

2017

# Teachers' Perceptions of Factors that Influence Teacher Turnover

Harold Anthony McCray Jr.  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Harold Anthony McCray Jr

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2017

Abstract

Teachers' Perceptions of Factors that Influence Teacher Turnover

by

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MA, Bowie State University, 2009

BS, Delaware State University, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2017

## Abstract

Teacher turnover is a critical issue for the public education community because it influences student performance, school climate, and employee morale. In a large urban school district in the northeastern United States, the turnover rate has been high; teacher morale is low, and teacher participation in the school community is lacking. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of novice teachers about factors that influence their job satisfaction and their future employment. Guided by Maslow's theory of motivation—which is characterized by motivational needs that drive individuals to improved performance—this study examined the perceptions of novice teachers about job retention. The research questions focused on teachers' perceptions about factors that could influence their decision to continue or leave their teaching positions. A case study design was used to capture the insights of 8 participants using semistructured interviews, reflective journals, and a focus group. Eight emergent themes were identified from the data through open coding; they involved performance affirmations, administrator and resource support, and professional development. The findings were validated through triangulation and member checking. According to the results, novice teachers sought to collaborate in a professional learning community and to expand their professional development opportunities. Hence, a project was designed to engage teachers and administrators in initiating and sustaining professional learning communities. This study may promote positive social change by increasing employee morale, staff cohesiveness, teachers' effectiveness and reducing teacher attrition rates among novice teachers.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this research study to my wife, Ciara McCray, who has been very supportive and encouraging throughout this whole journey. My parents Rose Cook and Harold McCray, Sr., for their encouragement and inspiration. My grandmother, Helen McCray, who has always told me the importance of getting an education and who pushed me to always do my best. My friends Dr. Mike Gibson and Dr. Zenobia Story, for being the example I needed to continue with the doctoral program. Finally, I dedicate this research to all of the educators who give themselves unselfishly every day to ensure our scholars are prepared to thrive in a global society.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **Introduction**

In U. S. school districts, teacher turnover is a growing problem. Fuller, Waite, and Irribarra (2016) reported that nationwide each year half a million teachers leave their schools, and half of those teachers leave the profession altogether. Moore (2012) reported that nationwide, turnover rates are high, with an average of 12% of teachers leaving the profession every year. According to Larkin, Brantley-Dias, and Lokey-Vega (2016), 30–50% of teachers exit the teaching profession within the first 5 years. With statistics such as these, it is critical to study the perceptions of current teachers to better understand why they leave. Knowing that may help administrators begin to reduce the turnover rate.

High teacher turnover is expensive for many school districts across the United States, and school officials continue to examine the many ways they can operate their budgets successfully and hold all stakeholders accountable for student achievement (Moore, 2012). The Alliance for Excellence in Education has estimated the United States spends almost \$2.2 billion a year to replace public school teachers who decide to leave the profession (Henkin & Holliman, 2009). In the United States, many school districts with a large number of low-income students see teachers leaving their careers early. The average is 15.2% (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton & Freitas, 2010).

In Section 1, I cover the following topics: problem, rationale, literature review, guiding questions, problem statement, purpose of the project study, significance, and implications for social change.

### **Definition of the Problem**

According to the National Commission on Teaching America's Future, 33% of teachers resign, transition to new teaching positions, or simply change schools within the first 3 years of beginning their teaching careers; almost 50% depart the profession within the first 5 years (Pearman & Davis, 2012). For example, New York City Public Schools lost 5,000 teachers in 1 year, with 10% of that number leaving the profession (Boyd et al., 2011). Heavy workloads, low salaries, and lack of support from their administrators influence their decisions.

The United States Department of Labor estimated the total cost of replacing the teachers who have quit the profession is about \$2.2 billion annually (Khasawneh, Omari, & Abu-Tineh, 2012). On the other hand, this fact is forcing all stakeholders, faculty, researchers, government, and school administrators to focus on the issue (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011).

In an elementary school in the eastern suburbs of Washington, D.C., each year a large number of novice teachers transition to new positions or change schools. Novice teachers have been working in education for less than 3 years; they are focused on surviving their first job; there is pressure to establish norms in their classrooms and to understand their organization's structure (Kumi-Yeboah & James, 2012). Over the past 3 years, an average of 40% of the teachers in this local school transitioned to a new school or changed careers (school principal, personal communication, 2014). The target school currently employs 44 teachers. In 2013, 5 teachers left this local elementary school; in 2014, 7 teachers left; and in 2015 that number rose to 11 (school principal, personal

communication, 2015). As a result, the climate has changed in the school buildings due to issues such as ethics, leadership structure, fear of failure, and discouragement. However, all these issues stem from the overall working conditions. In prior years, the local school provided various afterschool activities for the students, but with high turnover rates, those activities are unable to remain consistent with the vision or goals of the school's success plan. Thus, they have become less important. Some have been cancelled altogether. Some have been restructured because of inadequate staffing, lower student participation, and inadequate resources (Parent, personal communication, 2015). Many new teachers are forced to work in isolation, while struggling with presenting the curriculum; they blame a lack of mentorship between senior teachers and new teachers (Teacher A, personal communication, 2015). Only four teachers signed up for the staff appreciation dinner in 2014 (Teacher B, personal communication, 2015).

The local school district spends more than \$3.8 million a year recruiting and hiring teachers (human resource partner, personal communication, September 26, 2014). Many factors are associated with this cost. For instance, there is a mandatory orientation for new teachers to the district, in which they participate in a weeklong program of professional development and district initiative trainings. The goal is to help build the capacity of every new teacher. Veteran teachers and various teacher leaders are compensated for providing the professional development and assisting with orientation. For preparation and delivery, these teachers receive 2 weeks of compensation, which is estimated to be about \$250,000 per program. Other items included in the overall costs are training materials, food, and facilities management (Local School District, 2014). If the

training session takes place outside of the normal duty day, these costs range from paying the new employee \$175.00 per session, or if the training takes place during the regular school hours, the cost is the daily \$110.00 rate for a substitute. Depending on the skills and competencies of the new teachers, these costs begin to decrease the district funds quickly (district principal, personal communication, September 26, 2014). The cost of onboarding new employees is immense, and districts benefit by being able to retain teachers in their schools.

In a state education survey in which teachers were asked about climate and culture and working conditions of this school, 100% of the local teachers responded with information that informed the state of the teachers' perceptions (Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning [TELL], Maryland Department of Education, 2013). According to the survey, 95% of the local teachers said that the sizes of the classes were not reasonable to meet the needs of all the students. The survey also revealed that 87% of the local teachers agreed that no effort was being made to reduce the amount of paper work associated with the career. When they were beginning their new career, 70% of the local teachers agreed that they received little to no support from other teachers in the building. Overall 31% of the teachers agreed that the local school was not a great place to work (TELL Maryland Department of Education, 2014).

In this local district the gap in practice is that there is no system in place to retain novice teachers and to support their growth. This study will examine the perceptions of novice teachers about the factors that influence their satisfaction levels with their careers and their perceptions about their future employment. Further, by examining the



perceptions of novice teachers, recommendations for improvement can be made. The goal would be to provide insightful information about why novice teachers decide to leave and encourage their retention.

## **Rationale**

### **Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level**

The local school being studied is in one of the biggest urban school districts in the United States. The school has a population of approximately 550 students and 44 instructional staff members, which includes specialists (teachers of music art, physical education, and technology). The school was built with the latest technology and resources to maintain its green school status: energy--saving lights, large windows for natural lighting, and recycling bins. Maintaining its green school status includes teaching students how to reduce environmental impact. The school is equipped with Apple iPads and desktop computers; it also features remote-control clickers used to respond to questions digitally to help students and teachers during learning activities. Teachers and students produce morning news and announcement programs in the school's broadcasting studio.

The school's population is 81% African American, 8% Latin American, and 4% European American, and 8% of two or more races. The majority of the local school's students are academically on or above grade level. There is a small population of special needs students, which includes talented and gifted as well as special education students. A district administrator indicated that among the elementary teaching staff, an average of

30% (9 teachers) per year have left their positions for a variety of personal reasons (Human Resources Partner, personal communication, 2014).

