardized testing, and parental involvement, which the study subjects perceived to be major influences in their de-commitment to their settings.

The following sections will review the emergent themes, from the perceptions of the participants. The initial section will describe leadership support as this theme reflects the most heavily referenced factors leading to the dissatisfaction of teachers within their previous settings. The remaining paragraphs within this section will highlight teachers' perceptions of standardized testing and parental involvement, and the role each played with teachers' motivation to remain committed to their settings. It should be noted that despite compensation/salary being a frequently referenced code, this was not included within the emergent themes to support the research. Salary increases are not an expectation from teacher mobilization within this district, as salary is not affected by relocation, rather changes in teaching experience and level of education based on the compensation policies within the district.

Leadership support.

Leadership Support describes the extent to which school leaders, which may include principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders, facilitate the instructional activities of teachers and how they affect the comfort levels that teachers experience in executing their responsibilities (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011). From the interviews, study subjects shared the perception that leadership played an insignificant role as it related to the facilitation of instructional activities. Miss Brittany noted, "...leadership was responsible for supporting me in any area that I felt I needed to grow and in any area where I had challenges... leadership was placing expectations on teachers without building capacity. I expected that leadership would do that." Coach D. noted, "My frustration solely resided with the leadership and their priorities with supporting individual teacher growth while also pushing the school to improve." This testimony reveals that there may exist some disconnect in understanding regarding how leadership demonstrated support and how teachers perceived themselves to receive support.

Many of the participants shared a common perception that they looked to leadership for a variety of supports in education. However, the most significantly missed opportunity from the participants' perceptions was that of leadership being a source of instructional support. One question that emerged within the literature asked: how is “leadership support” defined and are all parties aware of this definition? (Schaefer et al., 2012; Shirrell & Reininger, 2017; Beltman et al., 2001). This further supports the assumption that there may be a disconnect between what the participants perceived as support in comparison to how their leaders demonstrated what they perceived to be support. Ms. Moore noted, “my leadership was really good at getting me resources and materials or pointing me in the right direction to find such resources.”

Miss Brittany also noted, “Whatever tangible items I asked for, I was able to get. If not from my principal or my assistant principal, we had instructional coaches or department heads that were very supportive in acquiring these things.” From the conversation with both participants, it appeared that they were provided “things” when needed. Ms. Moore, however, went on to claim that despite these “things”, leadership was not much support regarding how to effectively utilize said materials and that she found herself often with a large toolbox of items she didn't know what to do with. Miss Brittany, elaborated, and described that despite being given resources and materials, leadership did not provide her with the necessary knowledge on how to plan better or execute their lessons. Participants seemed to share a need for more in-depth support in their claims that the support they received was more superficial in nature. Given that school leadership is transitioning to a more instructional leadership role in modern educational settings (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016), current leadership, or the leadership at the time of the referenced experiences, may not reflect such instructional capacity within leaders or a desire to assist. Future research may reflect differing perceptions as schools and districts place more focus on school leaders having the capacity to lead with a more instructional focus.

The initial interview questions asked relatively vague questions regarding how the participants viewed their leadership as a source of support. However, follow-up questions delved deeper into their perceptions to gain more clarity into their experiences. These questions asked the participants to elaborate on their professional growth opportunities as educators as well as opportunities to advance their roles and responsibilities within the setting and within the profession in general. Coach D. noted,

Yes, I occasionally asked for support getting into the door with athletics. I already coached the basketball team, so I asked about the AD [athletic director] position once. After I expressed an interest in becoming an athletic director and asking for responsibilities where I could grow, they sent me to the current AD who wasn't the most supportive in helping my growth. My assumption was that he didn't want anyone taking his job given that he had been in the position for years.

This appears to have been a missed opportunity for the leadership of Coach D. in their efforts to acquire, or be assigned, mentorship to support growth opportunities in the profession. Ms. Maishall noted, "As a new teacher, my leadership assigned me a veteran teacher mentor. This mentor had little impact on my growth as a teacher. They were extremely friendly, but I never felt as though they were committed to my development." This testimony reflects possible neglect of school leadership in advancing teacher's professional growth. When school leadership provides teachers with a mentor, this assists teachers in their abilities to cope with the challenges of the profession and to further their professional growth.

Further shared perceptions among participants included that despite being provided resources and materials that assisted with their responsibilities, they perceived missed opportunities by their leadership in developing them professionally. Robertson (2016) noted that schools across the nation have taken on the responsibility of building the capacity within leadership to

bring about the sustainability of school improvement through teacher development and building teacher-leaders.

The capacity-building can take the form of study groups where employees engage with current literature on trends in education related to their circumstances. Also, this capacity-building can present itself in the form of research teams that identify concerns about instructional and pedagogical practices to perform research initiatives that may reveal issues that lead to future questions and actions. A third form of this capacity-building could involve school leadership teams where non-school leaders are delegated leadership responsibilities related to school improvement plans. Considering the work of Robertson (2016) in conjunction with the perceptions of Participants Two, Three, Six, Nine, and Eleven it appears that leadership may have neglected to support the desires of these participants in that they had not designated opportunities for employees to engage with the work of the leadership team, if one existed. Mr. Marcel noted “the school had employed so many people working in support roles, that it limited the opportunities for teachers to take on additional responsibilities.”

Ms. Maishall noted “it never felt as though our leadership team trusted me or other teachers to take on leadership responsibilities when I had been a testing coordinator before in a previous setting.” Dr. Marilyn noted, “there were times where select groups of teachers were assembled to discuss solutions to possible challenges and our input was requested, however, we were never involved in the actual execution of developed plans, nor were we recognized.” Though these perceptions may not reflect the ability or the current capacity of the participants interviewed, which may have factored into leadership’s decisions not to involve them, they do reflect their dissatisfaction and may also be a factor as to why the motivation of the teachers to remain committed was no longer present.

