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College of Education

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Faith Smith-Cole

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

School Contextual Conditions That Influence Newly Hired Teachers to Remain or Leave Their School District

by

Faith Smith-Cole

MA, Northeastern University, 2008

BS, Lewis University, 2003

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

June 2022

Abstract

A suburban school district in the midwestern United States experienced concerning teacher attrition rates of teachers with 5 or fewer years of experience. The gap in practice addressed in this study was that district administrators had little knowledge about how newly hired teachers experienced the contextual conditions that occur at their schools and how these experiences influenced the teachers to leave or remain employed in the district. The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to provide information to district administrators that they could use to develop and apply practices, programs, and policies to provide school contextual conditions that support the district's teaching staff and decrease teacher attrition. The conceptual framework for this study was the Boyd et al. model of school contextual influence on teacher attrition. The research question addressed newly hired teachers' perceptions of their experiences regarding school contextual conditions and how these experiences influenced their decisions to leave or remain employed at the school district. Data were collected through individual interviews of eight district teachers with five or fewer years of service in elementary or middle schools. Data were organized using provisional and pattern codes; subthemes and themes were identified. Two key findings of the study revealed that school contextual conditions did impact newly hired teachers' decisions to remain employed or leave the school district. More specifically, administrative support, staff relations, and facilities influenced their decisions to stay or leave the school district. Based on the study results, a project was developed to provide professional development about school contextual conditions to school principals that may promote positive social change by leading to increased retention of teachers at their schools.

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Dedication

I give all honor and praise to God who showed me this path and has given me the strength to follow it. I dedicate this work with all of my heart to my family: my mother, Mary, my father, Wayde, my brother, Anthony, and my sisters, Melissa and Brittany. To my devoted husband, Travis, and to my beloved son, Travis Jr.; without their dedication, love, passion, sacrifice, and unending support, I would not be here. To men and women of color before me, thank you for making this achievement possible and obtainable.

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I would like to acknowledge my doctoral chair, Dr. Salina Shrofel, who has been instrumental to my success in completing this process. Dr. Shrofel has pushed me beyond my limits and helped me grow throughout this whole process. I would also like to acknowledge my second chair, Dr. Seymour, and my University Research Reviewer, Dr. Nistor, for their continued feedback and guidance.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

U.S. school districts have been challenged by teacher attrition and, more specifically, by the attrition of newly hired teachers (i.e., teachers with 5 or fewer years of experience in the district). Zhang and Zeller (2016) stated that teacher attrition of newly hired teachers has increased and is one of the major causes of the U.S. teacher shortage. Additionally, research has shown that newly hired teachers are more likely to leave their employment than more experienced teachers (Redding, 2019; Viano et al., 2019; Whalen et al., 2019).

The U.S. teacher shortage does not appear to be solely caused by lower numbers of graduates from teacher preparation programs but instead by the inability of the school districts to retain the teachers they hire (Boyd et al., 2009; Buchanan et al., 2013; Dupriez et al., 2016; Ingersoll et al., 2016). Districts across the United States have expressed concerns about the attrition rates of newly hired teachers and have put in place teacher induction and mentoring programs in an attempt to reduce attrition; however, to date, these programs have not had a significant effect in reducing newly hired teacher attrition (Corbell et al., 2010; Gunning et al., 2020; Leimann et al., 2008; Lynch, 2012; Oliver et al., 2009; Parker et al., 2009).

One suburban school district located in the midwestern United States, DTW (a pseudonym), experienced teacher attrition rates between 7% and 12% over the 4-year period from 2015 to 2019. At the time of this study, the district served 6,000 students in prekindergarten through Grade 8 and employed approximately 500 teachers. Although

the DTW attrition rate was lower than the national average of 13.5%, district administrators found it concerning because of the cost of replacing teachers and the influence of teacher turnover on continuity of policy, programs, and student academic development. According to the DTW human resources department, teacher attrition in the district has been an ongoing concern since at least 2015 and, despite continuous efforts, there has been no change in the attrition rates of district teachers. Although DTW did not disaggregate attrition statistics by length of service, the district's human resources department stated that the vast majority of teachers who left were newly hired teachers with 5 or fewer years of service. Table 1 gives the percentage of teachers who left the district in each school year between 2015 and 2019.

Table 1

Employment and Attrition of Teachers in the Studied District

School year	Total *n* of teachers in district	% who left district (and did not retire)
2018–2019	536	9.1
2017–2018	563	7.6
2016–2017	521	9.8
2015–2016	502	11.8

Note. Data received from the human resources department of the study district in January 2020.

Teacher turnover is detrimental to a school district in two ways. First, replacing departing teachers costs money that could be better used to provide additional educational resources to benefit student learning. It was estimated in 2018 that school districts spent between $10,000 to $17,000 to replace each teacher who left a district (Nguyen et al., 2020). Second, teacher turnover disrupts student learning because it exposes students to

teachers inexperienced in curriculum, pedagogy, and school or district policies (Nguyen et al., 2020; Zhang & Zeller, 2016).

A number of researchers have established that there is a strong relationship between school contextual conditions (e.g., teacher influence, administrative support, staff relations, student behavior, facilities or resources, and school safety) and teacher attrition (Boyd et al., 2011; Burkhauser, 2017; Carver-Thomas et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020; Troesch & Bauer, 2017). The gap in practice addressed in this study was that district administrators had little knowledge about how newly hired teachers experience the contextual conditions of their schools and how these experiences influence the teachers to leave or remain employed in their districts.

Rationale

High teacher attrition rates across the United States have had negative financial and social consequences for students and communities (Gore & Rickards, 2021; Kelchtermans, 2017); however, many of the training and mentorship programs put in place to increase teacher retention have not achieved the desired results (Ingersoll et al., 2016). The United States has been experiencing an emerging teacher shortage (Sutcher et al., 2016; Toropova et al., 2021). In 2017, all 50 states reported statewide shortages in at least one teaching area (Viadero, 2018). The attrition rate among U.S. teachers has been approximately 13.5% per year with a majority leaving before the age of retirement (Carothers et al., 2019). Furthermore, teachers with 5 or fewer years of teaching experience in a district are 40% more likely to leave the district than teachers with more than 5 years of experience (See et al., 2020). Teacher attrition has multiple negative

effects on students and schools, including loss of financial investment in school districts (Solomonson et al., 2018), reduction in student achievement, and inconsistency in school culture (Kelchtermans, 2017).

In communications with the local school board in 2020, DTW's senior director of human resources expressed a desire to identify why teachers were leaving the district despite the district's efforts to increase retention. At the time of this study, DTW's administrators had not researched the factors contributing to attrition and retention in the district. The purpose of this study was to provide information to DTW's administrators that they could use to develop and apply practices, programs, and policies to provide school contextual conditions supportive of the district's teachers that would improve teacher retention and reduce teacher attrition.

Definition of Terms

Administrative support: The extent to which principals and other school leaders make teachers' work easier and help teachers to improve teaching. This can include offering support and encouragement, consulting teachers before making decisions, dealing effectively with student disciplinary issues, getting school resources, dealing effectively with pressures from outside school, fairly evaluating teacher performance, and regularly collecting data on teacher performance and reviewing it collectively with teachers (Boyd et al., 2011).

Facilities: The physical spaces where teachers work and the resources available to them, such as textbooks, pacing guides, physical spaces for teachers to use when they are not teaching, and appropriate facilities (Boyd et al., 2011).

Newly hired teacher: A teacher with 5 or fewer years of teaching experience in a school district (See et al., 2020).

School safety: School conditions that affect the physical and psychological well-being of students and teachers (Boyd et al., 2011).

Staff relations: The cooperative effort among staff members, the coordination of the content of classes with colleagues, the ability to obtain advice from colleagues, and the ability to experiment with teaching strategies (Boyd et al., 2011).

Student behavior: Student misbehavior in school, students' habits and attitudes regarding school, classroom rules for student behavior, and student support outside classrooms (Boyd et al., 2011).

Teacher attrition: When qualified teachers leave the profession for reasons other than having reached the age of retirement (Kelchtermans, 2017).

Teacher influence: The autonomy of teachers to select instructional materials, content, and topics; evaluate students; and discipline students (Boyd et al., 2011). Teacher influence also includes opportunities that a school's teachers have to contribute to decisions that affect the school, its teachers, and its students (Boyd et al., 2011).

Teacher retention: When qualified teachers stay in the profession (Mertler, 2016).

Significance of the Study

The results of this study provide an in-depth and nuanced understanding that district administrators can use to develop and apply programs, policies, and practices to reduce teacher attrition. Boyd et al. (2011) argued that existing research into factors affecting teacher attrition was not rich enough to drive program and policy decisions

because that research relied solely on teachers' responses to survey questions. Because I collected interview data from teachers in this study, the findings provide insights needed to inform district efforts to improve retention of newly hired teachers at DTW. The results could also be beneficial to the students and school district by reducing the negative financial and social effects of teacher attrition (see Adnot et al., 2017).

The findings of this study and the project developed based on its results could provide local-based social change at DTW. The findings provide information that may allow DTW's leaders opportunities to develop and apply practices, programs, and policies to provide school contextual conditions that support the district's teachers and reduce attrition among them. Teachers could benefit by receiving a supportive working environment. Students could benefit from a stable workforce of teachers who apply consistent practices, programs, and policies. Social change may result from improvement in the retention of newly hired teachers, which may lead to increased academic achievement among students.

Research Question

To provide information to DTW administrators that would allow them a better understanding of school contextual factors that influence teachers with 5 or fewer years of experience to leave or stay employed in the district, I asked the following research question: How do DTW teachers with 5 or fewer years of service experience school contextual conditions at their schools and how do these experiences influence their decisions to leave or remain employed in the district?

Review of the Literature

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework grounding this study was that of the relationship between teacher retention decisions and school contextual conditions developed by Boyd et al. (2011) based on earlier research about school factors that affect teacher turnover (Dinkes et al., 2009; Hirsch & Emerick, 2007; Johnson, 2006; Loeb et al., 2005; Macdonald, 1999). Boyd et al. developed six factors to measure a school's working conditions: teacher influence, administrative support, staff relations, student behavior, facilities, and safety. Boyd et al. referred to these factors as school contextual conditions. In the following subsections, I discuss these contextual conditions in more detail.

Teacher Influence

Teacher influence refers to teacher autonomy in their classrooms, such as in selecting instructional materials, content, and topics; evaluating students; and disciplining students. This factor also refers to the opportunities that teachers have to contribute to decisions that affect the school, teachers, and students. Prior research showed that teachers tend to stay in schools where they have autonomy and a role in decision making (Johnson, 2006).

Administrative Support

Administrative support refers to support that makes teachers' work easier and improves their teaching. Boyd et al. (2011) stated that multiple studies have shown that administrative support influences retention and that school leadership is related to other working conditions that in turn influence teacher retention decisions. Administrative

support includes administrator actions, such as offering support and encouragement, consulting teachers before asking decisions, dealing effectively with student disciplinary issues, getting resources for the school, dealing effectively with pressures from outside the school, fairly evaluating teacher performance, and regularly collecting and reviewing performance reports collectively with teachers.

Staff Relations

Staff relations refers to cooperative effort among staff members, such as coordinating the content of classes with peers, the ability to get advice from colleagues, and the ability to experiment with teaching strategies. Boyd et al. (2009) stated that staff relationships can provide teachers with much-needed support and guidance.

Student Behavior

Student behavior refers to student misbehavior in school, students' habits and attitudes regarding school, and classroom rules for student behavior. Student behavior can be one of the major stressors that teachers experience on a daily basis (Boyd et al., 2009).

Facilities

Facilities refers to materials like textbooks and supplies, spaces for teachers to use when they are not teaching, and appropriate facilities. According to Boyd et al. (2011), teachers feel most effective when they feel prepared to teach and when they have the appropriate materials and resources.

School Safety

School safety refers to students threatening to injure the classroom teacher and if a student from school has physically attacked a teacher at school. According to Boyd et al. (2011), the importance of teachers' working conditions and their sense of safety can greatly impact their level of job satisfaction.

Review of the Broader Problem

I searched several research databases to locate scholarly literature about the topic: Walden University's Thoreau, ProQuest Central, SocINDEX, ProQuest Dissertations, EBSCOHost Academic Complete, EBSCO PsycARTICLES, EBSCO PsycBOOKS, ScienceDirect, and SAGE. Peer-reviewed research studies published 2017 to the present provided limited findings; therefore, I broadened the search to include research and literature published over the last 15 to 20 years. The search terms I used to find research relevant to attrition and retention among newly hired teachers were *U.S. Department of Education, school culture in urban school districts, school culture in rural school districts, teachers' work stressors in education, teachers identified as minorities representation in education, newly hired teachers representation in education, veteran teachers representation in education, retention rates for teachers identified as minorities, retention rates for newly hired teachers, retention rates for veteran teachers, factors that affect newly hired and newly hired teachers retention rates, factors that influence veteran teacher attrition rates, factors that influence teachers identified as minorities attrition rates, how teacher attrition rates influence students learning, teachers' job satisfaction,* and *teacher shortage in North America.* I identified additional literature within the

reference lists of the literature found via these searches. This three-pronged approach assured that I saturated the relevant literature related to teacher attrition and retention.

In the following subsections, I discuss research relevant to teacher attrition and the factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in their school districts or leave. The subsections that follow focus specifically on (a) the problem of teacher attrition and retention, (b) teacher characteristics and work conditions related to attrition and retention, (c) teacher job satisfaction and attrition and retention, (d) attrition among ethnic minority teachers, and (e) teacher attrition globally.

The Problem of Teacher Attrition and Retention

High teacher turnover has been a growing problem in the 21st century (Bihasa, 2018; Carothers et al., 2019; Dizon-Ross, 2020; Redding & Nguyen, 2020; Ronfeldt et al., 2016). Turnover rates among teachers early in their careers have increased over the past decade (Abetang et al., 2020; McCollum, 2014). Public school teaching has ceased to be a long-term occupation for most teachers in the United States; in fact, for some it is a temporary job (Glazer, 2018). A small amount of teacher turnover is common, but the rate of turnover has risen to a high, concerning, and unsustainable level. Teacher turnover can adversely affect student achievement and local education budgets (Bailey et al., 2020). Filling in the gaps caused by high turnover costs districts and taxpayers billions of dollars in recruitment, hiring, and training (Greenlee & Brown, 2009; Ingersoll et al., 2016; McCollum, 2014). Such high turnover also leads to loss of institutional knowledge and a reduction of student performance (Curtis, 2012). Moreover, the turnover rates have been higher for teachers belonging to racial and ethnic minorities than for other teachers

(Hill-Jackson, 2020; Ingersoll et al., 2016), which has reduced the racial and ethnic diversity of teachers, who act as role models for students (Hill-Jackson, 2020; Kokka, 2016). This disparity has created classrooms with demographics unlike those of the nation as a whole (Gunning et al., 2020; Ingersoll, 2002; Ingersoll et al, 2011).