One major shift at the local school is that teachers are no longer staying after school to host academic and extracurricular clubs. There is a lack of collaboration during the planning period in the school day and many grade-level meetings are business-only topics (Local School Teacher, personal communication, 2015). In the local school teachers lack support for growing professionally and improving their skills in teaching the content. According to the TELL Maryland Survey conducted by Maryland's Department of Education (2013), 87% of the teaching staff concluded that no effort was being made to reduce the workload; 100% of the new teachers agreed that no time was ever made for them to meet with their mentors during school hours. In addition, 100% of the staff felt that, as a teacher from the local district, they received no additional support (TELL Maryland Department of Education, 2013). "Over the past 3 years, we have seen this staff completely turn over within the local school and our children have not had consistency since they have been enrolled here" (Local School Parent 1, personal communication, 2015). At the local school, the instructional grade-level teams are responsible for sharing duties; when the staff experiences turnover, they have increased responsibilities because new teachers are inexperienced in the duties that go along with classroom instruction and teaching (Local School Teacher 2, personal communication, 2015). As a result of this problem, there has been a lack of field trips, less effective communications with parents, and greater inconsistency with assignments and projects (Local Parent, personal communication, 2015).

The National Center for Education Statistics (2014) reported that teacher turnover has increased by 7.7% since 2000. Many districts and schools across the nation have struggled to replace teachers and for this reason, teacher attrition has become a major issue in education (Liu, 2007). Maryland has been recognized by Education Week as being number one in the nation 4 years in a row in successful management of the following: standards and accountability, school finance, and student achievement (Maryland Public Schools, 2012). One of the categories that is not included in the ranking is teacher attrition. In 2009-2010, the Maryland teaching workforce lost 6% of its teachers or 3,797 people (Maryland Public Schools, 2012). It is important to note that this number has decreased from previous school years. According to Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE, 2012), the decline may have been caused by fewer teaching positions due to poor economic conditions. Nonetheless, teacher attrition still exists.

According to the MSDE, there are 24 school districts and all 24 are projected to have teacher shortages in 2018 (MSDE, 2016). MSDE developed incentive programs to attract teachers to their districts and retain them. Programs such as the Distinguished Scholar Teacher Education Program were designed by the MSDE to provide financial assistance to scholar-teachers to complete a state-approved education program. The program stipulates that for each year a participant receives funding, he or she must provide a year of teaching service. According to the state staffing report (MSDE, 2016), the local school district hired 588 new teachers in 2014-2015. With the high number of new teachers in the local school district, approximately 67% of the teaching force in this

local district has been teaching fewer than 10 years. It is important to highlight that the state lost 6.9% of its teaching staff in 2014–2015, with 4,433 teachers leaving the profession. By comparison, the local school district had an attrition rate of 8.6% yearly as of 2014-2015 school year (MSDE, 2016).

### **Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature**

According to Miner (2009), teacher attrition is a serious concern because many teachers leave the profession within their first 5 years; in urban districts, it takes an average of only 3 years for 50% of teachers to leave. Millions of dollars are invested in teacher training; with teachers leaving at high rates, school districts face a significant loss (Yonezawa, Jones, & Singer, 2011). For instance, according to Cha and Cohen-Vogel (2011), the Texas Department of Education spends \$329 million a year on teacher training and recruitment. This money reduces the number of educational initiatives that schools could invest to improve student learning (Cha & Cohen-Vogel, 2011). The National Commission on Teaching (2012), the National Education Association, and the National Academy of Sciences reported that in 2000-2010 schools across the United States have experienced several problems created by teacher shortages. Issues that contributed to teacher shortages included fewer teaching candidates entering preparation programs for the sciences, gaps in students' learning due to a lack of highly qualified individuals to teach particular subjects, greater frustrations between administrators and teachers, and poorly prepared graduates at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels (Ingersoll, 2001).

American Sponsored Schools located in countries outside of the United States have also experienced teacher turnover. Even in American International schools in Asia the average turnover rate is 17%, with some schools rising to 60% (Mancuso, Roberts, & White, 2010), which shows that this problem goes beyond the borders of the United States. With skillful and highly qualified teachers withdrawing from schools, policies and procedures no longer operate effectively (Mancuso et al., 2010). In the United States, future students, current teachers and administrators lose the benefit of the money that was invested in the professional development for novice teachers who left; in addition, students suffer because a new group of novice uninformed teachers is hired as replacements (Achinstein et al., 2010).

When teachers decide to leave, the climate and morale among staff and students is heavily affected (Moore, 2012). Many factors such as high-stakes testing, pressure to increase student achievement and working conditions are some causes that contribute to teacher turnover (Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014). According to Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2013), when teachers leave their schools, relationships among the staff members are damaged and the and cohesion in the building is disrupted. Ronfeldt et al. (2013) described the results of a study in which schools with high teacher turnover affect social resources such as staff collegiality and trust . Teachers leaving the profession affect several critical elements of operating a school.

According to Olsen and Anderson (2007), public schools in urban or metropolitan areas are difficult to staff and experience the most employee turnover. With so many tenured teachers leaving the profession, they are being replacing with less experienced

teachers. Research shows that the less experienced teachers may also decide to leave at a higher rate than those who have taught longer (Olsen & Anderson, 2007).

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of novice teachers about factors that influence their satisfaction with their careers and their perceptions about their future employment. Exploring these perceptions may help uncover solutions for creating more stabilized staffing in the local school.

### **Definitions**

*Administrative support:* Borman and Dowling (2008) stated that administrative support is help given to teachers by administrators in the areas of instruction, school climate, the curriculum, and student behavior.

*Mentor teacher:* Russell and Russell (2011) defined mentor teacher as an experienced or veteran teacher that assists a new teacher or novice to become acclimated to a school or the profession.

*Novice teacher:* Pogodzinski, Youngs and Frank (2013) defined novice teachers as those who enter the profession within the first 3 years of their career.

*School climate:* School climate is defined as the quality and aspects of a school's life as it relates to the criterion and values, relationships, social interactions, and school structures (National School Climate Center, 2015).

*Teacher turnover:* Ingersoll (2001) defined teacher turnover as the rate teachers transfer from school to school, or exit the profession altogether.

### **Significance**

By exploring the perceptions of novice teachers about influences that contribute to teachers leaving the profession I could identify ways to reduce turnover rates at the local site. The findings from this study could help identify factors that influence teachers at the local school to change professions and might provide a resource for creating programs to retain effective teachers.

Insights from this study may help the local school district gain information that will be useful in promoting teacher retention. The results of this study may help the local school district develop programs and plans that could be implemented to decrease the attrition levels in the district. By identifying why teachers leave the profession and what might? motivates them to stay, this study may improve the teacher retention rate.

### **Guiding Research Questions**

Teachers are faced with many challenges and great responsibilities in today's schools. There are various factors that a teacher might consider when deciding to continue teaching at this local school in suburban Washington, DC or to leave the profession. The questions that guided this study focused on teachers' perceptions about factors that might prompt them to leave the profession and factors that might influence them to stay..

Understanding the factors that influence teachers to leave their employment may offer information that could help this school district come up with solutions—or at least? spark interest in further investigating teacher turnover—in an effort to boost the retention rate of teachers. Teacher perceptions of their roles and responsibilities, the culture of the

school, and the roles and actions of the school administration may provide insight on how to develop strategies or programs to help improve their perceptions and experiences. The following three questions guided the study:

1. What are novice teachers' experiences with, and perceptions about, the factors that influence teachers to remain?
2. What are novice teachers' experiences with, and perceptions about, the factors that influence teachers to leave the profession? leave their place of employment?
3. What suggestions do teacher participants offer that might reduce teacher turnover?

### **Review of the Literature**

In order to search for peer-reviewed research journals and articles that are related and aligned to the perceptions of teachers on the factors that cause teacher turnover, Researcher has properly researched using various resources. The Walden University database is my first resource, my professional education journal subscriptions are the second resource, and Google Scholar provided some peer reviewed information, which was needed to help to gather appropriate literature. In order to retrieve the information, some of the search terms that were used are *novice teachers*, *teacher attrition*, *teacher turnover*, and *school culture*. Using primary sources and a few secondary sources, two major themes emerged: (a) teacher turnover and working conditions and (b) teacher turnover and support from the administrators and/or mentors. Each theme will be discussed below. The review begins with the conceptual framework.



## **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study is based on Abraham Maslow's theory of motivation. Maslow wanted to gain a deeper understanding of what motivates people. He believed that what motivates people is not related to rewards or desires, but it is related to achieving certain needs (McLeod, 2007). In 1943, Maslow published the theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1943). The relevance to the research is self-explanatory in that human motivation seriously affects how people are going to react to any situation (Maslow, 1970). Once one need is fulfilled, a person will seek to fulfill the next. Maslow developed five motivational needs. They were divided into two categories: basic needs and a growth need. The motivational needs, in order from the lowest to the highest, are physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1970). The more that these needs are unmet or denied, the yearning to fulfill them becomes stronger. The lower level basic needs must be fulfilled first before a person can fulfill the highest level of need, which is identified as self-actualization (McLeod, 2007). The different levels of motivational needs relate to the aspects of teaching that may motivate teachers to stay or leave in certain educational environments (Maslow, 1970).