The traditional framework of school organizations, where school leaders are the sole instructional and organizational leader is becoming extinct. When considering school improvement and teacher retention, school leadership cannot serve as the lone leaders in school initiatives without the support of all educators. Beyond retaining teachers, Simon & Johnson (2015) claim that when this culture is not present, the sustainability of the school suffers when leadership transitions. Participant testimony revealed that unshared leadership and the absence of capacity-building within teachers had adverse effects on their satisfaction and ultimately their desire to remain committed to the setting. These perceptions also revealed that leadership support is a driving force in teacher retention. Additionally, recognizing that this support can be misinterpreted between teacher and leader, measures should be taken to ensure teachers and leaders share a common understanding of support expectations in a school. This could counteract claims such as Tre' Franklin noting, "They did the best they could in terms of their own understanding of the term. Looking back, and knowing what I now know, I wasn't 100% supported."

The culture of perceived leadership support within the district manifested itself through the experiences that participants shared in the interviews. The culture is reflected through the expressed understanding of what the participants expected from a leader and if or how those expectations were or were not met. Teachers expressed possible resentment towards their leadership in not having their needs and wants met, while also being held to the expectations established by leadership which participants viewed as a one-way relationship between them and those in authority. Much of the testimony revealed a misalignment of expectations between teacher and leader. From teachers receiving support that was not beneficial to their instructional or professional growth to being directed to other forms of support and feeling neglected, there exists a disconnect, thus preventing teachers from meeting personal and professional goals. This disconnect

may have deviated the participants from what originally motivated them to join the organization and possibly the profession.

Standardized testing pressures.

Standardized testing has become a norm of the educational environment (Longo, 2010). It is now more of a focus related to school accountability and with this concept being introduced, schools and district are utilizing various forms of achievement measuring assessments in tracking student progress. In more modern educational research and initiatives, there have been additional metrics of tracking student achievement including but not limited to budgeting, salaries, class size, and seat time but the most common and controversial metric of student achievement, being standardized testing, has emerged as the most heavily weighted factor (Au, 2013).

As it relates to the findings within this study, participants claimed to have been the victims of scrutiny as a result of failing public schools, identified through standardized testing. Standardized testing appears to have impacted the participants in that they have shared perceptions of feeling less capable. Ms. Maishall noted,

As a high school Biology teacher, we were pressured to prepare students for state testing, but the students were coming from eighth-grade science which had a physical science foundation. Therefore, we were essentially starting from scratch unlike more coherent subjects such as math and English. Results from a test that measured ninth-grade abilities actually did not consider life-long science learning, making me feel less than capable of performing my job.

Participants expressed perceptions of feeling pressure in their responsibility to deliver instruction that would result in specific expectations pertaining to student achievement. This may have been the result of them feeling obligated to teach to the test. Tre' Franklin noted,

I taught economics and everything revolved around the End of Course Test. I often felt pressured to teach-to-the-test which theoretically aligned with preparing students with basic knowledge to be contributing members of society, but I never felt as though that was important, thus I didn't feel important or valuable when students did not meet expectations.

The impact of this mindset introduced an additional constraint of educating children based on test-taking strategies as opposed to building a strong foundation of content knowledge. Furthermore, claims that the focus of teacher planning time shifted to testing formats and language and away from content-based learning goals as noted from Ms. Tesa, "The majority of my non-instructional time was dedicated to formatting classwork and tests to resemble standardized tests and less time on focusing on the content within student work."

Ms. Tesa was not alone in referencing this challenge. Other participants of tested subjects, shared that they were met with the challenge of teaching from verbatim scripts, seemingly disallowing them to explore creativity and innovation with their students. Ms. Moore and Mr. Marcel claimed, "We had to engage in way more training, we were held more accountable for data, and we experienced much more pressures than teachers of other subjects" and "When I sought new employment, I was intentional about working somewhere that would allow me to teach a non-tested subject" respectively. Their perceptions further supported claims that the teaching positions that are evaluated in part by standardized tests come with an additional stress on teachers, while less emphasis is on the teaching positions that do not teach tested subjects. There appears to be some level of disproportionate accountability on behalf of teachers of certain tested subjects and grade levels versus those that are not. Coach D. noted, "there were times where I considered going into other professions but I loved the kids. I did consider trying to get a

PE [physical education] position since I did aspire to be an Athletic Director someday.” Coinciding with leadership supporting professional growth, Ms. Tesa noted, “I wanted to focus on moving to leadership. With that being said, I couldn't be stressed over tests. Teaching eleventh or twelfth grade English, I could redistribute my efforts from testing to other things that would help my professional goals.” Of the research participants, eight of the nine were teachers of subjects or grade levels that were aligned to a state as described in Table 2.

Table 2

Participant Subject/Grade Level Taught and Testing

Participant	Subject/Grade Level	State Tested Subject (Y/N)
Ms. Moore	HS Physical Education Teacher	No
Tre' Franklin	HS Economics Teacher	Yes
Ms. Maishall	3 rd Grade Teacher	Yes
Coach D.	7 th Grade Teacher	Yes
Dr. Marilyn	HS Biology Teacher	Yes
Mr. Marcel	HS Math Teacher	Yes
Miss Brittany	8 th Grade Teacher	Yes
Mr. Ponto	5 th Grade Teacher	Yes
Ms. Tesa	HS English-Language Arts Teacher	Yes