Researchers have identified a variety of factors contributing to the high rate of teacher attrition (Nguyen et al., 2020). School and workplace environment, teacher collegiality, professional development programs, and induction and mentorship programs can all influence a teacher's decision to stay in or leave teaching (Mertler, 2016; Nguyen et al; Redding, 2019). A teacher's individual characteristics (e.g., length of teaching experience), the socioeconomic status of their school, their connection with their students and the community, and their positive attitude and resilience also affect their decision to stay or leave (Cunningham, 2015; Day & Hong, 2016; Nguyen et al., 2020).

One response to rising teacher attrition across the United States has been the implementation of induction and mentorship programs for early career teachers (Nguyen et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2015). However, the effectiveness of such programs has been mixed and has depended on the quality of their implementation and whether they addressed the specific challenges facing teachers in their districts (Abetang et al., 2020; Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017).

It is important that leaders of school districts know and understand the factors that can influence teacher retention so that they can provide the support measures that most effectively reduce attrition (Lazarev et al., 2017; Veldman et al., 2016). Although school administrators cannot control all relevant factors, they can change many workplace

environmental factors that influence teacher satisfaction, such as teacher compensation, training and induction support programs, and aspects of school culture (Glennie et al., 2016; Nguyen et al., 2020). According to Kalman (2020), reform and change are essential in education for both improving schools and rebuilding educational systems to produce higher quality outcomes.

Teacher Characteristics and Work Conditions Related to Teacher Attrition

Teachers resign from their school districts for many reasons related to their experiences, demographics, and workplace conditions (Mertler, 2016; Omar et al., 2018; Toropova et al., 2021). School culture and teacher characteristics, including teaching experience and age, affect teacher attrition (Harfitt, 2014; Hughes, 2012; Mertler; Schaefer et al., 2012). Von Haaren-Mack et al. (2020) divided the factors contributing to teacher attrition into two main categories: contextual factors and individual factors. Individual factors include teacher burnout, resilience, personal demographics, and family. Contextual factors include professional support, salary, professional development, teacher collaboration, teacher education, and student issues. Individual factors typically combine with contextual factors to raise teacher attrition rates. These two categories roughly correspond to the two factors described later in this section: workplace experiences and workplace environmental factors. Most researchers have focused on the effects of only one of these two factors rather than their combined effects (Von Haaren-Mack et al., 2020). To fully understand the complex decision-making process behind teacher attrition, Von Haaren-Mack et al. suggested that researchers examine both individual and contextual factors together.

Teacher Characteristics. Although even experienced teachers can choose to leave their positions, younger, less experienced teachers have the highest rates of attrition (Elhay & Hershkovitz, 2019; Harfitt, 2014; Harfitt & Chan, 2017; Kim et al., 2020; McCollum, 2014; Toropova et al., 2021). The length of a teacher's service directly influences their professional satisfaction; despite teachers being more likely to stay in their school district after several years of service, they can become more dissatisfied over time (Toropova et al., 2021). Most researchers investigating factors that influence teacher attrition have therefore focused on teachers within their first 5 years of teaching.

Harfitt and Chan (2017) conducted a study based on narrative inquiry and examined why two teachers left teaching after 1 year only to return 2 years later. Through multiple interviews and monthly journals, Harfitt and Chan identified the teachers' youth, rough transitions from students to teachers, and lack of support from school administrators as the main factors behind their attrition. The participants were more likely to become frustrated and to focus on their own failures as new teachers when they received insufficient support from their school administrators and colleagues (Harfitt & Chan, 2017). Harfitt and Chan stressed the importance of support mechanisms for teachers, particularly early career teachers, as ways to mitigate teacher attrition.

Workplace Conditions. Workplace conditions constitute a major factor of teacher attrition identified by many researchers (Boyd et al., 2011; Nguyen et al., 2020). Many researchers have identified some aspect of workplace conditions or school culture as critical to a teacher's decision to stay or leave (Burke et al., 2013; Curtis, 2012; Martin et al., 2012; Plunkett & Dyson 2011; Schaefer et al., 2012; See et al., 2020). Teachers

experience emotional exhaustion when they feel unable to cope with the stress and demands of the job (Robinson et al., 2019).

According to See et al. (2020), an increasingly important issue is teacher workload. See et al. found workload stressors, such as peer relationships, curriculum requirements, and administrative support, impacted teacher attrition. The authors studied 631 teachers from three public schools in the southwestern United States to determine their job satisfaction, workload stressors, and correlations between these variables and their intent to leave the profession. See et al. found that elementary school teachers tended to have higher job satisfaction and were less likely to consider leaving their schools due to student- and teaching-related stressors than middle- and high-school teachers. The authors found it difficult to determine the reasons for this difference in job satisfaction, especially given that teachers from all three groups indicated comparable levels of stress and burnout.

School District Conditions and Characteristics. Retaining teachers in high-poverty schools can be particularly difficult (Elhay & Hershkovitz, 2019; Northup, 2018; Simon & Johnson, 2015). High-need, low-performance schools typically lose 20% or more of their faculty each year, and more than 50% of the teaching staff must be replaced every 5 years due to low retention rates (Elhay & Hershkovitz, 2019; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Because of these statistics, some have argued that retaining highly effective teachers should be a national priority in districts with such schools (Hansen et al., 2016; Omar et al., 2018).

Several researchers have examined the relationship between socioeconomic conditions of students and teacher retention (Newton et al., 2011; Nguyen et al., 2020). Newton et al. noted that the school's location, the level of poverty among its students, and the level of achievement among its students affects its likelihood of retaining qualified teachers.

Hansen et al. (2016) conducted a qualitative study of teacher placement and retention strategies among corps members of the Teach for America (TFA) program in poorly performing, high-need schools. TFA is a hybrid-teaching program that places teachers in a 2-year, fast-track teaching program in exchange for a 2-year teaching commitment in a low-performance U.S. school district. TFA clusters teachers in one low-performance, high-need school to provide a shared teaching experience during their first 2 years of teaching. Hansen et al. studied members of the TFA who taught in the Miami-Dade school district between 2003 and 2011. At the time of Hansen et al.'s study, the Miami-Dade school district was the largest school district in Florida and the fourth largest in the United States, and it had the largest population of disadvantaged students and students belonging to racial and ethnic minorities; 60% of students were economically disadvantaged. The authors surveyed members of the TFA to find evidence to support the claim that the TFA clustering strategy positively affected retention and mobility rates. Hansen et al. found that over 30% of members of the TFA assigned to high-need schools during the study period remained in their initial teaching positions. However, this was comparable to the district's overall retention rate, indicating that the TFA clustering strategy had little to no influence on teacher retention.

Many researchers have found that school environment, teacher collegiality, professional development programs, and induction and mentorship programs can affect a teacher's decision to stay or leave teaching (Burke et al., 2013; Carver-Thomas et al., 2020; Greenlee & Brown, 2009; Petty et al., 2012; Schaefer et al., 2012). It has become difficult for U.S. school districts to retain and replace highly qualified educators (Ingersoll et al., 2016); therefore, it has become imperative that leaders of school districts learn more about teachers' perceptions of their workplaces and reasons why they leave.

Teacher Job Satisfaction and Attrition

According to Ellis et al. (2017), an individual's job satisfaction is the degree to which they feel positively or negatively about their job. Job satisfaction is critical for teacher retention, but the job satisfaction of teachers has reached a 25-year low (Ellis et al., 2017). Poor job satisfaction among teachers is concerning because researchers have linked job satisfaction to effort, job performance, and turnover in multiple professional fields (Hom & Kinicki, 2001; Judge et al., 2001; Toropova et al., 2021). Many factors can influence teacher job satisfaction, and these may change throughout a teacher's career (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Toropova et al., 2021). Increasing teacher job satisfaction is one possible way to increase teacher retention (Ellis et al., 2017).

According to Ellis et al. (2017), one way to improve job satisfaction may be to improve the representation of job responsibilities and requirements when advertising teaching positions. Ellis et al. conducted a quantitative study and examined the relationship between accuracy of a job preview and teacher satisfaction. Using data from over 700 teachers collected by the Center for Research, Evaluation, and Advancement of

Teacher Education, the researchers tested a mediation model to determine whether a more accurate job preview led to a better job fit and greater overall job satisfaction. Ellis et al. concluded that school and district leaders should provide ways to increase applicants' knowledge of specific teaching positions during the hiring process, including precise school settings and student backgrounds, to increase job satisfaction and reduce teacher attrition.

According to Cunningham (2015), a teacher's personal attitude can also influence their job satisfaction. Cunningham conducted a quantitative survey to identify factors associated with teacher attitude and job satisfaction. Data were collected from the Schools and Staffing Survey administered by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. Over 43,000 teachers were asked whether the following factors affected their job satisfaction: salary, administrative support, student discipline, staff influence and input on school policies, and attitudes about teaching experiences. Cunningham found that teachers' attitudes about teaching experiences accounted for more variability in job satisfaction than any of the other items examined. If a teacher had a positive outlook on their current teaching assignment, this factor alone determined their job satisfaction.

Attrition Rates Among Ethnic Minority Teachers

Diversifying the teaching workforce in U.S. public schools has long been an issue of public interest (see Sun, 2018). Over the past several decades, numerous scholars have signaled the growing mismatch between the racial and ethnic diversity of students and that of teachers in the United States (Ingersoll et al., 2016; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

According to Ingersoll et al. (2016), 41% of Americans belonged to racial or ethnic minority groups, 41% of elementary and secondary students belonged to racial or ethnic minority groups, but only 16.5% of elementary and secondary teachers belonged to racial or ethnic minority groups. Moreover, teachers who belonged to racial or ethnic minority groups were overwhelmingly employed in public schools serving high-poverty, ethnically diverse, and urban communities. These teachers were 2 to 3 times more likely than White teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools. The researchers found that, despite a host of barriers to entry and competition from other occupations for college graduates belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups, efforts to recruit more such graduates and place them in schools serving disadvantaged students have been very successful. The number of elementary and secondary teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups increased by almost 100%, which is outpacing the number of White teachers entering the profession and resulting in a more diverse teaching workforce (Ingersoll et al., 2016).

Cole et al. (2017) found limited research available on the attrition rates for teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minorities. Cole et al. conducted case studies regarding this issue by collecting personal accounts from three, first-year teachers who belonged to racial or ethnic minority groups. The participants had completed their educational programs and were working as university professors. Cole et al. argued that simply being a teacher belonging to a racial or ethnic minority group can make it difficult to navigate the teaching profession. The researchers highlighted the need for more support for such teachers throughout the transition from graduation to the workforce,

including peer support and mentorship during their first year of teaching. Cole et al. concluded that participants could adequately prepare for their teaching assignments when they had a clear understanding of others' expectations of them, which could help to reduce attrition among teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minorities.

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) conducted a comparative study of whether school size affected attrition rates among teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups. Ingersoll and Strong found that such teachers in schools with fewer than 300 students departed more frequently than did White teachers in schools of the same size. Controlling for other variables revealed that White teachers were more likely than other teachers to leave schools with high proportions of low-income students and teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). However, it is important to note that the difference in the overall attrition rates between these two groups of teachers was small and statistically insignificant (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011).

Ingersoll et al. (2016) used a case study to examine and compare the recruitment efforts and retention rates of White elementary and secondary teachers and elementary and secondary teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups. The researchers examined three groups of known predictors of teacher turnover: teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and organizational conditions. Teacher characteristics included teacher age and gender. School characteristics included school size, school location, student socioeconomic status, and numbers of students and teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups. Organizational characteristics included teacher salary, student

discipline procedures, school resources available to students and teachers, administrative decision-making process, and teacher autonomy over curriculum and lesson delivery.

Using data from six cycles of the Schools and Staffing Survey, Ingersoll et al. (2016) found that teacher, school, and organizational characteristics affected the job satisfaction of all teachers regardless of race or ethnicity. Moreover, they found that 35% of teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minorities were dissatisfied with their jobs and left teaching, compared to 30% of White teachers. Teacher age predicted likelihood of turnover but only for White teachers. White teachers younger than 30 years old or older than 50 years old were far more likely to depart than middle-aged White teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2016). Among teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minorities, men departed at a rate 50% higher than that of women. There were no differences between the attrition rates of men and women among White teachers. The researchers concluded that, although a gap in racial and ethnic diversity persisted between students and teachers in U.S. schools, this gap was due not to a failure to recruit new teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minorities but rather to the high attrition rate among this group (Hill-Jackson, 2020; Ingersoll et al., 2016).

Ingersoll et al. (2016) used data from the Schools and Staffing Survey and the Teacher Follow-Up Survey to examine patterns in the attrition of teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups between 1987–2013. The researchers found that the total number of such teachers in the United States had more than doubled from 1987 to 2012, but turnover rates among this group of teachers were also significantly higher than among White teachers. Teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups cited

organizational and working conditions as the primary reasons for leaving the profession. In particular, teachers cited the lack of influence they had on decision making and the lack of autonomy they had in their classrooms (Ingersoll et al., 2016). These reasons were more important than salary, professional development, and classroom resources, which is particularly noteworthy given that the teachers belonging to racial and ethnic minority groups were overwhelmingly employed at high-poverty, high-need, urban schools (Ingersoll et al., 2016).

Gist (2017) conducted a comparative case study using interviews and focus groups to examine how teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups perceived their teaching and learning experiences. Nine such teachers took part in either one or two levels of investigation. Level 1 investigation consisted of a single interview, and Level 2 investigation consisted of two to three interviews and a focus group. Gist noted that teachers who said they had personal pride in their school district and community often felt a moral obligation to remain in their current district despite feeling dissatisfied with their jobs. The author suggested there was a need for further development, support, and guidance of teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups throughout their teaching careers. Gist also argued that teacher education programs must be more strategic and focus on the types of institutional policies, pedagogical practices, and overall preparation experiences that equip and sustain teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups for the challenges ahead.

People belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups make up 37% of those enrolled in teacher preparation programs at colleges and universities but only 17% of

teachers who actually enter the teaching profession (see Hill-Jackson, 2020). This disparity indicates a clear need to investigate the support programs in place for teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups who are entering the profession (see Hill-Jackson, 2020). Such teachers have shared experiences of alienation and isolation in their school environments (Cole et al., 2017). The methods and strategies in place to train and support White teachers are not as helpful for teachers belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups, who face specific challenges upon entering the teaching profession (Jackson & Kohli, 2016).

According to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019), teachers belonging to racial minority groups are more likely than other teachers to enter teaching through a pathway other than a 4-year teacher certification program. Alternative certification programs have become particularly popular among new Black teachers, nearly half of whom entered teaching through such programs. Although there is a statistically significant difference in the overall turnover rates of teachers belonging to racial minority groups and White teachers (18.9% and 15.1%, respectively), this difference is not present in all types of schools. In schools where the proportion of those belonging to racial minority groups is the same among students and teachers, there is no statistically significant difference in turnover rates (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019).