This research is driven by the desire to investigate teacher perceptions of the factors that influence teacher turnover. When focusing on what motivates or influences a teacher to leave his or her profession, it is important to examine Maslow's theory. Applying Maslow's theory to this study is important because his theory of motivation explains that an individual does not reach his or her full potential if certain needs are not met first. For example, if teachers do not reach the highest level (self-actualization), then

their ability for decision-making may be less developed, and their ability to grow in the profession may be limited. Maslow's theory explains that safety and satisfaction are important factors in reaching self-actualization. Maslow's theory of motivation will contribute to this study by providing a conceptual framework to interpret and analyze that will be collected through face-to-face interviews, a focus group, and journal entries.

### **Teacher Turnover and Working Conditions**

School administrators have classified teacher turnover as a significant problem that causes multiple hardships on school districts (Ingersoll, 2001). It is also important to note that personal reasons could potentially contribute to high turnover rates in school. Ingersoll (2001) further explained that novice teachers' contributing factors for their departure from the profession include reasons such as health issues, family problems, and pregnancy. Teacher turnover is not just an issue in the United States; it is a concern in many countries around the world. Khawary and Ali (2015) completed an international study and suggested that one of the major factors that influence teacher turnover is the lack of motivation. The authors further explain that when teachers do not feel valued, lack the ability to effectively contribute to the school and are dissatisfied they eventually quit. If teachers' needs are being met and efforts are acknowledged by the administrators, then they will be more likely to continue teaching in the profession. Equally important, the lack of compensation is another factor as to why teachers leave the profession (Khawary & Ali, 2015).

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2007) concluded that retirement is an issue that contributes to teacher turnover. In the United States, it

costs almost \$7.31 billion to recruit, hire and train new teachers (Hallam, Chou, Hite & Hite, 2012). The public-school systems in the United States are experiencing high turnover rates of teachers, especially among those who are new to the profession (DeAngelis & Pressely, 2011). The United States spends more than \$2 billion just to replace those teachers who decide to leave the profession early (Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012). While the cost of replacing new teachers can be expensive, there is a shift in the school atmosphere and culture due to non-cohesion because of teacher turnover (Schaefer et al., 2012).

While teacher turnover is high in the United States, the problem is more severe in developing countries such as Afghanistan, South Africa, and Zambia. According to the official sources in Afghanistan, 70% of teachers are not even qualified to actually teach (Khawry & Ali, 2015). Furthermore, Khawry and Ali (2015) explained that other factors in developing countries that contribute to novice teacher attrition are the lack of safe teaching environments and the quality of resources provided to educate students. Using this information to understand the factors that influence teacher turnover from a global perspective brings potential validation that this study is something from which many could benefit. Although this is a local problem, the use of this research clearly indicates teacher turnover is an issue globally.

According to DeAngelis and Pressley (2011), stakeholders such as administrators, teachers, district leaders, and policy makers are concerned with 50% of teachers leaving the profession within their first 5 years. They are concerned because of the amount of money it would cost to replace those teachers who leave and the impact it will have on

student achievement (DeAngelis & Pressley, 2011). Almost 20% of all the newly hired teachers decide to leave teaching during their first three years (Olsen & Anderson, 2007). According to Taylor (2013), novice teachers are leaving the profession due to factors such as low salaries, the lack of administration support and even teacher blame. When some teachers leave, they are doing so for other occupations and this has to be added to the discussion. If the motivation is monetary in nature, there is a greater chance for the leaving teacher to go somewhere out of the profession. DeAngelis and Presley (2011) brought in the other side of the discussion by speaking to teacher turnover. If there are a great number of teachers who are leaving the profession, then they too must be replaced and there is a cost associated with replacing teachers. Ladd (2011) explained in an Australian study that teachers reported working conditions established by school administrators as a key factor for novice teachers when deciding to stay or leave. Other factors such as workload, professional development and classroom management also play a vital role in the decision of deciding whether or not teachers will remain in the profession (Buchanan, 2012).

Varlas (2013) investigated how to retain teachers by using The New Teacher Project (TNTP), which outlined several factors that one should examine to retain teachers, such as the school culture, administrator support, resource support, and working conditions. According to a report conducted by TNTP, it has been estimated that almost 10,000 teachers decided to leave their schools in the 50 largest school districts in the United States from 2009 until 2012 (Varlas, 2013). Some argue that a teacher shortage exists because of teacher retirements, however Ingersoll (2001) insist that the high

number of teachers being replaced is caused by teachers not being satisfied with their careers. All things considered teacher turnover has major effects on how school districts and their schools operate. There are fiscal factors in school budgets and school climate that are affected by teacher turnover. Exploring some these factors will help rationalize and understand if teachers are influenced by them and ultimately cause them to leave the profession.

When teachers consider staying or leaving the profession a myriad of factors contributes to that decision. Some leave due to the lack of support from the administrator or student behavior problems, others decide to stay or leave based on salary and stress, but many have cited the working conditions are not conducive for being an effective teacher, as a major factor as to why teachers leave. Benton and Gill (2012) explained that working conditions such as resources for teaching, the amount of input a teacher has in decision-making, class size and parental involvement can also potentially be a deciding factor for teachers to remain in the classroom. Researchers have conducted various studies on teacher salaries and the correlation it has on why teachers decide to leave the profession; however, many teachers leave the profession for other reasons such as personal commitments, lack of support and working conditions (DeAngelis, 2013). Rivikin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) investigated teacher salaries and reported that research demonstrates evidence that when trying to determine student success, teachers are the most important factor in that research. School districts understand that their success depends on maintaining a quality teaching force and if their salaries are not competitive then they jeopardize that success (Grissom & Strunk, 2012). Some

researchers have reported that the catalyst behind restructuring teacher salaries is not a topic of conversation among educators, but rather politicians and the business community (Miner, 2009). With supported research that outlines the seriousness of cultivating teacher compensation, Ingersoll (2004) suggests that teachers are not satisfied with their pay and will correlate that to workload being a factor.

According to Aloe, Amo, and Shanahan (2014) teacher burnout is a global issue and is common among young and unmarried teachers. Teachers who experience more or feel more burnt out are highly likely to leave the profession. Santoro (2011) argues that it is hard for teachers to feel like their work is being done well when the current policies and procedures in the profession limit them the creativity ability to teach freely due to testing mandates. When faced with a heavy workload, then being compensated respectively becomes a factor. With teacher turnover being a problem in the United States, it is hard to even attract younger people to the profession (Miner, 2009). It is important to understand that working conditions are determined by the interaction between the educational setting features, the culture of the building, the rules that govern the employees, and other factors. Factors such as class size, principal leadership, and workload, all play a vital role in how a teacher determines satisfaction in the profession (Cucchiara, Rooney, & Kraft, 2015). Santoro (2011) explained that when professionals engage in work that is important and is done with fidelity, they usually enjoy work and are content with their career choice in education. Furthermore, the work that teachers are doing also serves society and provides satisfaction to the teacher (Santoro, 2011). According to Miner (2009), the younger generation is typically contemplating the

decision to teach or even remain in the profession, because they would have to wait almost 20 years to receive a salary comparable to the veteran teachers. In addition, teachers are frustrated with work responsibilities such as implementation of the curriculum, dealing with classroom management issues and simply being organized (Haverback & Mee, 2014). It is also important to note that the level of trust among teachers and the collective workload amount also is factor that teachers use to determine if they will remain in the profession (Pogodzinski, Youngs, & Frank, 2013). Without the proper support, especially new teachers these tasks can become overwhelming.

Barnes et al. (2007) conducted a study among novice teachers to understand collaboration in schools. They reported that an opportunity to collaborate is important to novice teachers; however only a small population of novice teachers said this type of opportunity was extended (Schaefer et al., 2012). The study also revealed that the perception of what support looks like to novice teachers was completely the opposite of what administrators perceived it to be. Whipp and Geronime stated that school leadership, culture, and relationships are important factors to the success of novice teachers. In 2006, the state of North Carolina conducted a survey in which the results stated that school leadership, professional development, and mentorship were high factors and determinants of teacher turnover (Whipp & Geronime, 2015). In a survey that was conducted in New York City by first-year teachers in 2005, found that working conditions influenced a novice teacher's decision to leave (Boyd et al., 2011) Furthermore, the lack of support from administrators and colleagues, having the

opportunity to make decisions for the school, and the facilities all had the greatest impact on novice teachers' decisions to leave their school (Boyd et al., 2011).