The research has shown that standardized tests are directly related to teacher attrition as a result of increased demands and accountability by local school leaders (Valli & Buese, 2007). As reflected upon in the testimony from the participants, when schools fail to meet designated progress and achievement metrics, teachers, in turn, view themselves as failures and are likely to move. This movement has shown itself not only to include a change in the profession as noted in the literature review, but also a change in their roles and locations within the profession from the claims of the participants. This was captured in the testimony of Tre' Franklin, as he noted, “There are so many challenges that you don't feel in control of and it's too easy to do something

else”; Ms. Maishall, “It made me feel like I had a near impossible job. This was the driving force behind me switching to become a PE teacher”; and Mr. Marcel, “It made me feel inadequate. I wondered what it was like to teach on the north end [of the district] where students were more successful academically.” Assuming that school-level accountability, measured by standardized testing, is becoming the norm in school-level evaluations, it may be beneficial to the profession to support the perceptions of teachers feeling overwhelmed, devalued, and being held to unequal expectations in relation to their peers. Given that six of the nine participants made explicit statements regarding searching for and finding alternative teaching assignments not associated with state testing, organizations can play a more supportive role in assisting teachers through these challenges as a way to retain their commitment to their settings and responsibilities.

Parental engagement.

The relationships forged between the school and parents, specifically, teachers and parents were shown to be a significant factor to teacher satisfaction. The participants’ individual commitment to their setting was potentially impacted by varying levels and quality of parental engagement. Parents expect that teachers, and the school, provide a safe environment that is conducive to learning and prepares students for college and career. Simultaneously, teachers expect that parents assist by ensuring students attend school regularly, are prepared with necessary materials, and have a strong foundation as it pertains to readiness to learn (Bryk, Sebring, Al-lensworth, Easton, & Luppescu, 2010).

Participants shared these expectations based on their testimony. Additionally, participants seemed to expect that parents were committed to collaborative efforts in addressing student behaviors and academic deficiencies as noted by Miss Brittany, in her statement “I would make it a point to communicate with parents good news in the absence of bad news to try and build the relationship.” The data revealed that participants felt a sense of isolation in educating children.

Tre' Franklin noted, "I always felt as though, parents seemed inconvenienced when asked to engage in any conversations or interactions related to academics or behavior." Similarly, Coach D. stated,

As a former discipline problem in school, I felt the need to work with parents to find ways to help students adjust behaviors that were not in line with school or classroom expectations. While I felt other teachers only communicated with parents to tell on students, it was my goal to try and work with parents to build students up and not beat them down.

The testimony from each participant supported the claims within the literature that teachers often experience frustration when the parent-teacher relationship seemed one-sided, leaving the teacher to feel isolated in supporting the student.

From an organizational lens, these parent-teacher relationships are the result of school structures that support interaction and communication between the two. This allows parents a stake and some level of ownership in school decisions or partnership with the school (Al-lensworth et al., 2009; Bryk et al., 2010). As reflected upon in the testimony of Mr. Marcel, methods of inviting parents into the building often were unsuccessful. This became evident in the statement,

We hired a community engagement specialist whose objective was to create ways to invite parents into the school community. These efforts often felt as though we were only implementing them to satisfy district mandates. It never felt as though they were implemented with fidelity due to the absence of urgency when participation remained low. It just seemed like another thing to do.

Though Mr. Marcel insinuated this challenge was the result of the school's ineffective implementation plan or the result of possibly disinterested parents, it's worth noting that this experience did not bring about desired results related to parental involvement. Could this be the result

of community dynamics? We must consider the socio-economic status of the community. Dr. Marilyn stated that teachers come into the job understanding that community dynamics may present challenges with parental engagement such as parent work hours, transportation options, time, etc. They stated, “Most parents live in poverty and are unable to come to the school; It’s hard to blame parents because they may not be aware of the norms of a school environment or they may not know how to support us.” Despite teachers often having an understanding of the community they serve, there is still a feeling that the challenges associated present insurmountable pressures in supporting children, especially when engaging parents in school matters is a necessary component of building trust between parents and teachers. This is reflected in a statement from Miss Brittany, “it was still a struggle [to support students in the presence of parental challenges] understanding our demographics.”

When parents are involved with their children’s education in the form of participating in school-based activities and at home, students tend to achieve more, are academically motivated, and show evidence of positive social and emotional behaviors (Rimm-Kaufman, Larsen, Baroody, Curby, Ko, Thomas, & DeCoster, 2014). Ms. Maishall claimed that “initiatives to include parents often seemed unsuccessful.” There appears to be a need to distinguish between the types of such initiatives and their quality. Activities such as volunteering, communications, participation in school functions, and supporting children at home are surface-level activities or district mandates as perceived by Mr. Marcel. However, trust, affiliation, shared visions and expectations may be necessary for these activities to have a positive effect. Mr. Ponto elaborated on his experiences with parents being involved at home stating, “I wish parents would engage more with students outside of school. When I do get an opportunity to speak with parents they are unclear of student challenges despite my many communications with them on how to support their

children.” This idea then couples with that of teachers feeling incapable of performing their duties. If ultimately, teachers are evaluated by student performance, and this performance is not supported at home, how are teachers expected to feel valuable at school? The shared claim by participants that parental involvement extends beyond the schoolhouse and into the home, is also supported by the work of Hornby & Lafaele (2011) in that they assert student success is heavily impacted by parent involvement both at school and home in the form of supporting with homework, providing access to reading, and celebrating students’ successes.

Generally speaking, it appears that the participants believe that when parental involvement is frequent and quality in nature, both at school and at home with quality, considering respect and collaboration, students may achieve more. Linking this notion to the idea that teachers suffer from feeling incapable and invaluable as professionals, when students do not perform well, the absence of positive teacher-parent relationships through parental involvement may have had a direct impact on teacher satisfaction and their commitment to the profession or setting. This is evident in the aforementioned three participants’ claims that parental involvement was related to their decisions to move. Specifically, Dr. Marilyn noted,

There have been times where I felt that the devaluing of teachers had made me feel incapable as a professional. I felt like even in success, we were never celebrated for our efforts. I mean, I see my friends starting businesses, switching professions, and it seemingly being a movement of freedom and job satisfaction, and I would be crazy not to want that feeling. But I don’t think it’s worth changing what I love to do. So I chose to look for alternative educational settings hoping for a change in environment.