Because the teaching workforce has remained overwhelmingly White (Berchini, 2016; Hill-Jackson, 2020), it is imperative to remember that lack of diversity among the teaching staff of a school sends a message to students belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups that educational attainment and leadership are not for them. Cherng and

Halpin (2016) found that White teachers were more likely than others to underestimate the academic abilities of students belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups, which in turn lowered those students' academic expectations of themselves. Cherng and Halpin used the Measures of Effective Teaching database to analyze information from over 1,600 middle-school teachers and 50,000 students to determine whether student perceptions of teachers varied based on teacher race. The researchers found that students viewed teachers belonging to racial minority groups more favorably than they viewed White teachers. Cherng and Halpin suggested this difference derived from teachers belonging to racial minority groups being more multiculturally aware than White teachers, making them better able to develop rapport with all of their students, regardless of student race.

Teacher Attrition and Retention Globally

The phenomenon of high teacher attrition has not been limited to the United States (Tran & Smith, 2020). Moosa (2020) stated that in the long and interesting history of the teaching profession, teaching has changed from being a preferred career with high social status to being regarded as a career selected by young people. Although every country faces unique challenges specific to its education system, many factors associated with teacher attrition appear to be shared around the world.

A South African researcher, Moosa (2020), conducted a mixed methods study to better understand how first-year teachers perceived their teaching experience and what ways they were motivated to continue teaching. Teachers were asked if their careers were based on altruistic, extrinsic, or intrinsic reasons. The study was conducted in

Johannesburg, South Africa where 678 teachers were surveyed. Over 60% of the teachers that took part in the study attributed their motivation to teach and continue teaching to altruistic reasons. Moosa reported that 97% of those teachers that took part in the study became teachers with the goal of influencing children's development, despite over 50% of teachers reporting teaching was not their initial career path.

Australian researchers Mason and Matas (2015) conducted a meta-analysis to synthesize research that identified why Australian teachers were leaving their jobs within their first 5 years of teaching. Mason and Matas used thematic content analysis methodology to locate published studies in three major databases published between 1995 and 2014. In the twenty studies they found, Mason and Matas identified 13 variables linked to teacher attrition: (a) teacher perceptions of the quality of school leadership, (b) teacher perceptions regarding the professional support of their school leaders, (c) teacher perceptions regarding the professional development opportunities offered by the district, (d) teacher perceptions regarding the instructional practices implemented by the district, (e) the complexity of the role of teaching and how it has changed to require additional certifications, (f) teacher perceptions of assigned duties, (g) teacher perceptions regarding the quality of preservice education for staff members, (h) teacher perceptions of the nature of formal and informal administrative support, (i) teacher perceptions of the quality of the relationship between the teacher and the larger school community, (j) teacher perceptions of school culture, (k) teacher perceptions of employment conditions directly related to teaching expectations, (l) teacher perceptions of school resources and facilities, and (m) personal characteristics of the teachers. Despite

the limited research on teacher attrition in Australia and the inconsistency of terminology associated with teacher attrition in the literature, Mason and Matas identified many of the same teacher attrition factors suggested in research on teacher attrition in the United States. Mason and Matas also emphasized the need for more longitudinal statistical studies on teacher attrition and the development of a theoretical model that acknowledges the complex nature of teacher attrition.

Hariri et al. (2016) investigated differences in principals' leadership styles to determine which types of leadership teachers preferred. Using a standardized multifactor leadership questionnaire and job satisfaction survey, the researchers surveyed over 400 teachers to determine the leadership styles of their principals and their job satisfaction. Of the leadership styles examined, Hariri et al. found that transformational leadership and rational decision making were the best predictors of high teacher job satisfaction; laissez-faire leadership, intuitive decision making, and avoidant decision making were the leadership styles most strongly associated with low job satisfaction. The presence of a principal with a transformational leadership style and rational decision making were the most important factors contributing to teacher job satisfaction, which is linked to teacher retention (see Hariri et al., 2016).

Teacher–student dynamics and community and school recognition can also influence teacher job satisfaction (Veldman et al., 2016). Veldman et al. conducted multiple case studies to investigate the job satisfaction of 12 Dutch teachers aged 54–64 years who each had over 25 years of experience. Veldman et al. found that only three of the teachers had high job satisfaction, which they attributed to their relationships with

their students. The other participants reported low job satisfaction, which they attributed to the feeling that they were not appreciated by the district and community.

Implications

The results of this study could have led to the development of a policy paper or a professional development project directed at district administrators. The policy paper would have provided information to administrators regarding teachers with 5 or fewer years of service and their experiences of school contextual conditions, and it would make recommendations about how DTW could address identified issues. A professional development project could provide school principals with professional knowledge needed to understand how to better retain their teachers. I conducted the research study, it was determined that the findings best supported the development of a professional development project.

Summary

In Section 1 I established the problem that I addressed in this qualitative study, namely the high rate of attrition among teachers with 5 or fewer years of service in a suburban midwestern school district. The focus of the study was the provision of information for DTW's administrators regarding how newly hired DTW teachers experienced the school contextual conditions within the district.

According to Boyd et al. (2011), a relationship exists between school contextual conditions and teachers' retention decisions. Boyd et al.'s concept of how school contextual conditions influence teacher attrition decisions formed the conceptual framework that grounded the study. Boyd et al. argued that teachers' perceptions of

school contextual conditions are important influences on teachers' decisions to leave or stay. Section 1 ended with an explanation of the implications of the study and its potential contributions to social change. In Section 2, I present the methodology of the study and describes the research design and data analysis.

Section 2: The Methodology

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

The purpose of this study was to provide information to DTW's administrators that they could use to develop and apply practices, programs, and policies to create school contextual conditions that support the district's teachers and reduce teacher attrition. In qualitative research, a researcher uses interviews, observations, and experiences of a sample to investigate a particular phenomenon (Merriam, 2017). Qualitative research provides contextualized and rich data, employs small samples, and entails time-consuming data collection and analysis techniques (Merriam, 2017).

I considered the quantitative research methods for this study but did not select it because a deep examination of the experiences of the participants was the best way to address the problem (see Merriam, 2017). Qualitative research differs significantly from quantitative research. A quantitative researcher collects broad data to study relationships between independent and dependent variables and, thus, test hypotheses (see Merriam). I considered both approaches but chose the qualitative method because this allowed me to collect rich data that would provide an in-depth understanding of the problem.

There are a number of qualitative research designs from which a researcher can choose: phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative analysis, case study, and basic qualitative research. In the following subsections, I describe each design.

Phenomenology

Phenomenological research is the study of people's conscious experiences of their life-worlds (i.e., their everyday lives and social actions; Merriam, 2009). Merriam stated

that phenomenological researchers are interested in the essences of the shared experiences of research participants and that the focus of such research is experience and how experience transforms participants. Because I did not plan to capture the essence of participants' shared experience, I did not choose phenomenology.

Ethnography

The aim of an ethnographic study is to discover the essences and unique complexities of social groups; ethnography is both a process and a product (Merriam, 2009). An ethnographic design focuses on the beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure behavior patterns in a specific social group. I was not focusing on values and attitudes of participants; therefore, I did not select ethnography.

Grounded Theory

Merriam (2017) defined grounded theory as a method of systematic study used to generate a theory about a substantive topic. The result of this type of qualitative study is a theory that emerges from, or is grounded in, collected data. According to Merriam, the focus on building theory differentiates grounded theory from other types of qualitative research. For this reason, I rejected grounded theory because my goal was not to build a theory.

Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis is a type of qualitative research that relies on narratives and stories as data. Story text forms the data set, which a researcher analyzes to make sense of the world (Merriam, 2017). I would not be using narrative analysis for my study. For this reason, I rejected narrative analysis.

Case Study

According to Merriam (2017), a researcher uses a case study to achieve a deep understanding of research participants' perceptions or experiences of specific issues. A case study involves in-depth analysis of information gathered from interaction with participants that directly focuses on individuals or small groups in their natural contexts (Merriam, 2017). A case study relies on more than one source of data to obtain detailed descriptions of individuals' experiences, and a researcher documents and analyzes these descriptions to seek patterns or themes (Merriam, 2017). I would not be doing a case study. For this reason, I rejected the case study method.

Basic Qualitative Research

According to Merriam (2017), a basic qualitative study relies on one source of data to answer a research question. When conducting a basic qualitative study, a researcher explores a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals (Merriam, 2017). I used a basic qualitative design for this study because it was the most appropriate method to study newly hired teachers in a situation where only one source of data was available. This basic qualitative design allowed me to obtain information about how teachers with fewer than 5 years of experience perceived school contextual conditions.

Participants

I selected a representative sample of eight teachers, each of whom had 5 or fewer years of service in the district. My sample population included one male of color, three

females of color, and four White females. The participants taught in various subject areas and grades ranging between kindergarten and eighth grade.

Table 2

Demographics of Participants in the Studied District

	Minority	Nonminority	Male	Female	Special Education
Participant 1		X		X	X
Participant 2		X		X	
Participant 3		X	X		X
Participant 4	X			X	
Participant 5	X			X	
Participant 6	X			X	X
Participant 7		X		X	
Participant 8	X			X	

Procedure for Gaining Access to Participants

To recruit participants, I followed a 21-day timeline to obtain informed consent while avoiding coercion (Creswell, 2009). The procedure consisted of the following steps:

1. I completed the district approval form for conducting studies. After receiving approval from the district's chief academic and accountability officer, I obtained a letter of cooperation from the district permitting me to access the research sites.

2. I applied for and received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Approval No: 06-18-21-0269697).
3. I began the 21-day recruitment process by sending introduction emails to all DTW teachers with 5 or fewer years of service inviting them to participate in the study. The emails were sent to their public email addresses, which were available on the district's website. The emails contained descriptions of how their privacy and confidentiality would be protected in the study.
4. At the end of the 21 days, I had recruited 12 participants who met the selection criteria. Of the 12, four of the potential participants requested additional information regarding the study prior to consenting. I spoke to the four potential participants privately to address any questions or concerns regarding the study. Three participants decided to not move forward with the study due to personal concerns. The remaining participant did not respond to follow-up emails regarding consent to take part in the study. I concluded that this participant was no longer interested in taking part in the study. In total, eight participants took part in the study. The participants ranged in ethnicities, gender, and subject area. Four of the eight participants identified as people of color. Seven of the eight participants were female, and one was male. Three of the eight participants taught in special education classrooms.
5. I sent a letter of informed consent via email to the eight participants who comprised the sample. I also sent a thank-you letter to all invited potential participants, regardless of whether they responded to the invitation.

6. After receiving the consent forms from the selected participants, I contacted them via email to schedule a date and time for their phone or Zoom interview. Participants were also reminded that the audio of the interviews would be recorded.

To conduct an information-rich, in-depth study, I had to establish a researcher–participant relationship with each participant that would not compromise the integrity of the study. The participants I selected did not view me as having any authority over them. With the aid of various communication tools—such as email, phone, and Zoom—I sought to maintain professional rapport with the participants to create an atmosphere of respect, trust, and confidentiality. I reassured participants before the interviews that their information would be kept in the strictest confidence, their names would not be used in the study, and all data collected would be de-identified and assigned a number or a pseudonym.

Protection of Participants' Rights

All study data will remain confidential. I obtained permission to collect data from DTW administrators. After receiving permission from the school district, I also sought and received approval from Walden University IRB to conduct the study before collecting data. To assure confidentiality, I used pseudonyms for participants when transcribing the interviews, analyzing the data, and storing the data on a password-protected computer. I backed up copies of the data on a thumb drive, which I will store in my home desk drawer without identifying information for 5 years after the study has been

completed. After 5 years have passed, I will permanently delete the data from the thumb drive and my personal computer.

Data Collection

Qualitative research is the type of research that encompasses a number of philosophical orientations and approaches (Merriam, 2017). To conduct this qualitative study, I interviewed a sample of currently employed, newly hired teachers. Creswell (2012) stated that a qualitative interview occurs when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers. I developed an interview protocol that I used to collect the data for analysis (see Appendix C).

Interviews

Data were collected for this study through individual interviews during June and July 2021 of currently employed, teachers with 5 or fewer years of service. I began the interview process by explaining the interview protocol to the participants, including how information would be recorded, how participants' confidentiality would be protected, and that they could opt out of the study at any time. I also reviewed the information outlined in the informed consent document and required each participant to send me an email stating their consent. Each participant was sent an email that included the interview date and time. The participant interviews took place via Zoom and lasted approximately 1 hour. At the conclusion of the interview, I thanked the participants for their participation in the study.

During the interview process, the Zoom interviews were audio recorded using more than one recorder. I transcribed the interviews into a Google document within 48 hours of each interview and uploaded them into a Google spreadsheet.

During the interviews, I followed the semistructured interview protocol, which allowed me to ask the participants follow-up and probing questions for clarity when needed. Creswell (2012) defined a semistructured interview protocol as useful for asking sensitive questions and enabling open dialogue that goes beyond the initial questions. The interview protocol contained interview questions that were sufficient to answer the research questions. At the beginning of each interview, I reassured each participant again of the confidentiality of the interviews.

A semistructured interview is used commonly in qualitative research because it provides structure for the interview protocol (Creswell 2012). The semistructured nature provides flexibility for the participants to elaborate on the points of each question that are meaningful to them, allowing for the researcher to drive the conversation even deeper. I developed the interview protocol guided by the conceptual framework (see Appendix C).

Role of the Researcher

At the time of the study, I was a doctoral student at Walden University and served as the director of a multitiered system of supports for DTW. I had been employed by the district for 18 years and had served in several positions: teacher, full-time teacher mentor, assistant principal, and principal. These roles afforded me the opportunity to develop deep professional relationships with and to formally mentor teachers and principals belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups and newly hired teachers and principals. At

the time of the study, I supervised 30 teachers. The teachers I directly supervised and evaluated were not invited to take part in the study.

My role in this study was to conduct a qualitative investigation of an issue that affected the local setting. As the researcher, my job throughout the data collection and analysis phases was to establish and maintain open communication with study participants. I was careful to select participants with whom I had no extended contact throughout the school year, with the exception of committees and district-wide professional development. I developed a researcher–participant relationship with each participant by communicating with them about the study through emails and phone calls before the interviews.

Qualitative research requires researchers to become involved in the intensity of the shared experiences of participants' ethical, strategic, and personal issues (Creswell, 2012). As the researcher, I was aware that my personal biases and experiences could influence my analysis and interpretation of the collected data; however, I took a clinical stance and interpreted and analyzed data objectively.

The biases that I brought to the analysis of the data were a result of my previous experiences with newly hired teachers in the district. I believed that a school district should provide the conditions that allow all teachers to be satisfied with their jobs. Although I had a professional relationship with DTW, I performed this research to provide deeper insight into the district's attrition and retention concerns, which may not have matched my opinions or viewpoints. The participants viewed me as a professional colleague as well as a researcher.