Public schools suffer the most out of many school systems because of the lack of continuity that occurs as a result of high turnover rates. A study conducted by Olsen and Anderson (2007) in Los Angeles explained that the turnover rate is so extreme in the United States that within a decade there will be a need to hire two million teachers. Some of the reasons revealed in the study for teachers leaving included heavy workloads, low salaries, and personal family issues. Olsen and Anderson (2007) were able to deliver some qualitative information that not only explained why the participants in their study wanted to leave, but also what sparked their interest in teaching. The participants reported that the desire to help students achieve, and their willingness to have an impact on their community were important factors to choose this profession. This information is important because it could potentially help with developing strategies to retain teachers.

According to Blomberg & Knight (2015), the profession of teaching can be one that can be emotionally draining, and emotions are often triggered by interactions with colleagues and stakeholders, the school system itself, and the policies and procedures in the school . In the profession of teaching, there is a high expectation of collaboration and the ability to maintain effective classroom management. These areas are important to novice teachers. In order to withstand good relationships in a school between colleagues and the students, novice teachers must be acknowledged for their hard work and efforts bestowed upon the school . Blomberg & Knight (2015) argued that many novice teachers feel as the school year progresses, their colleagues become inaccessible, the



administration no longer solicits opinions from the novice teachers, and their lack of professional confidence has increased due to isolation. More importantly novice teachers felt their lack of preparation in their undergraduate studies program did not equip them with the skills and realities of the classroom .

Grissom and Strunk (2012) found that equating teacher compensation with experience instead of performance has now become an issue with many districts in the United States. More recently, President Obama and his administration provided 4.3 billion dollars to help reform public schools, which sparked the conversation of linking quality teaching and standardized testing, to teacher salaries (Miner, 2009). Research conducted by Kula-Acevedo (2009) found that when teacher workloads are growing and accountability items such as standardized testing are being linked to compensation; there is a direct correlation to teacher turnover. Many school districts were outraged with teacher salaries being tied to standardized testing, simply because the stakeholder creating these proposals were not teachers (Miner, 2009). In a study to investigate strategies of attracting and sustaining quality teachers, Stotko, Ingram, and Beaty-O'Ferrall (2009) identified teacher salaries as one of the leading causes for teacher deciding to leave the profession. Being faced with low salaries and heavy workload conditions result in dissatisfaction in the profession.

Whipp and Geronmine (2015) argued that teachers do not leave schools where there is a large population of European American students who achieve well on standardized tests and where there are adequate resources, including materials and administrative support, to be successful as a teacher. According to a National Center for

Educational Statistics' (NCES) survey, the condition in which a teacher had little control over grading, content and teaching techniques were the highest factors reported from science and math teachers who decided to leave the profession (Whipp & Geronmine, 2015).

Workloads and teacher salaries are tied together because of the dissatisfaction teachers' express due to low compensation for the work performed. When teachers are faced with working conditions that are deemed to be harsh, they begin to stress and feel exhausted, which then results in them not being able to effectively focus on their career (Brunsting, Sreckovic & Lane, 2014). Due to the high demands of the career many teachers experience burnout, and that is an important factor that influence a teacher's decision to stay in the profession (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014). Tasks such as grading papers, district initiatives, and dealing with classroom management are cited as high factors that cause teacher turnover. Aloe et al. (2014) explained that American teachers are stressed more because of working conditions that include dealing with a diverse population of learners and the lack of parental involvement. Torres (2014) reported that workload is the primary reasons that even teachers in charter schools leave. Schools that serve low-income students have extremely high turnover rates. But Torres (2014) further argues that regardless of the student population that is being served, working conditions is very influential when a teacher decides to leave. Teachers who experience these issues feel that more has been added to the long list of things they already need to do. Some researchers have revealed that even an increase in teacher salaries might not commit a teacher to the profession, simply of their bad perceptions of the profession as it relates to

the workload (Liu & Ramsey, 2008). Furthermore, teachers are leaving the profession and highly likely to change careers due to being compensated with what they perceive as a low salary.

### **Administrator and Mentor Support**

Branch, Hanushek, and Rivkin (2013) conducted research measuring the impact of effective principals, and concluded that schools whose principals are effective have a massive exit of less effective teachers. According to Sedivy-Benton and Bolden-McGill (2012) administrators have a high influential status in school climate and culture, and their support has a direct impact on the teacher turnover rate. Studies have been conducted to gain insight about the perceptions of teachers and the role administrators' play when deciding if they will remain in the profession. High-rates of teacher turnover that has been impacted because of administration are a clear indication that there is a problem in the education community. Schools that have effective leadership and a less turnover rate indicate that the principal took all stakeholders into consideration (Mancuso, Roberts, & White, 2010). Teachers will remain present in their schools where there are supportive and effective administrators. It is when teachers feel there are no opportunities for growth in the profession, and the lack of administrative support that they begin to determine if they will stay or leave (Sedivy-Benton & Bolden-McGill, 2012). Effective principals are more successful at retaining teachers who are committed to the profession, while pushing those who are less effective out the profession (Branch et al., 2013). Gardner (2010) reported that administration support, recognition, and the level of instructional delivery were all factors that influenced teacher retention of music

teachers. The lack of communication that exists between teachers and employees also can be a determining factor as to why teachers leave. The influence of career satisfaction may also differ between the levels of experience among teachers. Administrators may display behaviors that lack support towards teachers; this then is perceived as dissatisfaction and creates a negative school climate (Mancuso et al., 2010). Certain conditions are needed for a teacher to build his or her capacity as a professional such as professional development, collaboration, and administration support (Brown, 2008).

According to Whipp & Geronime (2015) there are various factors that influence teacher turnover such as school leadership and school culture. In a survey that was conducted in North Carolina in 2006, the findings indicated that the quality of the administration was the highest determining factor in which made a teacher leave the profession (Ladd, 2011). Also in New York City in 2005, first-year teachers revealed through a survey that their unhappiness with school leadership had the greatest impact on why they quit teaching. Teachers look to administrators for support. Mancuso et al. (2010) argued that teachers expect administrators to foster collaboration amongst teachers, solve problems, and demonstrate respect in the workplace. Teachers want to be treated as professionals. For this reason, when these actions are not provided or demonstrated among teachers, they are more prone to depart the profession. Schaefer et al. (2012) also argues that burnout occurs with novice teacher due to working in isolation, excessive paperwork, and the lack of administrative support. Administrators who are aware of these burnout factors could potentially reduce the turnover rate, according to Schaefer et al. (2012). Leadership plays a large part of what happens to new teachers and

those who would like to retire. Zhu, Devos & Tondeur (2014) examined the culture of schools in China while trying to make the connection between leaders and teachers and provides gives another perspective of leadership and from a cultural difference. Kilinic (2014) brought the conversation around to the leadership of schools, which makes the analysis more applicable to the discussion of retention and also natural attrition. Teachers will be replaced continually so it is important to make sure that the data matches preconceived ideas. McCarley, Peters & Decman (2014) also gave a second perspective on leadership which moves the topic further for research purposes.

Administrators need to model expected behaviors, be visible throughout the school, and provide guidance to all staff members. School leadership can also develop learning communities in the building to help strengthen collegiality among all teachers in order to decrease turnover rates (Brown, 2008). Principals can improve the education quality by ensuring they hire effective teachers in the classrooms and transition less effective ones out (Branch et al., 2013). The role of an administrator is essential to teacher retention. Offering respect, allowing teacher input in school decisions, and solving school issues helps to build trust and are seen as supportive actions (Mancuso et. al, 2010). Positive working conditions that include teacher support from administrators are a direct correlation to how teachers perceive their profession and their decision to continue teaching. Torres (2014) reported that the perception of the support from an administrator plays a significant role when a teacher is determining to leave. A study was conducted in 2006 in Canada among novice teachers, in which the researchers concluded that having an administrator who promoted a positive school culture and support from

experienced teachers minimized the difficulties they would experience (Schaefer et al., 2012). While some novice teachers expressed that having administrative support and support from their experienced colleagues is a good thing, they would prefer to have more support in implementing the curriculum and more mentor experiences (Schaefer et al., 2012).

Kilinc (2014) noted that a principal-centered leadership style could potentially create a climate in which there is a lack of improvement in building teacher capacity and student achievement. He further stated that best practice for leadership should focus more on teacher collaboration and stronger relationships, which could eliminate or decrease the amount of teacher turnover. When schools have administrators that are supportive of its teachers, share the decision-making process with others, and allow teachers to share in the vision of the school, then a relationship of trust is developed among the school and its stakeholders (Kilinc, 2014).

Respectively district administrators also play a role in teacher turnover. While teachers may look to their principal for support, central office administrators often are not included in the factors as to why teachers leave. According to Billingsley (2004) district administrators are very influential in policies that affect the workload and responsibilities that are given to school administrators. Those policies are then enforced, causing disconnect among the teachers and administrators and cause some type of dissatisfaction for the profession.