Systematically forging these relationships in schools may be beneficial not only to teacher satisfaction, but also student achievement and school culture. Thus, efforts to bridge the possible gaps

in the teacher-parent relationship or the understanding of the roles each party plays may prove to be a high-leverage organizational action.

The state of parental engagement at the schools of the participants within this district reflect that communication is limited, the interaction may not be quality in nature, and there may exist gaps in understanding as to how the parent-teacher or parent-school relationship is most effective. Communication is a two-way effort in which teachers and school representatives extend invitations to parents, as well as the converse of parents extending invitations of their own. Preferably, this communication should also not be limited to the negative aspects of school experiences regarding academics and behavior. The reflections from the participants reflect that this is not evident; however, the blame is not focused on either the parent or the teacher. The quality of this interaction between parents and the school relies heavily on the systems and structures of the organization. From the testimony, there does not appear to be an open-door culture such that these interactions are available for effective relationship-building experiences. Despite the claims that there may exist individuals or teams whose responsibility is to create this culture, it appears that more work is necessary.

Summary

Data from the interviews revealed that participants who have mobilized within this district perceived that their motivation to continue teaching in specific settings was impacted heavily by expectations of leadership support, stress incurred from standardized testing, and the frequency and quality of parental engagement. If educational organizations were intentional and effective in establishing structures that would support teachers in these areas, their motivation to continue working and their commitment to the setting may have remained. The participants expressed dissatisfaction with general challenges and specific moments that interrupted the factors that motivated them to join the profession or the setting. A comment from Mr. Ponto included,

“This job needed to consider the emotional strain that logic would not always satisfy. There were many times where I felt that if leadership would just support my needs I would work harder.”

The interviews with the participants revealed that specific needs, either personally or professionally, were in many cases not met. Though these needs varied among participants, it seems that there is a necessary conversation around understanding these specifics as it relates to teachers and the organization, in efforts to combat mobilization.

Discussion

The findings in this dissertation supported the research that organizational factors, specifically, leadership support, stress from standardized testing, and the frequency and quality of parental involvement impacted teachers’ commitment to specific settings and the option to explore employment at alternative settings within the district. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the organizational factors within schools in this district that teachers perceived as causes for their mobilization. Previous studies have found that these factors have been reasons for teacher attrition. The rationale for this particular study was to investigate how these factors or other emergent factors were related to teacher mobilization given that schools and districts incur the same challenges and expenses in mobilization as they do with complete attrition.

The theoretical framework, organizational theory based on Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, provided scholarly literature to support the methodology used in this research. A comprehensive review of literature related to teacher retention, attrition, and mobilization revealed that leadership support (instructional growth and professional growth), standardized testing pressures, and parental involvement influenced a teachers’ decision to remain committed to their professions and settings (Moolenaar, Slegers, & Daly, 2012; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2011; Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011). Mr. Ponto stated,

My expectations of my leadership was to support me in any area that I felt I needed to grow and in any area where I had been deemed to have some challenges. There were many times where I felt that if leadership would just support me I would work harder and sometimes I just wanted to be satisfied.

According to Johnson et al., (2012), the work environment or working conditions that matter the most to teachers are mainly the social conditions: the school's culture, the principal's leadership and relationships, and the relationships among colleagues. These factors are valid indicators of a teacher's commitment to the profession and their settings. The data collected from each participant provided the answers to the questions that guided this study.

The first research question asked: What are participants' perceptions of the organizational factors that impact their decision to mobilize, leaving a specific school for an alternative educational setting within the same district? Considering there were a variety of factors referenced within participant testimony, there were commonalities in their perceptions which ultimately established the overarching themes: leadership support, standardized testing pressures, and parental involvement. Analysis of data revealed that teachers desired support in forms that were meaningful to them including professional growth, instructional growth, support with parents, and the ease of testing stressors which all supported teachers in executing their duties and creating a sense of value. A study conducted by Eyal & Roth (2011) concluded teachers' job satisfaction, and subsequently, their retention was directly linked to satisfaction with school leadership.

Schaefer et al., (2012) concluded that school leaders could support the retention of teachers by including teachers in the decision-making process and supporting their growth as professionals which indirectly impacts morale and teacher satisfaction. Many of the participants perceived these types of opportunities as necessary to in meeting their professional goals in addition to meeting leadership expectations. Shirrell & Reininger (2017) shared this conclusion, that

providing teachers with support in which both the teacher and the leader had a shared understanding of what expectations were, positively impacted teachers' decisions to remain committed. The evidence reflects that these practices are not evident in the participants' schools as described in their testimony which leads one to believe that if they were, their mobilization may have been avoided.

Marks & Printy (2004) suggested that instructional leadership encompasses developing quality missions and goals, evaluation of school curriculum, instruction, and assessment, establishing an environment conducive to learning, and building a supportive working environment. These practices align with the perceptions of the participants not being present. Participants cited challenges directly related to unproductive parental interactions, teaching to the test, and stressors related to testing which align to the claims of Marks & Printy (2004). Leaders from the study sites, as evident in the testimony of the participants, demonstrated many missed opportunities as it relates to these actions. Tre' Franklin noted, "For what my leaders understood it [support] to be, I assumed I received it initially. They did the best they could in terms of their own understanding of the term."