To ensure that my biases did not appear in either my questions or my analysis of the data, I used bracketing, as described by Tufford and Newman (2012). Bracketing is a dependable method a researcher can use to protect themselves from the adverse effects of closely examining data that could be emotionally challenging. The bracketing method I used was to keep a reflexive journal. In this journal, I worked to examine my reasons for doing this research, biases, personal judgments, personal experiences, and ability to maintain a reflexive stance throughout the study. By keeping this journal, the rigor of the study was increased.

Ethical Issues

In order to ensure ethical standards for this study were followed and protect the participants, I followed the Walden University IRB's guidelines to assure ethical research practices and the protection of all parties involved in the study. After receiving permission from DTW's superintendent for permission to begin my study, potential participants were sent the invitation to participate letter. I provided a consent statement that included a full disclosure of the study, its purpose, how the survey would be used to collect information and guide decision making, a description of who would be selected as participants, and a plan to ensure the participants were: (a) protected from any physical, mental, social, or professional harm; (b) provided confidentiality and anonymity; (c) assured that the data collected would not reflect individual practice in the classroom or be used for school-level evaluations; (d) assured that participation in the study was optional; and (e) given the opportunity to opt out of the study at any time. It was also noted that participants would not be compensated for participation, although the data collected

would benefit the school. I informed the participants that by completing the survey, the participant provided consent for the use of their data for the research purposes of this study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involves preparing and organizing the data, exploring and coding the data, describing findings and forming themes, representing and reporting findings, interpreting the meaning of the findings, and validating the accuracy of the findings. Data analysis is making sense of the data in order to address the research questions in a study (Merriam, 2017). For my study, I conducted interviews with eight participants. After the conclusion of each interview, I spent 15 minutes reflecting in my journal. I reflected on how the overall interview went, adjustments I needed to make for the next interview, and any major themes or wonderings that emerged. I saved the interview data and reflections in a password-protected document. At the conclusion of each interview, I transcribed the video call using the transcription app Otter. I reread each interview transcript at least three times to ensure the transcription was accurate. I compared the transcripts to the audio recording and looked for inconsistencies in the transcripts. I used this process for data analysis. I verified the interview data by reading and rereading the transcripts. I organized the data using provisional and pattern codes. I identified subthemes and themes in the transcripts. I describe and interpreted those themes.

Organizing and Managing the Data

After transcribing each interview, I labeled the audio recording with the participant number and locked it inside my file cabinet at my residence. I stored each

transcribed interview in a data collection folder on my password-protected personal desktop computer. Each transcribed file included the participants' number and the date and time of the interview. I listened to each audio recording multiple times and reread the transcript for each participant to make sure that I transcribed everything from the audio recording. I matched the audio recordings and transcripts using the participants' numbers and the dates and times of the interviews.

Data Coding

I conducted two cycles of data coding. During the first cycle, I coded each transcript using a set of preliminary codes developed based on the conceptual framework and the literature review. During the second cycle, I coded each transcript using pattern coding. After completing the coding, I reviewed the provisional and pattern codes and clustered the codes into categories that captured the essence of the data (see Saldana, 2021). From these categories, I developed a set of themes that accounted for the data and answered the research question.

Trustworthiness of the Analysis

According to Merriam (2017), a researcher can ensure the trustworthiness of a qualitative study by assessing the credibility, transferability, and dependability of the data analysis. A researcher establishes credibility by thoroughly describing the analysis step by step. Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined credibility of research in relation to the truth of the research findings and confidence that the researcher has correctly interpreted the participants' views and drawn information from participants' original data without contamination from bias. Lincoln and Guba defined transferability as the degree to which

answers to research questions transfer to other contexts and settings with other participants. Dependability, as defined by Lincoln and Guba depends on whether the findings are stable over time and another researcher would come to the same conclusions if they replicated the study. Establishing dependability involves evaluation and interpretation of the findings supported by the data. The sections that follow describe how I established trustworthiness.

Validity of the Analysis

According to Merriam (2017), researchers can use several strategies to enhance the validity of qualitative studies. I demonstrated validity and reliability of the data analysis with two methods. The methods used were rich, thick description and peer debriefing.

Peer Debriefing

Lodico et al. (2010) stated that a peer debriefer asks a researcher questions to stimulate reexamination of their assumptions and alternative ways to look at the data analysis. I used two peer debriefers to validate the accuracy, authenticity, and transparency of the data analysis. I used two colleagues, both of whom had doctoral degrees in education from the University of Chicago. Both peer debriefers had experience conducting qualitative research. The peer debriefers examined all the raw data and reviewed the coding and the analysis of the data. The peer debriefers provided feedback on the analysis to ensure that it aligned with the coding of the data. I reviewed the feedback to determine whether there were areas of concern that needed reconsideration. I reported the peer debriefers' results as part of the data analysis.

Rich, Thick Description

Rich, thick description is important when conveying findings; using it establishes transferability. Merriam (2017) defined rich, thick description as the use of words and pictures rather than numbers to convey what a researcher has learned. As the researcher, I described the data and provided detailed descriptions. When a researcher provides detailed descriptions with many perspectives about a theme, the results are more realistic and richer, adding validity to the findings (Merriam, 2017). I ensured that people unfamiliar with the research context could accurately understand the setting and context. To do this, I provided adequate information about the participants' experiences, findings, and contextual factors.

Discrepant Cases

As the researcher, I was aware that discrepant cases could emerge during the study. When analyzing the data, I did not discover any discrepant data.

Data Analysis Results

I conducted this research study to answer one broad research question that asked how newly hired teachers experienced school contextual conditions and how those experiences influenced their decisions to stay or leave their school district. In order to answer the research question, I first analyzed the interview data, I read and reread the transcriptions, organized the data, coded the data using two cycles of coding, and identified the themes. For my first cycle of coding I used provisional codes that were based on the conceptual framework outlined by Boyd et al. (2011). Each transcript was coded line by line using the six provisional codes.

During the second round of coding, I used pattern coding to identify patterns in the data. Pattern coding identifies similar coded data and organizes it into sets, themes, or attributes (see Saldana, 2021). The findings resulted in two themes. The first theme was that participants perceived there were both positive and negative aspects for each school contextual condition. These contextual conditions were (a) administrative support, (b) student behavior, (c) teacher influence, (d) staff relations, (e) facilities resources, and (f) school safety. The second theme was that participants reported three school contextual conditions that could affect their employment decisions. These contextual conditions were (a) administrative support, (b) staff relations, and (c) facilities resources.

Theme 1: Participants Perceived Both Positive and Negative Aspects of School Contextual Conditions

To present that data for theme I will first present the positive aspects and then present the negative aspects. The data for each of the contextual factors will be presented in the following order (a) administrative support, (b) student behavior, (c) teacher influence, (d) staff relations, (e) facilities resources, and (f) school safety. The theme overall is that there are positive and negative aspects of each of the conditions.

Newly Hired Teachers' Perceptions of Administrative Support

Administrative involvement and support were defined as personal and professional relationships administrators develop with their staff, administration providing specific feedback to staff, and administration reflecting and seeking feedback about their own practice for improvement (Boyd et al., 2011). The study found that

perceptions of administrative support and involvement varied greatly among newly hired teachers.

Participant 1 reported positive aspects of the level of support and involvement she received from her administrator. Participant 1 stated, she often gets visits and feedback from her administrator on a regular basis. Participant 1 pointed out that because her administrators have high levels of involvement and presence in her classroom, administrators understand her teaching style and know the students in her classroom.

Participants 5 and 6 reported very different experiences in relation to administrator support. Participant 5 reported little to no administrative involvement or support during her first few years as a newly hired teacher. Participant 5 stated that she does "not receive classroom visits and/or check ins from my administrator at all." Furthermore, Participant 5 stated, "how can my administrator evaluate me if they have never been in my classroom? …the principal does not know what I am doing in my classroom each day." Participant 5 went on to say, "I would appreciate even small suggestions or feedback about my teaching practices; that would be helpful and welcomed."

Participant 6 also reported negative aspects of administrative support. Participant 6 reported feeling "unsupported by my administrator." Participant 6 pointed out in "my first year in the school it was really difficult, there were a lot of student behavior issues and I did not feel like they were not appropriately addressed by administration." Participant 6 reported a larger concern for the high turnover rates of teachers in the district. Participant 6 said, "one thing I have noticed is how many jobs are posting here

every year. The attrition rates seem really high, especially in a community like this." She stated that administration needs to "reconsider and review their current practices and how they support newly hired teachers."

Participant 7 also reported negative aspects of administrator support due to concerns about the level of attrition in the school district. Participant 7 reported "last year three teachers left in the first month of school because they did not feel supported by administration. I have never seen anything like that before, people leaving in the middle of school year from one department." When viewing the district job openings, she reported levels of concern about teacher turnover in her Special Education Department especially. Participant 1 said, "it is disappointing when teachers leave midyear, I feel like students need a sense of closure. When a teacher leaves in the middle of the year that impacts everyone." Participant 7 argued, "Administration need to be supporting their teachers by being in their classrooms and seeing what is happening, to understand how to best support them."

Participant 2 reported negative aspects of administrative involvement due to "limited administrative support and involvement" during her time as a newly hired teacher. Participant 2 said, "administrators often do not understand the subject area I teach (math) making it more difficult to provide feedback on how to improve my teaching." Participant 2 argued that even if administration has "a teaching background in math, or even a strong math knowledge they do not spend enough time going through the curriculum to understand what the students are learning and what the teacher is covering." Participant 2 stated, "This year has been frustrating due to lack of support

from the building administration." However, she points out a "bright side I believe the high rate of administration turnover in my building means that a new administrator may be replacing the current administrator soon."

Newly Hired Teachers' Perceptions of Student Behavior

Student behavior is defined as student misbehavior in school, students' habits and attitudes regarding school, classroom rules for student behavior, and student support outside classrooms (Boyd et al., 2011). Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 reported positive aspects of student behavior in their schools. In addition, a majority of participants reported little to no concern regarding student behavior in their schools with the exception Participant 6 who experienced some student misbehavior in her first few years of teaching and reported negative aspects of student behavior. Participant 6 pointed out in "my first year in the school it was really difficult, there were a lot of student behavior issues and I did not feel like they were not appropriately addressed by administration." Participants 2 and 8 reported that students were very well behaved in the school district as a whole and that this was a positive experience for them as newly hired teachers.

Newly Hired Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher Influence

Teacher influence is defined as the autonomy of teachers to select instructional materials, content, and topics and to evaluate and discipline students (Boyd et al., 2011). The findings of my study revealed that participants reported both positive and negative aspects of teacher influence in their school. Participant 2 stated they were often frustrated

with decisions made by the administration without teacher input despite these decisions having the greatest influence on the teachers and students.

Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 reported both positive and negative aspects in regards to teacher influence. They reported that teachers are often expected to follow district and state level teaching expectations, limiting their teacher influence. Participant 8 reported the district provides teachers with formative and summative assessments for each grade level and content area to administer to their students. According to Participants 3, 7, and 8, teachers have some flexibility to determine when assessments are given to students. Participants 1, 3, and 7 reported having no influence over curriculum development or how students were disciplined due to district level policy.

Newly Hired Teachers' Perceptions of Staff Relations

Staff relations is defined as the cooperative effort among staff members, the coordination of the content of classes with colleagues, the ability to obtain advice from colleagues, and the ability to experiment with teaching strategies (Boyd et al., 2011). The findings of my study revealed that all participants reported both positive and negative aspects of staff relations in their schools. The findings of my study revealed that Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 reported positive aspects in regards to staff relations because of high levels of colleague support and involvement throughout the school year. All participants reported an appreciation for having colleagues who were willing to support and help them become acclimated to the school district. In addition, to school supports all newly hired teachers take part in a district level Newly Hired Teacher Mentor and Induction Program in their first and second years of employment. All newly hired

teachers take part in this monthly professional development program regardless of the subject or grade level they teach or years of experience. The program is designed by district level administrators to provide newly hired teachers with monthly topics that develop teachers' understanding around the district expectations. Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8 stated that although the generalized supports available through the district's mentor and induction programs were helpful, it would be more beneficial to have support that addresses the specific needs of each teacher.

Participant 4 experienced limited district level mentoring support during her first year in the district and she explained it did not meet her needs as a newly hired teacher. Participant 4 reported this as a shortcoming for the district. Participant 4 stated the topics covered for all new staff during the mentoring classes include: technology, district level evaluation, state assessments, district assessments, and curriculum. Participant 4 reported her needs as a newly hired teacher to be classroom management, teaching small groups, working with grade level colleagues, and managing classroom time.

Participant 6 was the only participant in the study to report the district-level induction and mentoring program as a positive aspect because she felt the program was "effective." Participant 6 stated that she found "great value" in the district level induction and mentoring program as a newly hired teacher. Participant 6 pointed out that she never really looked forward to attending the monthly classes; however, when she attended she found the classes to be beneficial.

Participant 1 reported that she relies on her grade level teammates to give her insight and feedback about her teaching practice and does not feel that the district

mentoring program “really meets her needs.” Participant 1 pointed out that sometimes your colleagues know your needs as a teacher because they are also a teacher.

Participant 3 argued that although “some teachers could benefit from only using generalized support that the district mentoring program provides, some teachers need more.” Participant 3 stated that “specialized teachers needed a different type of support from someone that understands the work you do and how to support you.” Both Participants 3, 5, and 6 stated that “teachers need different mentoring support depending on what they teach.”

The findings of my study revealed that all participants reported high levels of colleague support and involvement throughout the school year. The findings of my study also revealed that all participants are assigned to weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and the professional gains they experienced from these groups. PLCs are designed to offer teachers an opportunity to develop community and collaboration regarding teaching practices.

Not all participants had an assigned PLC. Participant 4 pointed because of her teaching role she was not part of a PLC. Participant 4 argued that her mentoring and induction meetings once per month with her district level team did not give her the professional learning and growth she hoped for in the district. Participant 5 has considered leaving the school district and/or her role in order to gain the PLC she is seeking for her professional growth. Participant 5 reported staff relations as a negative aspect.

Participant 8 pointed out that she did not feel supported or engaged in her professional learning committee at her school due to some professional disagreements. However, she considered her biggest support to be the school level instructional coach. Participant 8 stated "she has kind of been my mentor since Year One. I have learned a lot from her and she makes me more confident in my teaching and my understanding of the work we do." All participants reported that a lack of staff relations negatively influenced their decision to remain employed in the school district or at their school. All participants reported that high levels of staff relations could positively impact their decision to remain employed in the school district. My findings showed that all participants reported negative and positive aspects in regard to staff relations.

Newly Hired Teachers Perceptions of Facilities Resources

All eight participants discussed the positive aspects of having access to school resources and school facilities that supported their delivery of instruction for their students. Facilities is defined as the physical spaces where teachers work and the resources available to them, such as textbooks, pacing guides, physical spaces for teachers to use when not teaching, and appropriate facilities (Boyd et al., 2011). Participant 7 reported that resources available to her were "hugely beneficial" when compared to the nearby school district. Participant 7 stated she considered herself very "fortunate working in a district that has so many resources." In addition, she stated "I think the district is excellent, my classroom, my physical space is awesome. I have a very large room, I am so fortunate." Participant 7 stated that even during the pandemic, the

size of her classroom allowed her students to spread out, move around the classroom, and for her to teach students in small groups.