A study was conducted in Mississippi in seven schools to determine why teachers decided to leave the profession. The participants reported that there was a lack of support

from the administrators, no opportunity to have input in decision making, and ineffective communication between their principals and teachers (Harper, 2010). Characteristics such as being a supportive leader, establishing open communication, and taking a vested interest in their employees were cited as important in relationship building (Billingsley, 2004). Khawary and Ali (2015) describe the rate of teacher turnover increasing when the school's leadership does not pay attention to what motivates its teachers and focus more just on instruction. According to Brunsting et al. (2014) many teachers do not feel they are supported by their principals and feel overwhelmed because of the lack of support and resources needed to educate students. Heidmets and Liik (2014) explained that it is important for the administrator to influence their teachers to push beyond their limits of their own agendas and work for the needs of the students and school.

When trying to predict whether or not a teacher will remain in the profession, their training and work experiences are highly important factors. Novice teachers often cite that their teacher preparation programs fail to prepare them to teach and deal with the practical situations that occur in a school (Whipp & Geronime, 2015). According to Hallam et al. (2012), many organizations recognize mentoring support to be important when hiring any new employee. It has been found that when teachers participate in mentoring programs, retention rates are higher. Teachers receive more support when using mentoring programs (Brill & McCartney, 2008). Teachers who participate in a mentor program also seek support for instructional practices that they can use in their classroom to improve student academic achievement (Mathur, Gehrke, & Kim, 2012). School districts are mandated to draw in and keep highly qualified teachers in the

classroom due to the federal legislative acts of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. As a result of teachers participating in mentor teacher programs, there has been decrease in teacher turnover (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). According to Blomberg and Knight (2015), in various countries across the world making that transition from a teacher education program to an actual classroom teacher has been one of the most difficult transitions in a teacher's career. Novice teachers want to work in a school where they are valued as a professional and where the school culture is a priority to their colleagues. In order for novice teachers to be successful and to be retained in the profession, practical experience and theory knowledge from their teacher education program must align.

Good mentoring in schools provides guidance and helps teachers become familiar with the profession. Having a support program in place will help improve the performance of the teachers, as well retain teachers in the education field (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). In Baltimore City Public School, the district implemented a school mentoring program and a first-year institute for all first-year teachers. This program provides ongoing support and professional developments for its teachers. At the conclusion of their first-year teachers reflect on their experiences and map out year two for progression (Varlas, 2013). Rowley (2012) argued that qualities of a good mentor begin with commitment. Having committed mentors to teachers who may be new to a particular school understand the importance of relationship building, and make a commitment to help retain teachers in their building. When examining perceptions of the factors of teacher turnover even from a global perspective, a group of teachers in



Portuguese expressed feeling stressed and tired, and that there was a disconnect between what was reality and the expectations (Menon, 2012).

It's important to also examine how other countries support or treat their novice teachers. Studying other models outside the United States could potentially provide solutions or strategies to help retain novice teachers. According to Ahn (2014), Japan supports novice teachers through the use of a 4-week student teaching residency and the use of a teachers' room in the school (). In Japan the teachers' room is used for professional development, collaborative planning, guidance and mentoring. The use of the room is ongoing throughout the day. In the teachers' room teachers are constantly debriefing about lessons, students, and receiving advice from administrators and veteran colleagues (). In Japan, novice teachers are those who have taught for a total of 6 years. Then after they have taught for a total of 6 years they must rotate to a new school in the same district. The strategies used in Japan have helped to keep teacher turnover rate low.

Recently in efforts to support teachers and protect their careers, labor unions and school districts began implementing the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program. While this initiative was created to enhance the skills of teachers, it also provides mentoring, support, and evaluates performance to help retain teachers (Papay & Johnson, 2012). The program usually hires veteran teachers through a competitive process, with the expectation that these "consulting teachers" return back to the classroom after a three-year term. According to Rochester School District in New York, after their first year of implementing the PAR program their retention rate increased from 60–90% (Papay & Johnson, 2012). A principal in the Syracuse, New York stated the program was

successful and helped retain teachers in his building instead of quitting. He stated that the program really taught teachers how to educate urban children, and build their capacity as an educator so that they could be successful and not decide to leave the profession (Papay & Johnson, 2012).

One aspect that Menon (2012) argued was that the expectation for teachers included communicating effectively with several different groups of people; stakeholders, parents, students, etc., sometimes makes the career overwhelming. Other duties of teachers include adapting to an established environment where they receive little to no support. Having a mentor program is essential to getting a teacher acclimated to the profession. According to Menon (2012) teachers who begin their profession with utilizing some sort of mentor teacher program usually decide to stay in the profession, and this helps to produce a healthy school climate. Ingersoll and Smith (2004) reported that teachers who had mentors reduced their decision to leave the profession by 30%. When teachers are working in collaborative climates and are able to contribute to the school this allows the teacher to satisfy their need of belonging and acceptance, which also contributes to the decrease of teacher turnover rates (Menon, 2012). Varlas (2013) argues that in order to reduce teacher turnover, schools and stakeholders must provide support and not ignore the issues that are present. Expecting that all teachers receive the same training and will be effective should not be the mindset of instructional leaders, and if the support is not provided teachers will leave.

The above summary review of recent literature provided several themes related to factors that influence teacher turnover. Most researchers cited in this literature review

believed that working conditions and administration support are the main criteria teachers consider when they decide whether or not to remain in the profession. Taylor (2013) also explained that teachers are in need of support, motivation, and collegiality in order to remain in the profession. Additionally, there is a high turnover rate of novice teachers and the cost to recruit, train and retain them is expensive. Teacher turnover has been classified as a significant problem in the education field and working conditions and support must be present in order for a teacher to want to remain in the profession (Ingersoll, 2001). Low salaries, the lack of administration support and personal reasons are the driving force to high turnover among novice teachers (Khawry & Ali, 2015). Furthermore, in order for teachers to make decisions remain in the profession they often consider resources needed for teaching, the climate of the school, class sizes, and support. The findings in this literature review evidently support the problem and purpose of this study on teacher turnover. The research questions, examining the perceptions of factors that influence turnover, may contribute to professional developments led by districts to retain their teachers. Understanding and learning the perceptions of novice teachers about factors that contribute to teacher turnover may provide information that could potentially decrease turnover rates and retain more teachers.

### **Implications for Social Change**

An analysis of teacher turnover literature revealed that the lack of support from either an administrator or mentor teacher is the fundamental reason teachers decide to leave the profession. The purpose of this project study was to investigate teachers' perceptions about the factors that influence teacher turnover and thus be able to decrease

turnover rates and increase retention. The results of this project study may help the local school district, where the study took place and where education stakeholders seek to reduce the turnover rate.

Based on this study and its findings, one possible project is the creation of a professional development program for novice teachers that would offer support, training, and collaboration. Such a program could help retain teachers. Buchanan (2012) reported that focusing on teachers' perceptions of their decision to leave might not only help to explain the issue, but also mitigate the turnover rate and help build continuity among schools. It is expected that the findings will present evidence that supports the development of local school and district policies that strengthen the district's activities to retain teachers. Based on the results, one project could be to develop a multiyear career path plan for teachers and to schedule an annual awards program to recognize teachers' contributions to the profession and their success in instructional delivery.

### **Summary**

In Section 1 of this project study, I provided information and evidence that determined that there was a problem with teacher turnover. The evidence presented not only focused on a local level, but on a broader scope to build and support the claim of teacher perceptions and the factors on why they leave the profession. Although the literature provided information on teacher turnover and working conditions, the next section will focus on the perceptions of those current teachers in the field who can add to the body of literature. This information and findings of this study could inform school

leaders and districts stakeholders of those external factors that contribute to teacher turnover.

In Section 2, I will provide a detailed explanation on the qualitative, case study design. I will outline the approach, describe the participants, and present the data on teachers' perceptions. Participants were current teachers who agreed to be interviewed, participate in a focus group, and keep a journal of their experience. In Section 3, I will focus on the project outcome that is aligned with this study. In Section 4, I will reflect on my scholarly work in completing this study.

## Section 2: The Methodology

The overall purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the teachers' perceptions about the factors that influence teacher turnover. Focusing on the teachers' perceptions may help decrease the turnover rate and sustain educator? continuity among schools. Furthermore, retaining teachers may improve student achievement. In this section I describe the qualitative method used for this study, explain the purpose of selecting a case study and justified its rationale. I provide an overview of gaining access to participants, including the criteria for selecting them, and how relationships were formed between the participants of the study and myself. Finally, I identify the plan for data collection and data analysis.