Surprisingly, participants shared one characteristic of leadership support in a positive light. Across most of the participants' testimony, there was a perception of receiving instructional materials when needed. Participants claimed to receive this support from the leadership directly or through school-level support staff. However, as stated by Boyd et al., (2011), leadership support describes the extent to which school leaders, which may include principals, assistant principals, and or other instructional leaders, and how they facilitate the instructional activities of teachers. This would imply that teachers were partial recipients of what is described as leadership support considering the facilitation piece was missing. In the words on Miss Brittany, "despite being given resources and materials, leadership did not provide me with the necessary

knowledge on how to plan better or execute lessons.” Algozzine, Gretes, Queen, and Cowan-Hathcock (2007) found that when school leadership provided teachers with teacher-perceived levels of support, this assisted teachers in their abilities to cope with the challenges of the profession and to further their professional growth.

The second phase of this study focused on the question: How do participants perceive the impact of organizational factors on job satisfaction and their motivation to remain committed to a specific educational setting? Lawson & Lawson (2013) describe the relationship between the employee and the organization as the organization functioning as an entity assisting employees in meeting their needs and motivations. The authors also claim that the organization has needs to be met by the employees as well. While the organization provides employees with careers, compensation, and future opportunities, the employees in return provide the organization with talent, knowledge, and energy (Lawson & Lawson, 2013). The review of the research on teacher retention, attrition, and mobilization concluded that organizations needed to focus on influences that impact individual motivations. This ties to Maslow’s claim that individual needs and desires were the primary motivations for individuals to commit to the mission, vision, and goals of the organization (Larkin, 2015) and this focus would prove effective in addressing the issues propelling teachers to mobilize in search of alternative environments or professions. The results of the data in my dissertation supported claims within the research that organizations must identify these motivations, establish clear expectations of both the organization and the employee, and support teachers in meeting these expectations in order to impact teacher mobilization in urban school districts.

Understanding what motivates teachers to perform and remain committed to an organization is a complex task in that their individual motivations stem from a wide range of experiences and understandings. Thus organizations cannot take a one-size-fits-all approach. Additionally,

identifying the level at which a teachers' motivations are presently being met presents an additional challenge for organizations. Maslow discussed that humans had had five sequential needs: physiological, safety, love/affection/belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1985). Though his contemporaries agree with the identification of each level, there are varying understandings pertaining to whether or not these levels of needs are met sequentially, or if humans can transition through each level in his proposed sequential order. Nonetheless, regarding motivation, the needs of teachers are important because addressing them will impact their desire for higher level needs and assist them in transitioning through the various levels reaching satisfaction.

Organizations and employees establishing clearly communicated expectations also has presented itself to be essential in teacher motivation and commitment. Creating an environment in which leaders and subordinates establish agreements or expectations, coupled with rewards or consequences in the event those expectations are either met or not met, forges the professional relationship necessary for both groups to coexist (Burns, 1978). Organizations typically consider how to marginally improve and maintain the quantity and quality of performance, how to substitute one goal for another, how to reduce resistance to particular actions, and how to implement decisions" (Bass, 1985, p. 27). Theoretically, both the leader and the subordinate are beneficiaries of these agreements, where there is an exchange of service for the desired result (Burns, 1978). This relationship becomes necessary because teachers and leaders make agreements with each other either explicitly or implicitly. The teacher exchanges a commitment to execute assigned duties and responsibilities in exchange for favorable evaluations and continued employment. However, when there is a disconnect in the terms or the understanding of that agreement, we are left to question if the agreement then becomes null and does the less powerful subordinate face consequences for not meeting expectations. When this culture exists, teachers then enter a

mode of self-preservation, often leading to attrition or in the case of this study, they mobilized as stated by Miss Brittany, “I was conflicted with the pressures I felt from leadership and the lack of teamwork or effort from them. I didn’t trust them so I left.”

The findings within this dissertation aligned to the research on teacher retention, attrition, and mobilization in that teachers identified leadership support and possible gaps in expectations, stress from standardized testing, and the frequency and quality of parental involvement as impactful on teachers’ decisions to remain committed to their profession or setting. Teachers that perceived challenges with such factors cited them as their motives to de-commit and ultimately mobilize.

Implications

Through this study, the perceptions of the participants provided insight into what may be the root causes for teachers’ dissatisfaction and ultimately their motivation to mobilize. The results from this study indicate several contributing factors to teacher mobility which has both implications for policy and practice. In establishing a better culture of retaining teachers in an urban district, each of the three themes discussed play an important role. These themes were as follows: (a) leadership support, instructionally and professionally with the added component that this support is perceived by both the school leader and the teacher, (b) managing the stressors related to standardized testing, and (c) creating a culture of quality and meaningful parental engagement.

Additionally, the study revealed findings for school and district leaders as they create organizational structures aimed at recognizing teachers’ motivations and their personal and professional goals. For example, when creating systems for teacher support and quality parental interactions, school leaders must first identify the driving factors that motivate teachers. This means acquiring a pulse of the staff to understand where they are and where they want to go. The leader

must determine what teachers desire, and work towards assisting them in reaching satisfaction, keeping this aligned to the vision and the mission of the school.

This work indicates that teacher motivations are key. Teachers and leaders communicate expectations through conversation and training. This training should also be reflected in district leadership. Regardless of the source of the training, the implementers must acknowledge that for teachers to effectively execute their duties and responsibilities, expectations have to align with what drives the teacher to perform. Otherwise, the fidelity of execution may not exist. Leaders must acknowledge that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to supporting the motivations of teachers and that this work will vary from school to school, district to district, and year to year. This should be a structure that is molded to fit the needs of the school for a specific time. Once school leaders gain some understanding of what drives their teachers, it is imperative that they take time to ensure their staff is aware that their professional and personal goals are important to the organization. Also, that efforts will be made to ensure that these motivations will align with their individual expectations and the vision and mission of the school. Teachers should feel valued and that the organization is aware of their goals, aware of their circumstances. They should also believe that the organization will commit to supporting them in meeting both school expectations and their individual goals. Teachers should view themselves as valued members of the organization, and this begins with intentionality in communication and action on behalf of the leadership.