Participant 6 reported that she sometimes felt overwhelmed by the level of resources offered to teachers with little to no instruction on how to navigate the resources. She stated, “I feel like getting the resources are really great but I do think an area where the district can work on [is] providing appropriate training for these resources.” She stated that the district says to newly hired teachers... “This great program, figure it out.” Participant 6 stated that she turned to the school veteran teacher for help in understanding the resources available to her and her students.

Participant 5 is a career changer and a first year teacher. Participant 5’s experience was different than other participants as he felt “less overwhelmed navigating the school resources and facilities.” He reported that he was able navigate the high level of resources that were shared with him due to life experience and his organization techniques. In addition, Participant 5 reported that he had been a student teacher in the current school where he teaches, making it easier for him to quickly navigate the school’s culture.

One of the resources that varies greatly in the studied district is classroom and office space. Having a space of their own within their schools was discussed by three participants. Both Participant 1 and Participant 3 are special education teachers and reported that they often struggle to feel a sense of ownership in their classrooms because they are asked to share spaces with another teacher. According to Participant 3, special education teachers are often asked to “get creative” with their classroom spaces as the

expectation is for students to be in general education classrooms as much as possible and not be pulled out from classrooms unless absolutely needed.

Participant 1 began the interview by stating that it took her over 10 minutes to find a space that was unoccupied to Zoom in a confidential meeting early that day. Participant 1 stated that although students should be in general education classrooms whenever possible some of her students can be easily distracted and unable to understand the general education curriculum and may need to be pulled into another space. Participant 1 stated the hallway or a lunchroom might be the only spaces available and can often embarrass the students when they are working with her. Participant 1 reported "that when you have a shared space it can feel often like it is not your own space and it cannot be fully quiet, focused and productive." Although Participant 7 was very grateful for the district's resources, Participant 7 stated the school and district should provide classroom space more conducive to teaching and learning.

Newly Hired Teachers' Perceptions of School Safety

School safety is defined as school conditions that affect the physical and psychological wellbeing of students and teachers and which include sense of belonging (Boyd et al., 2011). The analysis revealed that all the participants reported positive and negative experiences with school safety. All participants reported varying degrees of sense of belonging in their schools. It is important to note that participants of color reported more occurrences of feeling as if they did not belong compared to the White participants. Participant 4 reported having issues with colleagues in the building and not feeling a sense of belonging due to the way they were being treated. Participants 1 and 4

reported negative aspects in regards to school safety. They reported school level leadership negatively influenced the school's culture and staff's feelings of sense of belonging. My findings showed that Participants 3, 5, and 7 reported a positive aspect of feeling a strong sense of belonging in their schools. In many of these cases, Participants 3, 5, and 7 stated they had to make personal efforts to establish and/or improve their sense of belonging within their school.

Participant 4, a teacher of color, reported feelings of "disconnection with her colleagues" and that she struggled to make a connection on a "personal level" with her administrator. Participant 4 reported several "uncomfortable experiences with my colleagues" that impacted her feeling of sense of belonging in her school. She stated, "during my first year of teaching, I was working near the paper copier and I overheard three colleagues talking negatively about me." Participant 4 approached her colleagues to interrupt their conversation and attempted to "mend bridges" unsuccessfully. Several months later, Participant 4 overheard two staff members telling each other that they hoped Participant 4 will be "leaving the school soon, as she is not liked here." After these two experiences Participant 4 said she "considered changing schools and even leaving the district in order to be at a school where I can feel like I am welcomed." Participant 4 was asked if she had any insight or thoughts regarding the reason her colleagues were reacting in this way towards her and she stated, "I am really not sure but I do know that the teachers reflect the attitude of the principal and how she feels about me." Participant 4 noted that she perceived that her principal did not "make an effort to ensure she felt included and welcomed at her school despite being aware of her experiences with staff."

Other participants in the study had different experiences in relation to sense of belonging in their schools. Participant 6 experienced and reported positive aspects of school safety due to “a strong sense of belonging” in her school each year during her employment in the district. Although Participant 6 has felt a strong sense of belonging, she argued that her sense of belonging has been because of her personal efforts to work on being “social with colleagues and being proactive in organizing social events to increase sense of belong for other newly hired colleagues.” She reported that she organized social events and activities to develop community. Participant 6 stated that she works to recognize when “someone might need to be included in social gatherings and tries to include them to increase their sense of belonging.” Participant 6 pointed out that she enjoys spending time with her colleagues outside of school and sees “value in building strong relationships.”

Both Participant 6 and Participant 1 reported the importance of spending time “with colleagues outside of school and getting to know them on a personal level.” Participant 1 stated that she has not always felt a strong sense of belonging in her school. Participant 1 pointed out that her sense of belonging improved when she changed schools. Participant 1 stated, “my lack of sense of belonging in my school was the biggest reason I decided to switch schools within the district.” Once Participant 1 changed schools, she experienced a more positive and “stronger sense of belonging.” She attributed the increase in her feeling of sense of belonging to her principal and how she “establishes the climate in the school.” At her former school Participant 1 reported feelings of “being left out and being treated as an outsider.”

Theme 2: School Contextual Conditions That Could Affect Participant Employment Decisions

During the interviews, participants reported three school contextual conditions that could affect their employment decisions. These contextual conditions were (a) administrative support and involvement, (b) staff relations, and (c) facilities resources.

Administrative Support and Involvement

All participants reported positive and negative aspects regarding their experiences with school administrative support and involvement. Participants reported that administrative involvement would affect their discussion to remain employed or leave the school district. Participants 3, 4, and 8 reported feeling disconnected from their school leader due to limited and/or negative encounters they had experienced with their leader during the school year. Participants 2 and 6 reported a lack of accessibility and physical presence of their school leader in the building. All participants reported that a lack of administrative involvement would negatively influence their decisions to remain employed in the school district or at their school. All participants reported that high levels of administrative involvement support could positively impact their decision to remain employed in the school district.

Staff Relations

The findings of my study revealed that all but two participants reported high levels of colleague support and involvement throughout the school year. The findings of my study also revealed that Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 reported positive aspects in regard to PLC and the professional gains they experienced from these groups. PLCs are

designed to offer teachers an opportunity to develop community and collaboration regarding teaching practices. Some participants stated that these weekly professional learning meetings allowed teachers to engage with grade level or subject area colleagues regarding instructional practices. Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 reported PLCs were helpful for all staff but more specifically for newly hired teachers. Each participant's PLC was supported by an instructional coach. Some participants stated that the instructional coach in their building served as the best support system available to them during their first few years of teaching.

Participant 8 pointed out that she did not feel supported or engaged in her professional learning committee at her school due to some professional disagreements. However, she considered her biggest support to be the school level instructional coach. Participant 8 stated "she has kind of been my mentor since Year One. I have learned a lot from her and she makes me more confident in my teaching and my understanding of the work we do." All participants reported that a lack of staff relations negatively influenced their decision to remain employed in the school district or at their school. All participants reported that high levels of staff relations could positively impact their decision to remain employed in the school district.

Facilities Resources

The findings of my study revealed that all participants appreciated the availability of resources that supported their delivery of instruction to their students. All participants reported that their school district provided many resources to support instruction. All participants stated that they were not fully aware of all the resources available to them.

However, they stated that the level of resources available to them and their students assisted in their ability to deliver their instruction effectively. All participants reported that a lack of facilities resources could negatively influence their decision to remain employed in the school district or at their school. All participants reported that high levels of facilities resources could positively impact their decision to remain employed in the school district.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings were related to the conceptual framework and the literature review. The conceptual framework developed by Boyd et al. (2011) argued that school contextual conditions affect teacher attrition decisions. Based on the findings, participants perceived there were both positive and negative aspects for each school contextual condition. These conditions were (a) administrative support, (b) student behavior, (c) teacher influence, (d) staff relations, (e) facilities resources, and (f) school safety. Participants perceived three school contextual conditions could affect employment decisions. These conditions were (a) administrative support, (b) staff relations, and (c) facilities resources.

According to Schwan et al. (2020), beginning teachers who are supported early in their careers have increased effectiveness in their classrooms, higher satisfaction, and a greater commitment to their school district compared to those that do not experience these supports. Boyd et al. (2011) findings support that administrative support has a direct impact on newly hired teachers' experiences. The findings of my study revealed that all participants had both positive and negative perceptions regarding school contextual conditions and more specifically administrative support. Albert (2020) argued

that school administrators should be expected to directly support newly hired teachers in their schools. Furthermore, collegial relationships between administration and new teachers must be fostered and teachers need to feel appreciated as professionals despite their limited experience in order to truly flourish (see Albert, 2020). According to Ni (2017), building level administrators need to build trust and positive school culture; support managing teaching resources and support teaching and learning to improve teachers' professional experience. Moreover, they should make effort to form a strong school culture where there is participation, flexibility and healthy and open communication. In this way, teachers can be enabled to enjoy their job and perform higher quality work (see Cansoy, 2019). Despite the need for administrative support identified in the research (se Boyd et at., 2011), the participants reported varying levels of support from their building level administrator.

According to the findings all participants reported their main support system within the school district were their school colleagues and their instructional coaches which Boyd et al. (2011) identified this contextual condition as staff relations. Housel (2020) argued that more relevant and individualized support can help improve the experience for teachers. Each school in the district has a trained instructional coach that works to support and coach all teachers in their teaching practices. In addition, each teacher is assigned to a PLC for the entire school year. PLC are groups of teachers assigned to one group based on their school and the grade level they teach. The PLCs are designed to provide all teachers with a space where problem solving and brainstorming can happen to improve learning outcomes for students. In additional to PLCs, each

teacher has access to an instructional coach at their school who supports their professional development. Each school level instructional coach supports weekly PLC meetings in their building. Seven out of the eight participants reported being assigned to a PLC. Participants reported professional gains from taking part in weekly PLC meetings. According to Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2018) a positive and supportive relationship with colleagues may lead to a more open communication of values and thereby also to a more common understanding of goals and values. In turn, the development of common goals and values will likely affect social relations among the colleagues positively.

Researchers Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2018) reported that resources had a strong correlation to teacher's wellbeing and motivation. All participants discussed the positive aspects of having access to school resources and school facilities that supported their delivery of instruction for their students. Facilities is defined as the physical spaces where teachers work and the resources available to them, such as textbooks, pacing guides, physical spaces for teachers to use when not teaching, and appropriate facilities (Boyd et al., 2011). All participants reported that the high level of facilitates available positively impacted their decision to remain employed in the school district.

In summary, the data analysis revealed two themes. The first theme was that participants perceived both positive and negative aspects of school contextual conditions. The second theme was that certain school contextual conditions could affect participants' employment decisions. These two themes were related to the contextual framework developed by Boyd et al. (2011). Boyd et al. argued that school contextual conditions affect teacher attrition decisions. The findings from the study supported Boyd et al.

contextual framework that participants experienced conditions that could impact their decision to leave or stay in the school district. The two themes related to the literature review. The literature review supported the claim that the conditions that participants revealed as affecting their decision to remain employed were also found to be significant in other school districts. These conditions included (a) administrative support, (b) staff relations, and (c) facilities resources.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

After careful analysis and collaboration with my committee, I concluded that the best approach for the project was a professional development project for school administrators employed by DTW. The 3-day professional development project titled, "Not Just Surviving but Thriving," (see Appendix A) has been developed for school level administrators. The goal of the professional development project is to provide an opportunity for building level administrators to develop their understanding and application of the best practices that enhance newly hired teachers' experiences regarding school contextual conditions. I created the 3-day professional development project to explore the research about school contextual conditions, present the findings of the current study, and provide learning opportunities for the school leaders regarding how to apply their learning to their school leadership practice. According to Sutcher et al. (2016), administrators play an important role in newly hired teachers' experiences in their schools and teachers' decisions to remain employed at the school.

In Section 3, I provide an overview of the project. This section includes a description of, the goals for, and the rationale behind the project as well as a literature review to support the project genre. Finally, in Section 3, I outline how the project will be evaluated and address implications, including social change at the study site.

Rationale

In a midwestern school district, school administrators had little knowledge about how newly hired teachers experience the school contextual conditions that occur at their

schools and how these experiences influence the teachers' decisions to leave or remain employed in the district. In this qualitative study, I conducted semistructured interviews of eight newly hired teachers to explore these experiences. From analysis of the resulting data, I learned that school contextual conditions were reported by participants as being both positive and negative, and three contextual conditions were identified by participants as influencing their decision to remain employed or leave the school district. The results of the study led to the development of a professional development program designed to present research about school contextual conditions, report the findings of the current study, and provide learning opportunities to school administrators on how to apply their learning to their school leadership practice.

Review of Literature

In this literature review, I present current research regarding leadership practices that retain staff and best practices for the development and implementation for professional development for school leaders. I conducted the literature search using the Walden University online library. The following keyword search terms were used: *administrative and teacher relationships, administrative involvement and support for newly hired teachers, professional development in education, professional development for administrators, school contextual conditions, best practices for school contextual conditions, adult learners, developing professional development, building teacher and administration relationship, the importance of building teacher relations, providing support for newly hired teachers, research about professional development for principal research about professional development regarding building relationship, job embedded*

professional development, and *professional development implementation.* Using these terms to search the literature helped me find a comprehensive collection of peer reviewed articles that were published within the last 5 years. I identified additional literature within the reference lists of the literature found via these searches.

Research Regarding Leadership Practices That Retain Teachers

According to Boyd et al. (2011), how newly hired teachers experience school contextual conditions could impact their decisions to remain employed or leave their school. Ni (2017) reported three practices that building level administrators could implement to improve the organizational and professional commitment of teachers: being actively involved in teachers' day to-day operations, practicing consistent student discipline that decreases disruption problems, and giving teachers higher degrees of autonomy and decision-making opportunities. Ni defined teachers' commitment as an internal desire for greater responsibility, variety, and challenge in their work. Cansoy (2019) argued that school leadership should focus on guiding teachers, implementing school level improvement plans, and motivating teachers in their teaching practice; however, school leaders' leadership style has the greatest impact on the experiences of teachers. School leaders who exhibit servant leadership and ethical leadership behavior have positive effects on teachers' experiences (Cansoy, 2019). Furthermore, school leaders can have a positive effect on teachers' experiences by exhibiting behaviors based on justice, equality and honesty; creating a strong vision around common objectives; and sharing school-related tasks with employees (Cansoy, 2019).

Jennings et al. (2019) reported that a school leader should provide teachers with interventions that promote teacher wellbeing and identified two ways leaders can improve teacher wellbeing in their building: (a) use mindfulness-based interventions with teachers and provide training to teachers on how to use mindfulness-based interventions in their classrooms and (b) measure and access the extent to which school contextual conditions are experienced by teachers in their schools.