### **Qualitative Research Design and Approach**

In this project study, I gathered and examined the perceptions of novice teachers, because these perceptions are reflective of their career decision to remain in the role of a teacher. Selecting administrators or veteran teachers of this local school would have probably provided good information too, but it was necessary ensure the research was authentic and captured the experiences and perceptions of a unique group.

The local school provided the bounded system for this study. The novice? teachers were unique because they were part of a local school that had experienced continued problems with teachers leaving after short periods of employment. According to Larkin et al. (2016), 30–50% of this group of teachers leave the profession within their first 5 years.

In order to conduct this investigation, I selected the qualitative case study design. The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of teachers about the factors that influence turnover in the local school setting (suburban Washington, DC). According to Creswell (2012), the essential idea with qualitative research is to examine the data from participants to gain knowledge about a problem or issue. Qualitative research is used to explore and understand the social or human problems of any individual or group (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative researchers interpret people's experiences to determine what experiences meant to them (Merriam, 2009). This research design correlated with the study in describing and understanding teachers' perceptions of factors that influence turnover. The design provided a platform from which teachers could share their experiences and investigate factors that can cause turnover.

Utilizing a case study design was an ideal way to focus on the perceptions through specific experiences and the day-to-day activities that occur in the local school. Glesne (2011) defined the case study methodology as an intensive study of a group or individual. Creswell (2012) stated that a case study focuses specifically on the problem being addressed from the perspective of the participants who are involved in the study. When using a case study design, the researcher operates as the primary collector of the data and is responsible for analyzing the data (Yin, 2013). Merriam (2009) defined a case study as the description and in-depth study that provides a lot of information about the case being studied. Using a qualitative case study was the best way to conduct this study because it allowed me to collect the perceptions of the participants in person. This enabled me to receive more information and to present the data collected from multiple sources such as

one-on-one interviews, a focus group, and document reviews (Merriam, 2009). The case for this study was teacher turnover, and the bounded system for this study is a local elementary school setting. Other research methods would be less effective in answering my research questions.

I considered using multiple qualitative methodologies for this study, however I chose to use a case study design because the case of the perceptions of novice teachers about factors that influence teacher turnover should not be considered without the context and experience of these individuals. Furthermore, the use of a qualitative case study provides multiple sources of information to help explore their perceptions as to why people leave the profession. According to Creswell (2008) using a grounded theory design is applicable when trying to develop or even revise a theory or explain a process. For my study, I focused on one particular problem in a particular school. Additionally, Glesne (2011) explained that data collection and analysis for grounded theory involves continuous sampling, coding and categorizing in order to develop a theory about a social phenomenon. This type of design did not align with my study because I am not looking to generate a theory, but rather understand and learn the perceptions of novice teachers about factors that influence teacher turnover. I also considered using an ethnographic study, however that type of study focuses on human society and a particular culture (Merriam, 2009), which does not align to my study. In addition, I considered to use a narrative design, however that design collects chronological events and stories that are told by individuals with the intent to study their lives (Creswell, 2012). Finally, I considered using a phenomenology design but according to Creswell (2012) that type of



design focuses on human experience, which does not align to learning the perceptions of teachers about factors that influence teacher turnover. A case study was the best design for this study to truly learn about novice teachers' perceptions.

By using the case study methodology, I collected rich, descriptive data from several different sources. This methodology allowed the participants to have opportunities to share their stories and experiences which will help to illuminate factors relating to teacher turnover and retention. The qualitative approach allows a researcher to be flexible, creative, and connected to gain authentic information. Using a quantitative approach would limit the researcher's engagement. Through the use of a qualitative approach, the researcher is bound by procedures and rules (Creswell, 2009). The use of a qualitative case study provided the research with in depth information about teachers' perceptions, opinions, and experiences that will cultivate an authentic study. Yin (2012) explained that using a case study will help determine what has happened and what is currently happening. Furthermore, other designs such as experiments and quasi-experiments address these questions; however, they do not provide the kind of rich information that is derived from case studies (Yin, 2012). This type of information is best gained through qualitative data collections methods, such as one-on-one interviews, journals, and focus groups.

### **Participants**

I used purposeful sampling in my study. According to Creswell (2012), purposeful sampling will provide the researcher with the opportunity to target and select specific participants that will provide rich information for that particular study. In order

to gain the perceptions of teachers for this study, I wanted to ensure that I obtained information from a group of novice teachers as participants. The most important requirement for criteria selection is that the participants had to be teachers with no more than 3 years of experience in the local elementary school that prompted this study. The study focused on the perceptions of current novice teachers about why teacher turnover exists in this particular setting. Gathering information from novice teachers brought current perspectives from people who are still considered new to the profession. A researcher should always identify participants that will bring a wealth of knowledge on the particular problem (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). According to Glesne (2011), purposeful sampling works best in qualitative case studies because it provides an opportunity to learn about the issue of importance through a carefully selected group of individuals.

I selected eight novice teachers to participate in the study. There are currently 44 K-5 teachers at the local elementary school; of that group, there were 25 novice teachers who have been at the school for less than three full years. My goal was to include teachers who have been teaching 3 years or less, and to select novice teachers who teach various grade levels and content areas in the local school setting. This criterion is important because I was looking for a variety of experiences and perspectives on factors about why teacher decide to leave. Finally, the total number of participants that were selected were based on the responses of those teachers who fit the criteria, who respond to the invitation to participate in the study, and who had schedules that made them available to participate.

In order to gain access to the participants I had to follow several steps. First, I obtained permission from the local school district's research office and submitted my proposal for approval. Also in that process is an application that had to be submitted. Next, I obtained approval to proceed with my study from the Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), Approval No 10-04-16-0180240. Once I had obtained those approvals, I then identified the local school and the participants that fit the criteria with human resources, so I know whom I would be able to contact. Once I had the approval from the local district, I had to submit my request to the local school administrator to conduct the study in that building. Glesne (2011) discussed the importance of building trustworthiness among the participants, but the same aspect can be applied when dealing with a principal. Specifically, it would not be ethical to conduct a study in a building without contacting the building administrator. I explained in detail the purpose of my study and the targeted participants. The criteria of the selected participants in the study were as follows:

- Nontenured, novice teacher (participant must not have been teaching more than 3 years)
- Employee of the local elementary school
- Participant had to be a full time, certified teacher

I contacted the participants and invited them to participate in the study. I gained access to the participants with the list provided by the principal of the local school. I then found their emails listed on the local school website as directed by the principal. After gaining that information I moved forward by sending an invitational e-mail to all teachers

in the local elementary school (see Appendix D). The email indicated a location and time to attend a meeting where I presented an overview of my study, explained the role of the participants, and review the ethical procedures and the consent form. The participants had one week to respond to the email to confirm if they will participate. I provided my personal contact information in the email in case the participants had clarifying questions or concerns. Those who were interested had to respond to the email with their contact information. At the end of the week deadline for responding, I selected those who responded affirmatively to participate in the study. I gave an additional three days just to make sure that I had as many of the 25 novice teachers who met the criteria for the study. A total of nine participants responded to the invitational email and attended the meeting. Due to an incident that occurred with one of the participants she could not participate which then left me with only eight participants. To conduct an authentic study that involves interaction among participants, I had to establish a relationship built upon trust. I encouraged the participants to engage in this study because their involvement may help solve an ongoing problem in the education community. As the researcher, I also had to be mindful of the responsibilities and time commitments of the participants. Therefore, I made sure I conducted the study around their current schedules and accommodate their job responsibilities. All of those factors were excellent methods of building trust and developing a working relationship with the participants.

Creswell (2009) outlined some important strategies to build trustworthiness and working relationships when conducting a study. Some of them included the following:

- Being engaged for long periods of time and being consistent helps to learn the culture of the site, and builds trust
- Using debriefing and reflection
- Acknowledging research biases and how the information will be used
- Sharing the final report with the participants also known as member checking.

I gained a researcher–participant working relationship through the measures of informed consent, confidentiality, and protection from harm. I further urged the participants to participate in this study by encouraging them to contact me with any questions so that I can discuss my role in the research, reassure them of confidentiality, and highlight the benefits of participating in this study.

Creswell (2012) explained that an informed consent form provides participants with an opportunity to gain information about the study before they participate, understand their participant rights, and agree to be involved in the study. After I obtained the participants consent to participate in this study, I ensured confidentiality by explaining that their identities will not be disclosed; I used pseudonyms to hide their identities. Also, I had to explain to them that all data collected is confidential and will be maintained on a password-protected computer. The information collected has been backed up on a portable flash drive, which is maintained in a locked cabinet at my home where it will be stored for 5 years. I also informed the participants that they could withdraw at any time and that their participation would be voluntary.