For those seeking to improve retention in their schools and districts, making data-driven decisions is vital to the short and long-term goals of their chosen initiatives. Findings from this study revealed that there were disconnects in the understanding of what support entailed. The gaps existed between leaders' expectations of support compared to the teachers' understandings.

Data from climate and culture surveys could reveal where these disconnects reside. The leadership team should consistently review formal data as well as informal data in the form of pulse checks throughout the year to drive the design and implementation of their initiatives. For example, if high percentages of teachers respond negatively to questions resembling “I feel supported when I have challenges”, leadership has a responsibility to investigate how they have been supporting teachers and if this support aligns to their needs.

The most frequently referenced challenge was teachers feeling unsupported in their professional growth. A deeper look into current practices may reflect that the leadership is missing opportunities in placing teachers in leadership roles or assigning them leadership responsibilities. Reflecting on participant testimony, leadership was noted to be hiring additional support staff to take on responsibilities that current teachers may be willing and able to perform. The use of data could align teacher perceptions and leadership actions in this instance.

When establishing structures and initiatives to acknowledge teacher motivations and attempting to align them with teacher responsibilities and the vision of the school, I would caution leadership that initially, it would not be feasible to satisfy every individual need of every individual teacher, especially in a district resembling the size of the one from this study. It may be more effective to begin with certain groupings of teachers who share similar interests or have related motivations. Over time, once the organization forms the groundwork, this acknowledgment and support can expand. However, beginning the work and establishing initial implementation may ignite a sense of hope among staff. This may function to increase teacher feelings of value and supporting their transition through the phases of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. As Mr. Ponto noted, “I believe my leaders had an obligation to forge deeper relationships with me and recognize my professional goals. I needed that from them in addition to always hearing what that they needed from me.”

In light of the literature related to factors contributing to teacher retention, attrition, and mobilization, the findings from this study affirmed the need to establish organizational cultures that reflect teachers being valued members. Current solutions to retaining teachers such as incentive and merit-pay are not working well. Schools and districts need solutions that will ensure teachers feel supported and valued. The focus of school and district leadership should be on retaining quality human capital, and this is done through improving the quality of the current teacher workforce (Ingersoll, 2003).

Limitations.

Research limitations included the selection of a limited number of participants. Thus a generalized representation of the educational population was not attained. The nine participants reflect a minimal representation of the average mobility rate for the district. The rationale for specific criteria for participants was to ensure meaningful qualitative data could be collected. Considering that the research sought to gain insight from teachers that had mobilized, and their current employment information was unknown, identifying and locating qualifying participants provided an additional limitation. Although the focus was on the perceptions of teachers that voluntarily mobilized within this specific school district, there was only participation from teachers that identified as “Black”. There was only one participant within their first five years of teaching and one with more than fifteen years of teaching experience, which limited the perceptions of the extremes of the teaching experience band, veteran and novice. It might have been more insightful if more veteran teachers had provided their perceptions of leadership support, standardized testing, and parental involvement and how these factors may have influenced their decisions to leave a school with their abundance of teaching experience.

Another limitation included the data which reflected the number of teachers that have mobilized within the district. There was no disaggregation of data to distinctly identify those

teachers that moved due to leveling and school consolidation from those that requested intra-district transfers. Despite numerous communications with the district human resources department, this level of information was not shared.

Suggestions for future research.

Additional research on this study could be from the lens of the school leader, allowing transferability. Instead of examining the voice of the teacher, future researchers can elicit the perspective of principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders or consider both perspectives collectively. Restructuring the study to examine these alternative lenses would provide an opportunity for the researcher to determine possible answers to questions such as: Do school leaders perceive their leadership to be effective? Are there organizational factors that impact a school leader's perception of their own effectiveness? A future researcher may also compare the findings from this study to any subsequent related studies from the leaders' perspective.

Conclusions

Despite small decreases in teacher retention, teachers continue to leave the profession in excessive rates (AEE, 2014). This movement is especially prevalent in urban school districts with schools that serve low-income and low-achieving communities (Bakker et al., 2014). As a result, Bakker et al., (2014) claims that students' educational experiences are limited to inexperienced teachers. The movement of teachers continues to have adverse impacts on student achievements and the sustainability of school improvement efforts (Robertson, 2016). More than 15% of teachers are either leaving from or mobilizing within the profession each year. Teacher burnout resulting from the inherent pressures and stressors from testing and parental engagement is negatively impacting the professional engagement of teachers (Demerouti, Mostert, & Bakker, 2010). Boyd et al., (2011) contends that strong leadership or lack thereof is a driving force in teacher movement. Therefore, educational organizations must take on the responsibility of establishing

systems to support the personal and professional motivations of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

Now, more than ever, strategic efforts to retain quality teachers is necessary. Accountability measures related to student achievement present increasing challenges in schools and districts that have a propensity to lose teachers to alternative school settings, districts, and the professions, thus relying on teachers that have minimal experience in the profession and within specific school communities (Redman, 2015). A review of the abundant literature on teacher retention, attrition, and mobilization contend that organizational structures including but not limited to leadership support, standardized testing pressures, and parental engagement influence a teachers' decision to remain committed to the profession or a setting (Simon & Johnson, 2013; Hanushek, Rivkin, & Schiman, 2016; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). The concepts of climate and culture and transactional leadership are often overlapping ideas considering that climate is a shared perception of behaviors and the agreements between leader and teacher require communication and effort from both parties respectively (Boyd et al., 2011; Bass, 1985). Leadership serves as the most influential factors in establishing and sustaining a positive school culture, which then has direct impacts on a teachers' perceptions of their value to the organization, and indirectly on student achievement (Cohen et al., 2009).