Best Practice for Creation, Implementation, and Evaluation of Professional Development for School Leaders

School administrators' involvement in professional development learning is considered to be a mandatory practice in most school districts (Daniels et al, 2020). Throughout the past decades, the profession of school leader has become more complex and requires leaders to be experts in many areas (Worth & De Lazzari, 2017). To deal with these increasing complexities and the challenges school leaders encounter, it is important that they are provided with professional development that develops their understanding and builds on previous learning (Daniels et al., 2020; Zembytska, 2016). When preparing for professional learning for adults, the developer of the professional learning must be aware of participants' needs (Hartree,1984). According to Knowles's (1984) adult learning theory, adult learners bring certain characteristics to their learning: (a) an ability to draw on life experience to assist with learning, (b) a willingness to learn when transitioning into new roles, (c) a focus on immediately applying new knowledge to real life situations and problems, and (d) a tendency to be internally motivated (rather than externally). Knowles suggested four principles to consider when planning adult

learning: (a) adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction, (b) adults learn best from experience (including mistakes), (c) adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance and impact to their jobs or personal lives, and (d) adults prefer a problem centered rather than a content-oriented approach.

Jimerson and Fuentes (2021) noted that school leaders vary in the knowledge, skills, and approaches they apply when leading their staff, and school leaders need direction. Freitag (2018) stated that frequent and ongoing professional learning is essential for the strong implementation of school wide goals and programs. Furthermore, professional development should be created and based on the current needs of the district and national trends (Davis, 2019). According to MacPhail et al. (2019), leaders in education perform a multitude of complex roles; receive minimal preparation or possibilities for professional development to fulfill these roles; and as a result, they need to acquire relevant knowledge and skills.

According to Trevethan and Sandretto (2017), there are often many missed opportunities for meaningful professional development due to a lack of understanding about the needs of the learners. The principalship requires ongoing acquisition of knowledge and skills, but current research has not seemed to have emphasized the importance of the principal as a learner (Acton, 2021). Furthermore, an effective principal is expected to be a self starter and innovator (Burkhauser, 2017; Oplatka, 2017). According to Jayaweera et al. (2021), school administrators and school principals need continuous professional development opportunities to ensure school improvement, teacher retention, and student success. School administrators need more and better on the

job professional development and support to meet today's demands (Jayaweera et al.). Principals are considered central in initiating and mobilizing changes in schools (Friedman & Berkovich, 2021). According to Rowland (2017), principals' continuous improvement and learning is important to ensure the success of their teaching staff. It is important that school leaders are developed to handle emerging challenges and complexities and support the teaching staff (Germuth, 2018). Research supports the idea that administrators would benefit from professional development that is designed to focus on meeting the needs of leaders in order to meet the needs of teachers at their school (Germuth, 2018).

Improving school administrators' professional development experience is a pressing and challenging issue in education (Schmitt-McQuitty et al., 2019). According to Davis (2019), professional development is an internal process in which professionals engage within a formal or informal framework. The professional development experience can be improved by providing more relevant and individualized instruction, which, in turn, can enhance academic achievement and success (Housel, 2020). According to Steinberg and Yang (2020), effective professional development happens when the adult learner connects personally to the new learning. The professional development process is rooted in critical self-analysis of professional practice and steps taken to improve current practice. Colleagues are more willing and likely to try new strategies when they are aware that others are trying them too (Soto & Marzocchi, 2021). When developing professional learning for adults, consideration must be made to how adults learn best (Hensley et al., 2017). Bengstson et al. (2020) argued that professional development must

reflect the needs of the participants. The research supports that administration (i.e., principals) need ongoing professional learning to develop their skill set (Westberry & Zhao, 2021).

According to Duguay and Vdovina (2019), it is essential that professional development produce a positive and long-lasting impact on educators' practices. In order for professional development to be meaningful and intellectually stimulating, it must be engaging, interactive, and collaborative (Duguay & Vdovina, 2019). In addition, professional development should provide new knowledge based on a specific question or problem (Meijer et al., 2017). When developing professional development for educators, the goals should be to share new information and deliver it in a way that allows for a high level of engagement and understanding.

According to Carson et al. (2020), formative and summative assessments should be used to monitor the delivery of professional development to ensure it is making the intended impact. Webster and Litchka (2020) noted that school districts need principals who are knowledgeable about the most current and compelling theories and practices of school leadership. Furthermore, formative and summative evaluation of the professional development implementation will provide the implementer of the professional development project with meaningful feedback and insights to improve the experiences for the learners.

Project Description

Introduction

Building on the findings of the current study and after consulting with my committee, I developed a professional development project. The project is a 3-day professional development project designed for school administrators employed by the local, suburban, and school district study site. The problem at this Midwestern school district was that school administrators had little knowledge about how newly hired teachers experience the school contextual conditions that occur at their schools and how these experiences influence the teachers' decision to leave or remain employed in the district. The target audience for the professional development program is building level administrators (i.e., principals and assistant principals) in the study site school district.

The professional development project for administrators at the study site includes 3 in service days featuring breakout group activities, small and group discussions, guest speakers, and reflection sessions. The goals of this professional development project are as follows: (a) school administrators will learn about the research regarding school contextual conditions and how those conditions impact newly hired teachers experiences, (b) school administrators will learn about the local research findings, and (c) building level administrators will apply their learning to their school leadership practice.

Resources and Existing Supports

The resources required for the professional development will be available at the district site. Prior to the professional development project, I will prepare all copies of the handouts, materials, and summative and formative evaluations in both electronic and hard

copies (see Appendix B). The members of the teacher discussion panel will prepare firsthand accounts of their experiences with school contextual conditions during their time as newly hired teachers. A guest speaker who is a leader in the field of education leadership will deliver a presentation on current leadership practices and best practices for implementing school contextual conditions. In addition, four to five local university professors who work with preservice teachers will be invited to take part in a discussion panel to provide additional insight into the needs of teachers when they enter the workforce.

Potential Barriers and Solutions

Potential barriers persist in every initiative. A potential barrier to this professional development project is the process to schedule additional training for administrators during the summer. Many of the summer trainings are planned in the district 2-3 months in advance. To address this barrier, I will work with the human resources department to ensure this program is scheduled well in advance. During this time, I will be presenting the results of my study.

Implementation and Timetable

The proposed 3-day professional development project will be planned in winter/spring 2022 and implemented in late summer 2022. I will make a formal proposal to the stakeholders during winter/spring 2022 and ask permission to present the professional development project in the summer of 2022. I will ask that the district administration add the 3-day project to their professional development calendar. This will

help by proactively blocking the time on the district calendar to secure dates and appropriate space for the professional development project.

The professional development program, “Not Just Surviving but Thriving,” will be implemented in the summer of 2022 for 3 days, 6 hours per day. This professional development program is designed for school administrators working in the local, suburban, school district study site. An outline of the timetable and tasks for the preparation and implementation of the project are as follows.

Winter/spring 2022:

- Present proposed professional development project to superintendent of schools and human resources department.
- Obtain permission to conduct the project and share a copy of the professional development project activity and agenda with stakeholders.
- Meet with stakeholders to explain and outline the proposed summer professional development program.
- Secure a panel of teachers from the district to share their experiences as newly hired teachers.
- Secure a panel of local university professors who supervise preservice teachers and prepare preservice teacher for their first year of teaching.
- Secure a guest speaker who serves as an expert in the field of leadership in education.
- Finalize professional development dates and invitations.

Summer 2022:

- Send out invitations to all invited participants.
- Finalize preparation for the program.
- Meet with teacher panel members to prepare them for the teacher panel.
- Meet with local university professor panel members to prepare them for the professor panel.
- Meet with the guest speaker to prepare them for their presentation.

Roles and Responsibilities

Facilitator

I will be the professional development project facilitator and responsible for planning, developing, communicating, and implementing the program. I will lead discussions and cofacilitate discussions as listed in the agenda. My job is to ensure that the goals of the project development plan are addressed.

Participants

The expectations for the program are that every school administrator participant will have the responsibility to attend each session with an open mind, to be willing to collaborate, and to be fully engaged in the content being delivered.

Panelists

Local teachers who serve on the teaching panel will provide a voice and perspective to administration regarding their experiences as newly hired teachers during the 3-day professional development activity.

Local university professors will be asked to describe their experiences with teaching and supervising preservice teachers.

Guest speaker

A guest speaker who serves as an expert in the field of leadership in education will be invited to speak to the participants. The guest speaker serves as a professor and a presenter in North America. The guest speaker will provide current leadership practices and best practices for implementing school contextual conditions.

Project Evaluation Plan

When determining the effectiveness of the implementation of a professional development project, the process must be evaluated (Daniels et al., 2020). In this goal-based evaluation plan two type of surveys (formative and summative) will be used to determine if the goals for the professional development project were reached. Participants will be asked to complete a formative survey evaluation form after the conclusion of each day. At the conclusion of the 3-day program participants will be asked to complete a summative assessment to determine whether the goals of the professional development project were met. The formative and summative surveys will be used to measure whether the goals of the project were achieved.

Project Implications

This project was created with three goals in mind: (a) school administrators will learn about the research regarding school contextual conditions and how those conditions impact newly hired teachers experiences, (b) school administrators will learn about the local research findings, and (c) building level administrators will apply their learning to

their school leadership practice. The project may promote social change by providing administration with professional development which may lead to increased teacher retention and improved academic achievement for students. In addition, this project can provide DTW's school leaders with opportunities to develop and apply practices, programs, and policies to provide school contextual conditions that support the district's teachers and reduces teacher attrition.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

I developed a professional development project for building level administrators based on the study findings. The findings showed that building level administrators needed to increase their understanding of the school contextual conditions and how those conditions may impact a newly hired teacher's decision to stay or leave a school district. The professional development project was influenced by Knowles's (1984) adult learning theory. In the adult learning theory, Knowles stated that adults learn best through activities that provide immediate, relevant topics that directly impact their job. In addition, adults learn best when learning is focused on problem solving and not content focused. A strength of the project is it provides building administrators with learning experiences that are relevant, job related, and problem solving focused. For example, administrators are asked to create plan to improve the contextual conditions for their newly hired teachers. Another strength is that the project is designed with the learner in mind, offering various types of activities each day to engage the participants. The project will include individual reflection time, small group discussion and reflection time, and whole group discussion and reflection time.

Possible project limitations may be time constraints and participants' willingness to fully engage in the professional development project. Time constraints may be a limitation of this project since it will be implemented over the summer, and administrators might see this as an extra professional development commitment during a very busy time. I will overcome this obstacle by working with the human resources

department to schedule this training during the summer months when administrators are less involved with the day to-day tasks of running the schools. If participants are not willing to fully engage in the professional development project, it will be difficult for participants to meet the goals. I will overcome this obstacle by providing engrossing learning activities to keep participants actively engaged throughout the 3 days.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The purpose of the "Thriving and Not Just Surviving" professional development project is to develop building level administrators' understanding about best practices related to school contextual conditions in their schools. An alternative approach to my project could be to create a school level mentoring program that supports newly hired teachers. The school level mentoring program would provide each newly hired teacher with a one to-one mentor in their school building that would support them with both district and school level needs. Based on Boyd et al.'s (2011) research regarding school contextual conditions, staff relations could impact a teacher's decision to remain employed or leave a school district.

Another alternative approach would be providing newly hired teachers with an opportunity to select the type of professional learning they feel they need throughout the year. Newly hired teachers would be offered several choices each month and would be allowed to select the professional learning that they feel would be most beneficial. Providing teachers with the responsibility to identify their learning needs may result in more engagement in their professional learning.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

Scholarship

Through this educational journey, I have learned that scholarship is about the endless quest for knowledge and understanding. As a lifelong learner, I realize my eagerness to understand and learn is a true asset. I knew that I wanted to research teacher attrition at DTW, but finding a research focus was difficult and overwhelming. After many conversations and reflection, I decided to conduct a study about newly hired teacher experiences with school contextual conditions. My experience as a newly hired teacher and as a mentor to newly hired teachers created an interest to understand how these teachers were experiencing school contextual conditions and how those conditions could influence their decisions to remain employed or leave the school district.

Carrying out this project, I have learned to define a problem, develop an argument, write a proposal, and collect and analyze qualitative data. By conducting this research study, I have grown and matured professionally in many areas throughout this journey. I have become a better teacher, educational leader, and critical thinker.

Project Development

I learned that professional development learning must be driven not only by data and research but also by the local context. After analyzing the data and discussing it with my supervising professors, I decided that using a professional development approach would be the most effective way to address the problem under study. By reviewing the literature regarding professional development, I learned a great deal about the planning, implementation, and evaluation of effective professional development that will foster the

leaders' professionalism and their abilities simultaneously. Conducting the second literature review also helped me to design a project based on best practices and the professional needs of the district, including administrators being involved in the planning and evaluation of their learning, experience to work through learning activities, learning that has immediate relevance and impact to their job, and problem centered focused learning rather than content-oriented learning.

Developing this research study has also helped me to understand how to address a research problem systematically and then create a project building on the research findings. I have not only gained knowledge and valuable skills in conducting a research study, but I have also learned about developing an engaging project and program from start to finish. The professional development project includes new learning, a teacher panel, guest speaker, and reflection. Because of this opportunity and my dedication to my research and project study, I am now able to design a professional development program that is engaging, collaborative, and follows best practices to be differentiated to meet the learning needs of all types of learners.

Leadership and Change

I recognize my position as a leader of change throughout my 18 years in education. A leader's role encompasses responsibility, accountability, and flexibility (Daniels et a., 2019). I further developed these three characteristics during this doctoral journey as well as my strength, grit, and perseverance. This journey has been, without a doubt, the most challenging experience in my academic career. Completing this project, I was pushed beyond my limits as a scholar and a learner. I have witnessed firsthand the

growth and commitment it took to get to this point in the doctor of education program. There were moments when I was doubtful and considered giving up. Finishing this project has required sacrifice, resilience, and ongoing determination from not only me but also my family. I learned how to analyze and disaggregate data as well as find viable solutions to problems. I am proud of the advances I have made academically, professionally, and personally. I realize my contribution to the field of education is small, yet meaningful as a novice scholar.

The doctoral journey has shown that I can achieve any goal if I work hard and persevere. I remained steadfast to see this journey to the end. Developing the professional development project for administrators took a substantial amount of planning. I had to fine tune my time management, prioritization, and organizational skills to complete the project.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

This professional development project designed to meet the needs of school level administrators can bring about positive social change in school districts. This project is important because it aims to improve building level administrators' understanding of the school contextual conditions experienced by newly hired teachers and how those experiences may impact teachers' decision to remain employed or leave the school district. I interviewed eight newly hired teachers in the study district to better understand their experiences. Designing this project provided me with the opportunity to engage in research to positively affect building level administrators. I truly believe administrators can work together to bring about positive social change within their school and improve

the experiences of newly hired teachers. As a novice researcher, I have developed my capacity to identify a problem of practice and develop a research project that works towards improving the experiences of newly hired teachers in regard to contextual conditions.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

For many teachers in the United States, teaching is no longer a lifelong career occupation (Ingersoll et al., 2019). Research on teacher attrition and retention has shown that teachers do not remain in the profession at the same rates as comparable service employee professions, such as nurses, police officers, and other public service employees (Achinstein et al., 2010). While it is impossible to retain every teacher who enters the field, it is prudent for school districts to study and improve teacher attrition (Schwan et al., 2020).