### Data Collection

The data collection for this project study was conducted at the purposefully selected site of a local elementary school. According to Creswell (2009), using purposeful selection of sites and individuals will better help the researcher understand the problem and gain information to answer research questions. Case studies necessitate gathering detailed information using “a variety of data collection procedures” including interviews, observations, and artifacts (Creswell, 2009, p.13). In this study, data collection methods included using one-on-one teacher interviews, a focus group, and reflective journals. I chose these forms of data collection in order to address the purpose of the study and the research questions. Table 1 illustrates the schedule for data collection.

Table 1

#### *Data Collection Schedule*

| Month/Week/Day          | Participants                       | Location          |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| October, Week 2, Day 10 | Focus Group                        | Secure Room (TBA) |
| October, Week 2, Day 14 | Collect/Review Reflection Journal  | N/A               |
| October, Week 3, Day 18 | Interview #1 teacher               | Secure Room (TBA) |
| October, Week 3, Day 19 | Interview #2 teacher               | Secure Room (TBA) |
| October, Week 3, Day 19 | Interview #3 teacher               | Secure Room (TBA) |
| October, Week 3, Day 19 | Interview #4 teacher               | Secure Room (TBA) |
| October, Week 3, Day 20 | Interview #5 teacher               | Secure Room (TBA) |
| October, Week 3, Day 20 | Interview #6 teacher               | Secure Room (TBA) |
| October, Week 3, Day 21 | Collect/Review Reflection Journal  | N/A               |
| October, Week 4, Day 24 | Interview #7 teacher               | Secure Room (TBA) |
| October, Week 4, Day 24 | Interview #8 teacher               | Secure Room (TBA) |
| October, Week 4, Day 28 | Make-up Day for Missed Interviews  | Secure Room (TBA) |
| October, Week 4, Day 28 | Collect/Review Reflection Journals | N/A               |
| November, Week 1, Day 4 | Collect/Review Reflection Journals | N/A               |

## **Focus Groups**

The first method I used for data collection was a focus group. I chose a focus group because it gave the participants a chance to engage in dialogue with colleagues about the topics that have been derived from the research questions. According to Morgan (1984) using focus groups offers the opportunity for participants to interact about the topic being studied so that the researcher can observe the attitudes and hear their experiences. Additionally, using focus groups allows the researcher to examine what issues are important to the participants and if they would be discussed later on in the interview session (Morgan, 1984). The focus group was conducted in a vacant classroom in the local school. There was no predetermined room to conduct the focus group because it was scheduled after school hours. The building administrator had to locate a secure and vacant classroom in a quiet area of the building. It was important to me that the teachers would not be interrupted by the after-school activities or announcements. I decided to record the focus group so that I could go back and listen carefully to the words of the participants in order to transcribe it accurately, but also to hear clearly the participants' perceptions about teacher turnover. I started the focus group by reviewing the protocols with the participants (see Appendix D). The rationale for conducting the focus group in that particular local school was the high number of novice teachers who could provide rich information to the study. I did not want the participants to travel, so I decided to conduct the focus group in their school. I also did not want to cause any issues for the participants during the study, so I made sure all my decisions in conducting the study were considerate and comfortable for the participants. During the focus group, I listened

carefully, but I also served as the facilitator of the discussion. The reason why I conducted it this way was to ensure that the participants stayed focused on the topic. This gave me the chance to acquire as much information as possible for the study. Moreover, the focus group allowed interactions that did not exist at the individual level and that permitted the participants to solve inconsistent beliefs and to create shared visions and ideas (Morgan, 1984).

Using the focus group provided me with the ability to listen closely to the conversations of the participants as they reflected about their practices and experiences. Focusing on their language and actions also helped create the image of the experiences they were sharing. According to Glesne (2011), focus groups are used when the researcher is trying to understand of how the participants will deliberate over a certain issue and bring forth multiple perspectives. This type of method for collecting data was different because I had to strategically outline the structure of the focus group differently from how I outlined the structure of the one-on-one interviews. Morgan and Spanish (1984) suggested that a focus group should be conducted before individual interviews because it gives the researcher the opportunity to schedule those individual interviews and it allows participants to fully understand the topic. Morgan (1997) explained that when one conducts a focus group, the facilitator must be ethical and make sure the participants' shared information remains confidential. The focus group that I conducted was semistructured to allow the participants to share and exchange ideas and drive the discussion deeper to get an understanding of the problem. All the participants in the focus group were employees of the same school and were informed of the confidential



atmosphere. As the researcher, it was important for me to establish an atmosphere that was conducive to trust and allowed the participants to share freely. Through the focus group, information about experiences, interests, and perceptions of staff retention and attrition were collected. This information enhanced my study by providing authentic responses that may help find solutions related to lowering the turnover rate of teachers. As teachers dialogued with one another during the focus group, at no time did I participate in the discussion because of my role as the facilitator. There were times when a participant would ask me for my opinion, however I redirected their question to another participant. Glesne (2011) explained that to get a deeper understanding, the use of few respondents is necessary and for a greater understanding and the use a one-time focus group works best. Throughout the whole time of conducting the focus group my main focus was on recording the participants' responses, taking notes of the participants actions, and learning as much as possible about their perceptions.

### **Interviews**

I chose the one-on-one interviews because of the extensive information and material that I might gain by conducting them. In order to have collected as much rich data as I did, I used a semistructured approach. Yin (2013) described semistructured interviews as the most common source of data used to conduct case studies. According to Creswell (2012), it is the intent of researchers who use semistructured interviews to plan to have a one-on-one interaction with the participants of the study. Glesne (2011) explained that the researcher's skills for moderating and probing the questions are highly important when trying to build a trusting relationship among the participants. The

interview questions were carefully aligned to the research questions so that the information gained from the participants were aligned to the overall purpose of the study. Excellent interview questions are those that are typically open-ended and crafted around the topic being studied (Merriam, 2009). Creswell stated that open-ended questions will provide the participants with an opportunity to give in-depth answers and not just vague responses. The questions that I designed for the study allowed participants the opportunity to expound on their experiences, but also to discuss the viewpoint on factors that cause teacher turnover. Throughout the interviews I used probing questions and I also made sure that I provided follow up questions to demonstrate my ability to engage the participants. The questions were asked consistently and in the same order (See Appendix B).

Case study participants provide details and ideas about situations and not just specific answers to a question (Yin, 2012). Another reason why I chose to use the interview format is because the novice teachers are key persons in the school, and they provided the information needed for this study. Each interview was conducted individually. I decided to use this format because it allowed for the participants to answer 10 open-ended questions and provided flexibility to ask follow-up questions and probe for deeper understanding around the research questions of the study. Once the participants were selected to participate in the study, I created a date and time to conduct the interview based on their availability. The interesting thing about this study is that three of the interviews had to be rescheduled due to either a teacher's responsibility they had to handle or a personal matter. Nonetheless, I was able to focus on the schedule and

restructure the interviews so that they could be included in the study. Each participant was interviewed once during the study. The interviews were conducted within a 60-minute time block. The interviews were also conducted in a secluded classroom in the local school. The participants agreed to be recorded to capture all responses. During the interview process I made sure to carefully listen and collect the participants' responses on a secured password protected laptop. According to Hancock and Algozzine (2006) conducting individual interviews will provide the opportunity to gain a significant amount of information and the perspective the participant has on the study being conducted.

### **Reflective Journals**

According to Creswell (2009), in qualitative research, the researcher may collect documents such as personal journals and letters. As a result of using reflective journals, I was able to ascertain a greater understanding of the lived experiences of novice teachers that encourage their continued work and that led to thoughts of seeking employment elsewhere. In this research, reflective writing provided data with reduced interviewer bias. Both the reflective writing and individual interviews were important to enhance my understanding on the subject of teacher turnover. Creswell (2009) stated that using documents in qualitative research saves time from transcribing and permits the researcher to get the words directly from the participants through their view.

Each participant maintained a reflective journal that was collected and analyzed throughout the data collection process. By incorporating reflective journals into the research plan, I was provided with an open window into the participants' perceptions

beyond what they might normally reveal. The journals captured the words directly from the participants, and which helped identify the perceptions of why teachers decide to leave. They were also used to record the realities of their daily interactions as well as their emotional transitions from moment to moment. This transparency tool helped the participants be reflective about their experiences and helped to build solid arguments when determining the perceptions of teacher turnover. Participants were required to complete four weekly reflection posts through an electronic journal about their experiences. These journal entries were collected in a Google drive folder which was shared between each individual participant and me. I decided to use that method to help ensure confidentiality with the information given to me from the participants.