Ingersoll (2013) contends that establishing structures to build the capacity of existing teachers, thus maintaining the quantity and quality of the teaching profession, increases the retention of teachers. It would be impossible to establish and maintain high levels of teacher satisfaction and commitment without considering the culture of the organization. Weiss (1999) acknowledged that it is this organizational culture and the structures within that create the conditions for employees to execute their responsibilities at the level of expectations. Walker (2015)

adds that the organizational culture establishes the social and professional habits of employees through rituals and routines, that can be executed naturally.

My experiences with the study participants provided me with the opportunity to review organizational structures and how they impact the teachers' commitment to their setting seeking understanding as to how to possibly address mobilization. The testimony from the participants was essential in investigating the organizational practices that have had adverse effects on teacher retention, specifically in this specific urban school district. A key revelation from this research was the recognition of how important it is that teachers feel supported, with this support being understood by both the teacher and the leader. Additionally, the significance of understanding the unique pressures that teachers experience and how the absence of such support created feelings of no value. I intend to share with my administrative team, the district-level leadership, and the participants within the study what I have gained from my research in the hopes that we can possibly adjust our leadership practices and organizational structures to meet the needs of our effective teachers.

This study aligned with the available scholarly literature, traditional and modern, in that teacher movement can be the result of a wide range of factors. However, geography and demographics can narrow that scope. Despite this wide range, teacher satisfaction can begin with feeling supported in their daily expectations, which ultimately impacts their evaluations. The data collected from the participants within this study reflect that leadership support in professional and instructional growth, mitigating stressors from standardized testing, and creating systems that support parental involvement that is quality in nature, assist teachers in remaining committed to what motivated them to join the profession or a setting and may impact their retention status.

The role leadership plays in not only supporting these factors but initially recognizing them as challenges for teachers directly impacts teacher commitment and motivation. The findings revealed in this case study have presented a sense of urgency in my own professional experiences to acknowledge what teachers believe to be deterrents to their commitment. My final thought reflects Ingersoll's notion that school staffing problems are rooted in the way schools are organized and the way the teaching occupation is treated. To improve retention in an urban setting, and possibly other school settings, school leaders must improve the quality of the teachers, and this can only be accomplished by improving the systems and the structures of the organization. In the words of Mr. Ponto, "our profession needs to consider the emotional strain that logic does not always satisfy. There were many times where I felt that if leadership would just support me, I would work harder and exhaust all my energy into the school."

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Informed Letter of Consent

Georgia State University

Department of Educational Studies

Informed Consent

Title: Teacher Mobility: A Case Study on Organizational Factors and the Movement of Teachers Within an Urban School District

Principal Investigator: Dr. Nicholas Sauers

Student Principal Investigator: Jason Patterson

Department: Georgia State University – Educational Policy Studies

Purpose

The goal of this research is to study the organizational factors that cause teachers within an urban school district to choose other educational employment within the same district. We want to specifically identify factors that cause teachers to change educational settings yet remain within the same district. The study will attempt to identify the teacher understandings of organizational factors within this district that influenced their decision to discontinue teaching at a specific setting. Up to 50 participants will be recruited for a survey that will provide demographic and employment information, however only ten to fifteen of these participants will be selected to participate further in the study involving an interview. The survey will require that you devote

ten minutes of your time and if selected to proceed further into the research the interview will require one hour of your time, on one day, for one session.

Procedures

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to complete a survey that will take less than ten minutes to complete. You also may be invited to an interview session with Jason Patterson for at most one-hour, one time, on one day if you qualify for the study. The interview will be audio-recorded either by telephone call or face-to-face at a safe location with your input. The student investigator will make sure that if a telephone interview is selected, he will conduct the interview in a private location where others will not be able to overhear. The focus of the interview will be your experiences with the organizational factors that may have led to your decision to leave your employment at a past educational site. You will have the opportunity to withdraw your participation at any time.

Future Research

Researchers will not use or distribute your data for future research studies, even when codes within the data are removed.

Risks

Participating in this study will not expose you to harm that is greater than that ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits

This study is not designed to benefit you personally or any other research participant. Overall, we hope to gain information about organizational structures that impact teacher decisions to remain committed to their employment sites. However, this study may impact your future experiences if the findings lead to organizational and leadership practices being redesigned to support teacher commitment.

Alternatives

The alternative to taking part in this study is to not take part in this study.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

You do not have to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time. You may refuse to take part in the study or stop at any time, this will not cause you to lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Confidentiality

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. Dr. Nick Sauer, Primary Investigator, and Jason Patterson, Student Investigator will have access to the information you provide. Information may also be shared with those who make sure the study is done correctly (GSU Institutional Review Board, the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP)). We will use study codes that resemble first initial, middle initial, last initial, participant order number (order in which participants meet qualifications) rather than your name on study records. An example code will resemble "MJQ002". The student investigator will only use your name when it is absolutely necessary, and if necessary, it will only be used on one singular digital document

which can be removed from the project if necessary. The student investigator will be the only member of the team to have access to the “key” and the study codes will be the only identifiers on study documents. The student investigator will secure all data, using personal computers that have modern security capabilities and will limit access to any identifiable information. The student investigator will refrain from using email or any other electronic means of transferring identifiable information. Prior to transferring any recordings to the computer, the digital recorder will remain in possession of the student investigator's person and it will be stored in filing cabinets in a safe room that only the student investigator has access. Each recording will be transferred to the researcher's password-protected laptop and password-protected cloud-based storage and deleted from the recorder following transfer. The file name of each recording will be comprised of study codes that do not contain any identifying information. The student investigator will properly destroy and delete all study documents and recordings at the conclusion of the study. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results. The findings will be summarized and reported in group form. You will not be identified personally. It should be noted that data sent over the internet may not be secure. You should take necessary precautions when engaging with online surveys such as using private secure internet connections. The survey will be conducted using Qualtrics software which uses HTTPS encryption to protect all transmitted data and the surveys will be password protected.