This project served as a solution to increase and develop building level administrators' understanding of the practices that influence newly hired teachers experience with school contextual conditions. Social change may result from improvement in the retention of newly hired teachers, which may lead to increased academic achievement among students. I created a 3-day professional development initiative designed for administrators within the study site district to deliver professional development sessions that increase their understanding of the practices that enhance newly hired teachers' experiences of school contextual conditions. School administrators play an important role in supporting newly hired teachers during their transition into their new roles and their first few years of teaching (Berkovich & Eyal, 2018; Kutsyuruba et

al., 2020). Berkovich and Eyal (2018) noted that social support can have a great impact on how newly hired teachers experience their time in their schools. Future research could explore the changing needs of the teaching staff. In order to improve school contextual conditions, school districts must be aware of the conditions that impact newly hired teachers' experiences.

Conclusion

The purpose of this doctoral study was to provide information to DTW administrators that they could use to develop and apply practices, programs, and policies to provide school contextual conditions supportive of the district's teachers that would improve teacher retention and reduce teacher attrition. The findings provided information that will provide DTW leaders with opportunities to develop and apply practices that influence newly hired teachers' school contextual conditions. According to See et al. (2020), when high levels of administrative support are available, teachers experience higher levels of job satisfaction, resulting in lower teacher attrition rates. Teachers could benefit from receiving a supportive working environment, and students could benefit from a stable workforce of teachers who apply consistent practices, programs, and policies. Social change may result from improvement in the retention of newly hired teachers, which may lead to increased academic achievement among students and a more stable workforce. In conclusion, the ultimate goal of this qualitative study was to increase the understanding of DTW building administrators of the practices that enhance newly hired teachers' experiences of school contextual conditions and make strides towards changing those conditions for the better in their schools.

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Appendix A: The Project

This appendix provides an overview of the proposed Professional Development Project. The project chosen to address the problem of this qualitative case study was a 3-day Professional Development Project designed for school administrators working in the local suburban school district study site. The problem at a Midwestern school district, is school administrators had little knowledge about how newly hired teachers experience the school contextual conditions that occur at their schools and how these experiences influence their decision to leave or remain employed in the district. The 3-day professional development sessions include a variety of learning experiences including data sharing, reflection time, guest speakers, panel discussion whole group work, and small group work to provide a variety of learning activities to engage participants.

Purpose

The project is a 3-day professional development project with a tentative implementation date of summer 2022, pending approval from district-level leaders. The purpose of the project is to provide school administrators opportunities to engage in learning about school contextual conditions in order to improve those conditions for newly hired teachers. The goals of this professional development project are as follows: (a) school administrators will learn about the research regarding school contextual conditions and how those conditions impact newly hired teachers experiences (b) school administrators will learn about the local research findings, and (c) building level administrators will apply their learning to their school leadership practice.

Learning Opportunities for Building Level Leaders During Professional Development Project

- Opportunity to learn from whole group collaboration with colleagues
- Opportunity to learn from small group collaboration with colleagues in break-out groups
- Opportunity to learn from an educational expert in the field of education to present to the group regarding school contextual conditions.
- Opportunities to learn from local university professors their experiences with teaching and supervising preservice teachers.

Target Audience

The target audience for the professional development program is school administrators (principals, assistant principals) employed by a Midwest school district. The proposed Professional Development Project for administrators at the research study site includes three in-service days featuring breakout group activities, discussions, guest speakers, panel discussion and reflection sessions.

Materials and Equipment

- Large conference room
- Tables and chairs
- Audiovisual equipment (laptops, cords, projector, document camera, screen)
- Nametags
- Paper (chart paper, post-its, notebooks)

- Handouts (formative evaluations, summative evaluations, questions for teacher panel (teachers with 6 or more years of experience in the study site school district), university professors (professors that work in any local school in the area with 5 or more years of experience), and digital note catcher)
- Writing materials (pens, pencils, markers, highlighters)

Timeline and Activities

Day 1: "What is the Data Telling us? "Sharing and Understanding the Data."

Activities and Learning for Day 1

- Learn about and discuss current national research and statistics related to teacher attrition and retention in United States
- Learn about and discuss the financial implications and impact on student learning caused by teacher attrition
- Learn from an educational expert in the field of education regarding school contextual conditions.
- Learn about and discuss current teacher retention and attrition rates in the local school district

Session 1: Introduction Session- "Setting the Stage"- 30 minutes

The three goals will be explained to the participants. The three goals for the professional development project are: (a) school administrators will learn about the research regarding school contextual conditions and how those conditions impact newly hired teachers experiences (b) school administrators will learn about the local research findings, and (c) building level administrators will apply their learning to their school leadership practice.

Session 2: "Sharing and Understanding the Data"- 45 minutes

The purpose of this session is to provide a 45-minute presentation of the research findings regarding national teacher attrition and retention. Participants will develop their understanding of the current national research and statistics related to teacher attrition and retention. In addition, participants will learn about the financial cost and impact on student learning caused by high rates of teacher attrition. The facilitator and the Senior Director of Human Resources will lead this discussion. Participants will be asked to record their responses in the note catcher in google documents.

10 minutes break

Session 3: Guest Speaker- 60 minutes

The purpose of this session is for an expert in the field of education to provide current leadership practices and best practices for implementing school contextual conditions. The guest speaker will also lead the reflection time with participants. The educational expert will present to the group regarding school contextual conditions. After the conclusion of the presentation, participants will be allowed individual reflection time. Participants will be asked to record their responses in the note catcher in google documents.

Lunch Break- 60 minutes

Reflection time with guest speaker- 45 minutes

The guest speaker will provide time for the participants to reflect and then provide discussion time for participants to provide their reflections with the larger group. The guest speaker will facilitate this discussion and provide insight.

Questions for participants

1. What do you believe caused teachers to leave your school or district?

2. What practices (if any) did you apply within your school to support your newly hired teachers over the last two years? Did you feel your implemented practices were effective? Why or why not?

4. Are there other practices you feel would have been beneficial for your newly hired teachers regarding school contextual conditions?

5. Based on your experience today, what have you learned regarding school contextual conditions that could be implemented at your school?

10-minute break

"Small Group Reflection Discussion"- 30 minutes

The purpose of this session is to provide small group discussion for participants after the conclusion of the reflection activity with the guest speaker.

Session 4: "Sharing and Understanding the District Data Compared to National Data- 45 minutes

The purpose of the session is for the participants to learn about national trends and district wide trends regarding teacher attrition and retention. The facilitator and the Senior Director of Human Resources will lead this discussion. Information will be provided to participants via PowerPoint. Participants will receive some individual self-reflection time and then engage in a whole group discussion.

Each participant will consider these questions related to their informal and formal observations of district teacher retention rates.

1. When comparing the national statistics and the district statistics, what were your thoughts?
2. When comparing the national statistics to the district statistics, what additional information would you like to have?
3. When comparing the national statistics to the district statistics, what conclusions can you draw?

Session 5: "Wrapping Up Our Learning"- 20 minutes

The purpose of this session is for the whole group to take part in a debriefing session regarding today's learning.

Day 2 "Listen, Learn, and Evaluate"

Activities and Learning for Day 2

- Discussion panel: district teachers provide firsthand accounts of experiences with school contextual conditions as newly hired teachers.
- Leadership will learn from firsthand accounts of newly hired teachers.

Session 6- "Veteran Teacher Panel" 120 minutes

The purpose of this session is for school administrators to learn from the experiences of newly hired teachers regarding school contextual conditions and how these conditions impact their experiences in the district. The facilitator will lead and facilitate the discussion between the teachers panel and school administrators.

Questions for teacher panel:

1. Please share your name?

2. Please share any experiences you had as a newly hired teacher in the district that impacted you either positively or negatively?
3. In your opinion what can administrators do to support and/or improve your experience as a newly hired teacher?

"Self-Reflection Time" for School Administrators

Participants will be asked to self-reflect regarding these questions

1. How do you think the newly the hired teachers at your school experience the contextual conditions?
2. What did you learn from the session that you can apply to your school or your experiences with newly hired teachers?

Lunch Break- 60 minutes

Session 7- "Change Protocol" 60 minutes

The purpose of this session is to provide self-reflection and small group reflection time to building level administrators regarding their current practices. The participants will take part in a protocol called, "Change Protocol". The *Change Protocol* is an activity designed for participants to self-reflect on a topic. Participants will reflect on current practices regarding school contextual conditions to determine if the current practice should be revised. The facilitator will facilitate the "Change Protocol". Visuals and directions will be provide with participants via PowerPoint.

"Self-Reflection Time"

Participants will be asked to reflect regarding these questions

1. What should building level leadership **keep** doing regarding school contextual conditions in your school?
2. What should building level leadership **stop** doing regarding school contextual conditions in your school?
3. What should building level leadership **consider** doing regarding school contextual conditions and what supports will you need?

Session 8- "Gallery Walk"- 60 minutes

The purpose of this session is to provide participants time to receive feedback based on Session 6. The participants will take part in a *Gallery Walk*. A "Gallery Walk" is an activity that allows participants to discuss and display their final thoughts on a topic of discussion in a public setting. It is a way participants can provide their group or individual thoughts in a nonthreatening way with the assurance of getting some feedback from other participants. The facilitator will explain and facilitate the "Gallery Walk".

Step 1- Brainstorming

Participants will identify one idea of something they should continue to do, stop doing, and begin doing in regards to school contextual conditions in their school. Participants will write these ideas on post its and place them on the large chart paper located around the room. There will be 3 large pieces of chart paper. Each paper will be labeled Start, Continue, or Stop to indicate what is being recommended.

Step 2- Gallery Walk

Once participants have placed their 3 post its on the appropriate chart paper they will visit each chart paper to read other participants' notes. If a participant agrees or likes the idea

they can add a star or a note that explains their thoughts. If participants have wonderings or questions they can include those notes. Participants will be asked to add their initials after their comments.

Step 3- Individual Reflection Time

Participants will be asked to reflect on comments.

Day 3- "So what, now what?"

Activities and Learning for Day 3

- Provide participants with opportunities to practice real life situations regarding newly hired teachers.
- Provide peer discussion and collaboration around best practices for leadership when supporting newly hired teachers.

Session 9-"Scenarios Practice"- 60 minutes

The purpose of the session is to provide participants with opportunities to think through real life situations regarding newly hired teachers experiences with school contextual conditions. Assigned groups will work together to think through each scenario and develop a response. The presenter and the Senior Director of Human Resources will lead this discussion. The notes from the discussion will be captured in the note catcher and available to participants to refer back.

Scenario 1

After your building staff returns to the building from summer break you find out from Human Resources that 3 of last year's first year teachers will not be returning. You inquire of Human Resources regarding the reason for their departure. Only one staff

member shared she was moving due to her husband's new job. You have not received any information from the other two teachers who have resigned. This information surprises you because all 3 teachers received high ratings on their evaluations and did not share they did not plan to return in the fall. As a leader you want to provide the best environment for all your teachers specifically your newly hired teachers. What additional information would you need to assess the current state of your building in regards to school contextual conditions? How should you collect this information?

Scenario 2

For the start of the new school year you are welcoming 7 new staff members into your school due to recent retirements. Your new staff ranges in age, years of experience, and grade levels. Your building has 23 staff members in total. How can you be proactive regarding building staff relations with your newly hired staff and your existing staff? How can you identify the needs of your newly hired staff in regards to school contextual conditions? How can you check for effectiveness of school contextual conditions through the school year with your newly hired staff? What contextual conditions do you need to be most mindful of when working with a new staff at the start off the school year?

Scenario 3

As a building leader you pride yourself on being self-reflective. You support a building of 120 staff members, 40 of those staff members are within their first five years of teaching in the school district. At the end of each school year you send out an end of the year survey to your staff to better understand the experiences from the previous school year. The survey included questions about: staff relations, facilities, and administrative

involvement and support. Teachers reported dissatisfaction around school contextual conditions specifically staff relations and administrative support. What additional information would you need to be provide to take any action? What should be your next course of action? How can you evaluate that the action(s) you take will have a positive impact on newly hired teachers satisfaction rates?

Session 10- "Teacher Preservice Administrator Panel" - 60 minutes

The purpose of this session is to provide a platform to University professors who work with preservice teachers to provide what they believe to be the needs of newly hired teachers. The presenter will lead and facilitate the discussion. The session will be designed to allow participants to feel comfortable. The group will sit in a circle. Prior to the university panel professors taking part in the panel I will conduct a premeeting with university professors via Zoom several days prior to the panel.

Questions for University Professors:

- Please share your name and professional experience?
- Please share your experience regarding teaching and supervising preservice teachers.
- What insight do you have for administrators regarding how they can support their newly hired teachers in their first 5 years of teaching?

"Self-Reflection Time" 30 minutes

When considering the Teacher Preservice Administrator Panel please reflect on the questions below.

1. What did you learn in today' professional development program regarding school contextual conditions that you can apply to your school or your experience with newly hired teachers?

Lunch Break- 60 minutes

Session 11- "Next Steps" 120 minutes

The purpose of this session is to provide time for building level administrators to plan and determine their next steps for changes in their building. Participants will be asked to pair up with another building level administrator to determine a plan of action to improve the experience of newly hired teachers at their schools. The plan of action created should include goals, timeline, resources, and activities that support school contextual conditions. Participants will be asked to provide their plan of action with the whole group during the final 30 minutes of the session.

End of the session

At the conclusion of the 3-day program participants will be asked to complete a summative assessment (Appendix B) to determine whether the goals of the professional development project were met and whether there are any additional steps that need to be taken with building level administrators.

"Not just Surviving but Thriving"

Professional Development for Administration for Improving Newly Hired Teacher School Contextual Experiences

Project Developer/Facilitator
Faith Cole
Walden University Doctoral Student

Professional Development Learning Overview

- Goals of Professional Development Learning
- 3 day Overview/Agenda
  - Day 1, 2, 3 activities and learnings
  - Introductions
  - Connector
  - Goals

Goals for the Professional Development

1. School administrators will learn about the research regarding school contextual conditions and how those conditions impact newly hired teachers experiences
2. School administrators will learn about the local research findings
3. Building level administrators will apply their learning to their school leadership practice

Day 1, 2, and 3 Training

Day 1- What is the data telling us? Sharing and Understanding the Data

- National level data: teacher attrition and retention

Day 2- Listen, Learn, and Evaluate

- Discussion panel: former newly hired teachers provide insight into how administrators can improve school contextual conditions
- Leadership reflection

Day 3- Next steps

- So what, now what?
- What does the research say about the factors that impact attrition and retention rates of our newly hired teachers?

Agenda

- Introductions
- National Teacher Attrition Statistics
- Implications for larger district
- Reflections
- Evaluation/Feedback

Introductions- 5 minutes

Please share

- Your role
- Years in the school district
- How do you directly or indirectly support newly hired teachers
- Group Connector (shared with your table)
  - Would you rather… sleep in till noon or go to bed by 9pm?

Teacher Attrition Statistics

- For many teachers in the United States and around the world, teaching is no longer a lifelong career occupation.
- Research on teacher attrition and retention has shown that teachers do not remain in the profession at the same rates as comparable service employee professions such as nurses, police officers, and other public service employees.
- The highest rates of teacher attrition occur among teachers during their first 5 years of teaching.

Teacher Attrition Statistics

- In addition, the demographic divide between teachers and students is of growing educational and public concern . With less than 20% of elementary and secondary teachers identified as minorities serving in schools and the minority student population over 40%, school districts need to ensure that the teaching population better represents the student population.
- As the U.S. student population has grown more ethnically and racially diverse, efforts need to be made to diversify the teaching force as well.

Why is teacher attrition important to a school district work?

How does newly hired teachers' attrition impact the larger school district?

- Costly to train newly hired teachers when attrition rates are high
- Constant turnover
- Impact student learning and student outcomes

Why is teacher attrition important to our larger district work?

Cost to train newly hired teachers

- Teacher turnover is costly to a school district in two ways. First, replacing departing teachers uses money that could be better used to provide additional educational resources to benefit student learning. It is estimated in 2018 that school districts spend from $10,000 to $17,000 to replace each teacher who leaves a district (Nguyen, 2020). Second, teacher turnover disrupts student learning because it exposes students to teachers inexperienced in curriculum, pedagogy, and school or district policies.

- High teacher attrition rates across the United States have had negative financial and social consequences for students and communities.

Why is teacher attrition important to our larger district work?

Impact on student learning and student outcomes

- Teacher turnover disrupts student learning because it exposes students to teachers inexperienced in curriculum, pedagogy, and school or district policies.

Break- 15 minutes

Guest Speaker- 60 minutes

Reflection time with guest speaker

Questions

1. What do you believe caused teachers to leave your school or district?
2. What practices (if any) did you apply within your school to support your newly hired teachers over the last two years? Did you feel your implemented practices were effective? Why or why not?
4. Are there other practices you feel would have been beneficial for your newly hired teachers regarding school contextual conditions?
5. Based on your experience today, what have you learned regarding school contextual conditions that could be implemented at your school?

Small Group Reflection Discussion

In table groups

1. Choose a group leader
2. Choose a recorder
3. Choose a timekeeper

Questions to explore

1. When comparing the national statistics and the district statistics, what were your thoughts?
2. When comparing the national statistics to the district statistics, what additional information would you like to have?
3. When comparing the national statistics to the district statistics, what conclusions can you draw?

Note Catcher- 30 minutes

Group 1
- note catcher

Group 2
- note catcher

Group 3
- note catcher

Group 4
- note catcher

Share Out- 15 minutes

Group 1
- Share 3 major takeaways

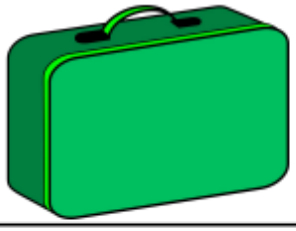
Group 2
- Share 3 major takeaways

Group 3
- Share 3 major takeaways

Group 4
- Share 3 major takeaways

Lunch Break

Please return back to the board room by 1:00pm



Welcome Back from Lunch!

Research Study Findings

School year	Total number of teachers in district	% who left district (and did not retire)
2018–2019	536	9.1
2017–2018	563	7.6
2016–2017	521	9.8
2015–2016	502	11.8

Note. Data received from the Human Resources Department of the studied district on January 30, 2020.

Breakout Sessions- Reflect and Record 45 minutes

Each participant should consider these questions as it relates to their informal and formal observations of district retention rates.

1. When comparing the national statistics to the district statistics, what about the statistics surprised you? Why does that information surprise you?
2. When comparing the national statistics to the district statistics, what additional information would you like to have?
3. When comparing the national statistics to the district statistics, what conclusions can you draw?

Wrapping Up Our Learning - 20 minutes

- Take **20 minutes** to discuss with your tablemates major takeaways
- In the note catcher please have the recorder add any major takeaways

Note Catcher - 15 minutes

Group 1
- note catcher

Group 2
- note catcher

Group 3
- note catcher

Group 4
- note catcher

Share Out- 15 minutes

Group 1
- Share 3 major takeaways

Group 2
- Share 3 major takeaways

Group 3
- Share 3 major takeaways

Group 4
- Share 3 major takeaways

References

Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Ing, M., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2011). The influence of school administrators on teacher retention decisions. *American Educational Research Journal, 48*(2), 303–333.

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Ellis, C., Skidmore, S. T., & Combs, J. P. (2017). The hiring process matters: The role of person–job and person–organization fit in teacher satisfaction. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 53*(3), 448–474.

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Nguyen, T. D., Pham, L. Springer, M., & Crouch, M. (2020). The correlates of teacher turnover: An updated and expanded meta-analysis of the literature. *Educational Research Review, 31,* Article 100355.

Worth, J., & De Lazzari, G. (2017). Teacher retention and turnover research. Research update 1: Teacher retention by subject. *National Foundation for Educational*

End of the session evaluation- 10 minutes

Thank you for your time today.
Please complete session evaluation located in your handouts.

Thank you for your participation.
See you tomorrow.

Day 2

Welcome

- *Please find your name tag at your assigned seat.*
- *Be prepared to share at your table*
  - *Your role*
  - *One major takeaway from yesterday*
  - *For vacation would you rather go to a beach or a major city?*

Day 2

Day 1- What is the data telling us? Sharing and Understanding the Data

- National level data: teacher attrition and retention

Day 2- Listen, Learn, and Evaluate

- Discussion panel: veteran teachers provide insight into how administrators can improve school contextual conditions
- Leadership reflection

Day 3- Next steps

- So what, now what?
- What does the research say about the factors that impact attrition and retention rates of our newly hired teachers

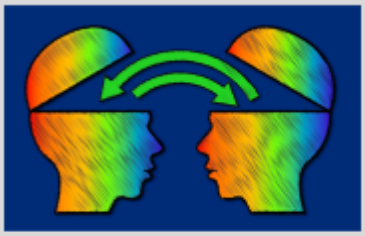
Share Out- 15 minutes

Group 1
- note catcher

Group 2
- note catcher

Group 3
- note catcher

Group 4
- note catcher



Share Out- 15 minutes

Group 1
- Share 3 major takeaways

Group 2
- Share 3 major takeaways

Group 3
- Share 3 major takeaways

Group 4
- Share 3 major takeaways

Gallery Walk- 60 minutes

Instruction:

Step 1- Brainstorming

Using your 3 Post its write three ideas of things that the panel shared.

Step 2- Gallery Walk

Organize Post its that are similar

Step 3-Individual Reflection Time

Recap/Review/Reflect- 15 minutes

- Take **15 minutes** to discuss with your tablemates what was discussed today
- In the note catcher please have the recorder add any major takeaways

End of the session evaluation- 10 minutes

Thank you for your time today.
Please complete session evaluation located in your handouts.

References

Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Ing, M., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2011). The influence of school administrators on teacher retention decisions. *American Educational Research Journal, 48*(2), 303–333.

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Worth, J., & De Luzuriaga, G. (2017). Teacher retention and turnover research. Research update 1: Teacher retention by subject. *National Foundation for Educational*

Thank you for your participation.
See you tomorrow.

Day 3- 10 minutes

Welcome

- *Please find your name tag at your assigned seat.*
- *Be prepared to share at your table*
  - *Your role*
  - *One major takeaway from yesterday*
  - *If you could have a super power what would it be?*

Day 1, 2, and 3 Training

Day 1- What is the data telling us? Sharing and Understanding the Data

- National level data: teacher attrition and retention

Day 2- Listen, Learn, and Evaluate

- Discussion panel: veteran teachers provide insight into how administrators can improve school contextual conditions
- Leadership reflection

Day 3- Next steps

- So what, now what?
- What does the research say about the factors that impact attrition and retention rates of our newly hired teachers?

Agenda

- Revisit goals
- Thought Partner
- Share Out
- Change Protocol
- Share Out
- Evaluation/Feedback

Goals for the Professional Development

1. school administrators will learn about the research regarding school contextual conditions and how those conditions impact newly hired teachers experiences
2. school administrators will learn about the local research findings
3. Building level administrators will apply their learning to their school leadership practice

Scenarios Practice- 60 minutes

Table groups will work together through each scenario and develop a plan of action.

Teacher Pre Service Administrator Panel- 60 minutes

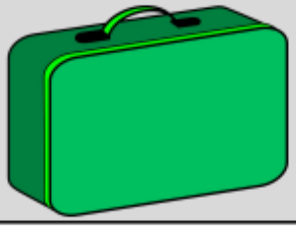
The purpose of this session is to provide a platform to University professors that work with preservice teachers to share what they believe to be the needs of newly hired teachers.

Questions:

- Please share your name?
- Please share your experience with preservice teachers during their time at the university and preservice teachers that have entered the workforce? Have newly hired teachers reported any concerns regarding their experience in their schools?
- What insight do you have for administrators regarding how they can support their newly hired teachers in their first 5 years of teaching?
- Question for building level administrators: what feedback do you have for University professors that would support preservice teachers preparing for their first teaching assignment?

Lunch- 60 minutes

Please return back to the board room by 1pm



Welcome Back from Lunch!

Next Steps - 90 Minutes

The purpose of this session is to provide time for building level administrators to plan and determine their next steps for changes in their building. Participants will be asked to pair up with another building level administrator to determine a plan of action to improve the experience of newly hired teachers at their schools. The plan of action created should include goals, timeline, resources, and activities that support school contextual conditions. Participants will be asked to provide their plan of action with the whole group during the final 30 minutes of the session.

End of the session evaluation- 10 minutes

Thank you for your time today.
Please complete session evaluation located in your handouts.

References

Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Ing, M., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2011). The influence of school administrators on teacher retention decisions. *American Educational Research Journal, 48*(2), 303–333.

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Thank you for your participation.

"Thriving not just Surviving"

Administration Professional Development

Note Catcher

Day 1

Group Number	Share Out 1	Share Out 2
Group 1		
Group 2		
Group 3		
Group 4		

Appendix B: Formative and Summative Evaluation

Not Just Surviving but Thriving Professional Development End of Session Evaluation

Formative Evaluation

Your feedback is important. Please fill out the following survey for Days 1 and 2 of the professional development. Thank you for attending professional development learning.

Name _____

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR RESPONSE TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

The professional learning today furthered my understanding of school contextual conditions and how those conditions impact the experience of newly hired teachers				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The professional learning today furthered my understanding of the school contextual needs within our school district				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The professional learning today furthered my understanding of my current leadership practices				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

How will you use the information learned in today's session?

Not Just Surviving but Thriving Professional Development

Summative Evaluation

Thank you for attending today. Your feedback is important. Please complete the following survey based on the final day of the professional learning.

Name _____

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR RESPONSE TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.

As a result of attending the workshop, I have a better understanding of the contextual conditions that impact newly hired teacher school experience.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As a result of attending the workshop, I have an understanding how to improve school contextual conditions as a building administrator.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As a result of my learning, I have improved my understanding of leadership best practices that improve contextual conditions for newly hired teachers.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As a result of my learning, I will be able to improve the experience in regards to school contextual conditions for newly hired teachers in my school.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

As a result of my learning, I will be able to improve the experience in regards to school contextual conditions for all teachers in my building.				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

As a result of your learning what changes will you make regarding school contextual conditions at your school?

Please describe what part of the workshop was most valuable and what suggestions you may have for future professional learning?

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Date:

Time:

Interviewee Code #:

Location of Interview:

Parts of the Interview	Interview Questions and Notes
Introduction	Hi, my name is Faith Cole. Thank you very much for participating in this interview today. As you know, the purpose of the study was to provide information to DTW's administrators that they could use to develop and apply practices, programs, and policies to provide school contextual conditions supportive of the district's teachers that would improve teacher retention and reduce teacher attrition.. This should last about 45 to 60 minutes. After the interview, I will be examining your answers for data analysis purposes. However, I will not identify you in my documents, and no one will be able to identify you with your answers. You can choose to stop this interview at any time. Also, I need to let you know that this interview will be recorded for transcription purposes. Do you have any questions? Are you ready to begin?
Question 1	How would you describe the facilities resources available to you? Resources refer to classrooms, textbooks, packing guides, classroom materials, spacing for teachers to use when they are not teaching and appropriate facilities. Probing questions: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?

Question 2	What facilities resources would you have liked to have that were not offered? Probing questions: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?
Question 3	How has the availability of resources influenced your decisions to leave or remain employed in the district? Probing questions: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?
Question 4	How have you experienced administrative support during your time in the district? Support refers to support that makes teachers ‘work easier and improves their teaching. Probing questions: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?
Question 5	What administrative supports helped you to improve as a teacher? Probing question: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?

Question 6	What administrative supports would you have liked to have that were not offered? Probing questions: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?
Question 7	How has the administrative support being offered to you influenced your decisions to leave or remain employed in the district? Probing questions: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?
Question 8	How would you describe your relationships with other faculty members? Relationship refers to cooperative effort amount staff members, coordinating the content of classes with peers, ability to get advice from colleagues and the ability to experience with teaching strategies. Probing questions: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?
Question 9	In what ways were these relationships helpful to you or a hindrance? Is there anything that you have learned? Probing questions: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?
Question 10	How has your relationships with other faculty members influenced your decisions to leave or remain employed in the district?

	Probing questions: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?
Question 11	What is your perception of faculty influence as it relates to school level and district level decisions? Influence refers to teacher autonomy in their classrooms such as selecting instructional materials, content, topics, evaluating students, opportunities to contribute to decisions that affect school, and disciplining students. Probing question: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?
Question 12	How has the faculty influence as it relates to school level and district level decisions influenced your decisions to leave or remain employed in the district? Probing questions: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?
Question 13	What are your perceptions of student behavior at your school? Behavior refers to students' misbehavior in school. Students' habits and attitude regarding school, classroom rules for student behavior and student support outside of the classroom. Probing question: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?
Question 14	What are your perceptions of how student behavior is managed at your school?

	Probing question: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?
Question 15	How has the student behavior influenced your decision to leave or remain employed in the district? Probing questions: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?
Question 16	What are some of your experiences either positive or negative in regards to feeling safe in your school? Safety is refer to a teachers experiences with students threating to inquire classroom teacher and students being attacked at school. Probing question: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?
Question 17	What could have been done by other teachers and school administrators regarding school safety for teachers? Probing question: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? Is there anything else you would like to share?

Question 18	How has your experiences regarding feeling safe in your school influenced your decision to leave or remain employed in the district? Probing questions: • Are you able to give me additional examples? • Could you tell me more about…? • Is there anything else you would like to share?
Close	Thank you for your answers. Do you have anything else you'd like to share? Do you have any questions for me? Thank you for your time. Goodbye.