Contact Information

Contact Dr. Nicholas Sauers at nsauers@gsu.edu or Jason Patterson at jpatterson20@student.gsu.edu or 404-313-9548.

- If you have questions about the study or your part in it
- If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study

Contact the GSU Office of Human Research Protections at 404-413-3500 or
irb@gsu.edu.

- If you have questions about your rights as a research participant
- If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research

Consent

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research, please sign below.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Principal Investigator

Date

APPENDIX B

Participant Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Student Investigator Preliminary Script: *“Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. For privacy purposes during the interview, please do not provide any names or identifying information about specific individuals. Any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering, you are not required to answer. You may decide to stop answering questions at any time.”*

General Education/Background

1. Discuss your educational/professional background. Include what led you to the profession, undergraduate/graduate degrees, years within the profession, and types of school settings you have worked.
2. How do you feel about the teaching profession in general?
3. How did you feel about going to work?
4. How did you feel about the accomplishments of your kids?

Compensation

5. How did you feel about your compensation package (salary, health benefits, retirement benefits, etc.)?

Teacher Preparation/Development

6. Discuss your educational route taken to gain certification.

7. Discuss how your individual preparation impacted your performance and/or satisfaction in this setting.
8. Discuss any teacher mentoring programs you experienced or observed while working in this setting. What did you perceive to be effective or ineffective given the existence of such programs within this setting? How specifically did this impact you and your relationship within the organization if experienced or observed?
9. Tell me about the staff development opportunities at this school.

Climate/Culture

10. What shared beliefs do you feel existed among the staff members at this particular setting?
11. Tell me about the community which surrounds the school.
12. Discuss how the students, the staff (including leadership), and the community impacted your desire to teach at this particular setting.
13. Discuss how you perceive the students, the staff (including leadership), and the community feel/felt about you as a professional in this particular setting.
14. Discuss if and how the students, the staff (including leadership), and the community expressed appreciation for your work.
15. Tell me about the parental involvement and support that you received at this school.

Environment

16. Discuss the working conditions of the setting in which you worked.
17. Describe student characteristics and attitudes.
18. Discuss the physical work environment. Include your perception of the logistics and the physical appearance.

Leadership Support

19. How did you perceive leadership to be a system of support for you?
20. What were the expectations that the administration had for teachers? What were your expectations of the administration, and do you believe they were met?
21. Describe your relationship with the administrative and teaching staff.
22. Discuss how you were given teaching assignments and what those assignments were. Include the type of assignments, the number of assignments you were given in this setting, class size and how these factors impacted your satisfaction and performance within this setting.
23. Describe the level of autonomy you possessed in planning and delivering your lesson.

Workload

24. Tell me about the professional expectations you were expected to complete and how you feel about it. Include the amount of paper work, duties and responsibilities, and other non-instructional requirements.

APPENDIX C

“Who to Call” Reference Guide

(Letterhead removed and modified to protect anonymity)

Faculty and Staff,

Please use this reference guide to direct you in the right direction when you experience challenges throughout the work day. If you have trouble contacting any of these individuals, please contact [REDACTED].

Principal: Dr. [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Support: GO Team, Master Building Schedule, Money & Bookkeeping, Contracts, Endorsements, Certification, Transfers, and Building Usage

Asst. Principal: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Support: Culture and Climate, Course Catalogue, Instructional Schedule, Discipline 6th and 7th Grade, FTE Counts, RTI concerns, Special Education Concerns, Accommodations, Field Trips

Asst. Principal: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Support: State Testing, Transportation, Lockers, Teacher Recognition, Technology Issues, Teacher Non-Instructional Duties, Sports, Academic Questions (Lesson Plans, Syllabi, Gradebooks, Report Cards)

Counselor: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Support: Social Emotional Challenges, Student Schedules, District Testing, Guest Speakers, and Assemblies, Parent Conferences, and Parent Community Engagement

Building Manager: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Support: Faulty School Furniture (Desks, Doors, Knobs, Tables, Windows), Air and Heat, Custodians, Trash, Recycling, Non-Tech Work Orders, Transporting Carts, Employee Parking, Lights,

Thanks for everything you do! Remember, Falcons S.O.A.R. every day!!!

Dr. [REDACTED]

APPENDIX D
Parent Email
(Identities Hidden)

The screenshot shows an email interface. At the top, there is a large redacted area. Below it, the sender's information is displayed: a circular profile picture with the initials 'JL', a redacted name, and the date 'Thursday, January [redacted]'. A 'Show Details' link is visible below the name. A grey warning bar states: 'To protect your privacy, some pictures in this message were not downloaded.' with a 'Download pictures' button on the right. The main body of the email contains the following text:

If the results of our efforts as parents to date include that quizzes are now sent home promptly; incremental work is graded and shared promptly; teachers go over tests in class with specificity; parents are able to see standards missed; teachers receive new training and clear expectations of the consistency you described; Ms. [redacted] record reflects her terrible behavior in class and Ms. [redacted] is facing expectations to fix serious problems in her class, I'd consider that overall a massive success for concerned parents -- and a sign that active, involved parents build stronger schools! I also hope you'll find some time amid your busy schedule in the coming days to realize that accusing parents of being litigious and trying to do the heavy lifting for their kids is disrespectful. That should be indisputable, just as it should be recognized that Ms. [redacted] remarks created a hostile learning environment for certain children. Facts before opinion, always.

Progress!
Thanks,
JL

APPENDIX E

Leadership Responsibilities Hierarchy

(Modified for Anonymity)