The reflection journal answered two specific questions about the participants' experiences during that week. The questions were as follows:

- What events or experiences occurred this week that make you enjoy the profession? Be specific and detailed oriented.
- What events or experiences occurred this week that would make you want to leave the profession? Be specific and detailed oriented.

These questions were designed to determine the perceptions about factors that influence teacher turnover. As the researcher, I am focused on the participants' experiences and specific events in the local school that may have had an influence on decision-making when it comes to the profession. This differs from the interviews and focus group because I looked specifically at the current events and experiences, which occurred after the focus group and interviews.

I used my personal written notes and my password-protected laptop to capture as much information as possible. This was done with consent from all participants and coded during the data analysis section of the study. The names of the participants were not used in this study. The participants were labeled by alphabet letters (ex. Teacher A, Teacher B, etc.) to remain anonymous throughout the study and to protect their identity.

All data from the interviews and focus groups were generated on the days when the meetings were held. All information was kept in two places to ensure the safety and confidentiality of the participants' responses. I recorded all notes on my laptop and saved them in two different locations: the desktop of my password secured computer and a flash drive. The flash drive will be maintained in a locked file cabinet in my home. I also kept a log of the dates and times of each interview, the focus group, and electronic journal submissions.

### **Role of the Researcher**

As the researcher, I upheld ethical standards while conducting this study. My relationship with the teachers who participated in this study is that we are all employees of the same school district; however, I do not work in the same local school. The local school where I conducted my study is one in which I previously worked. While working at the local elementary school, I served as the mathematics specialist and a sixth-grade math and science teacher. I chose this school because I am familiar with the setting, and I am aware of some of the staffing difficulties the school has experienced. I am currently a principal at another school in the district. My role had no impact on the responses provided by the participants because I do not supervise or evaluate any of the

participants. I conducted the study myself as a neutral and unbiased researcher, and I allowed the participants to offer authentic information that may help retain teachers. I explained to the participants that my role is strictly to collect data that may inform the research problem.

### **Results of the Data Analysis**

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions and experiences about the factors that influence teacher turnover to promote teacher retention in a suburban school. To do that I had to determine how the information would be gathered, analyzed and recorded. There were several steps and various approaches used to complete the data analysis task to verify that the study was done with accuracy, and to ensure that the perceptions of teachers were captured and presented with fidelity. The process of collection and analysis included synthesizing and consolidating data in order for me to present it clearly. Conducting a qualitative data analysis includes answering research questions by examining and identifying patterns and themes from the data that were collected through the research (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative data for this study were collected using three different methods: a focus group, interviews, and reflection journals. Yin (2012) suggested using various sources to collect and describe the data. According to Yin (2012), this will make the study solid and believable.

It is imperative for researchers to gather and synthesize data, to analyze the meaning of the data, and to identify categories of information before identifying and reporting the findings (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). In qualitative studies, completing the task of analyzing data includes a process in which the researcher examines the

information continuously to identify themes and patterns (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Data analysis includes organizing and coding the data, finding ways to represent them, and deciding how the data will be interpreted (Creswell, 2009). After the data collection process, I organized the information by research questions in order to make sense of the information collected. The step of organizing the data was important because it helped me identify the themes in the data, which then provided categories for the data as well.

After data organization, I coded the data with an open coding process. Merriam (2009) suggested that researchers should preview the data while they are being collected to avoid becoming overwhelmed with the large amounts of collected data. The key to doing this effectively is to be detailed and organized. Saldaña (2013) stated that coding should be a crucial part of the procedures when analyzing qualitative data. According to Saldaña (2013), a code in qualitative data can be a word or phrase that is developed to represent that data from interview transcripts, documents, pictures, and other data that is collected in qualitative research. Creswell (2009) described the process of coding as taking sections of the data and organizing them before defining the meaning of the collected data. Exploring the data through coding helped the focus on identifying themes, patterns and discrepant information from the data, which provided insight into the established research questions. The coding process was done by highlighting words in the transcripts from the focus group and interviews as well as the reflection journals that aligned to the research questions. With this qualitative study, there were much data to analyze therefore I made sure to code the data multiple times. When I coded the information for the second and third times, I was intentionally looking for patterns that

would be used to identify emergent themes, configurations, or evidence that provided explanations to the data. A pattern can be characterized by the following: similarities, differences, frequency, sequence, and correspondence (Saldaña, 2013).

Open coding is when the researcher takes one word to summarize the overall point of the section of the data being analyzed (Saldaña, 2013). I identified themes from all three data sources. I searched for words related to the research questions. I then placed all the collected terms into groups organized by the research questions, and then I identified patterns. Saldaña (2013) explained that coding is not a precise method; however, it is how the researcher interprets the information. Merriam (2009) explained that condensing and interpreting the data is a part of the process of making meaning of the data. Once I completed that process, I coded the information by themes. These themes were developed by the frequency of how often certain words and phrases appeared and how they aligned to the research questions. All responses that were aligned to research question one were highlighted in yellow; those that corresponded to research question two were highlighted in blue; and for question research question three, the data were highlighted in orange.

In the second phase of analyzing the data, I searched the relevant data again for repeated ideas among the participants. I then organized the groups of repeated ideas into common themes. The purpose of this step was to create a visual picture of the emergent themes by condensing the data into thematic groupings. The data were reviewed again using a recursive process of continuously reading the text until groups of themes emerged. According to Stake (2013), during data analysis the researcher's purpose is to



analyze the data by identifying the general themes. I used the participants' responses from the interview questions to look for general categories of ideas related to the research questions. Once I generated this list of general categories, I reviewed the comments from the focus group and reflection journals for repeated ideas from the participants, which were ultimately reduced to eight themes. I then organized the eight themes into key categories which helped me to organize the findings. The key categories are the following: (a) community affirmation and connections; (b) support of administrators and resources; and (c) collegial interactions and continued professional development. Table 2 lists the research themes, key categories, and findings.

### **Findings**

The overall goal of this study was to explore the novice teachers' perceptions of factors that influence teacher turnover. This section will present the patterns and themes that emerged from the data collected. The guiding research questions used for this study were the following:

- What are the novice teachers' experiences and perceptions about the factors that influence teachers to remain?
- What are the novice teachers' experiences and perceptions about the factors that influence teachers to leave their place of employment?
- What suggestions do teachers participants offer that might reduce teacher turnover?

From these research questions, I could capture themes that I was able to organize into key areas of findings. The first finding was that novice teachers are motivated and encouraged

by the support they receive from students, parents, and community members, and their relationships are strengthened from their participation in community activities. The second finding was that novice teachers need both administrators' support and adequate resources to perform job responsibilities successfully. The final finding revealed that novice teachers need the collaborative benefits of working in a professional learning community (PLC) and the advanced job skill development from continuous professional development workshops. To answer the research questions, I then focused on three findings that helped to answer the research questions and essentially the problem that prompted me to investigate this problem. In this section, I will use the perceptions that the teachers shared with me to help frame the picture and thought process of the participants that emerged from the analysis of the data.

**Finding 1.** After reviewing the data collected, the first finding identified was that novice teachers are motivated by the support they receive from students, parents, and community members. It also displayed that their relationships are strengthened from their participation in community activities. During the focus group, the participants provided personal testimonies and examples of how they felt completely supported by their parents. Teacher A stated that "Parents at this local school are so supportive. They constantly volunteer in the classroom, purchase needed resources, and advocate for additional funding during school district meetings," when asked to discuss why they enjoy working at this local school. Teacher A went on to say that, "when parents are working hard for us it makes you feel appreciated."

Table 2

*Themes, Key Categories, Findings*

| Themes  | Key categories  | Findings   |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Parents and the community members affirm the efforts of teachers through their support of providing resources, effective communication, and advocating for the needs of the teachers.</p> <p>Teachers within the local school participate in various community events with families and local stakeholders</p>   | Community Affirmation and Connections                         | Novice teachers are motivated and encouraged by the support they receive from students, parents, and community members, and their relationships are strengthened from their participation in community activities. |
| <p>The workload is overwhelming. Teachers are expected to do a lot with limited resources and no support from the administrators.</p> <p>All teachers are not held to the same expectations by the administrators which causes stress and tension among the staff.</p>  | Administrator Support and Adequate Resources                  | Novice teachers need both administrators' support and adequate resources to perform job responsibilities successfully.   |
| <p>Teachers want more structured time to collaborate with each other.</p> <p>Teachers feel a mentoring program and a new teacher academy is necessary to keep teachers.</p> <p>Teachers within the local school work collaboratively through shared learning, responsibilities, and materials.</p> <p>The teachers also want administrators who intentionally show support, provide feedback and are visible within the school.</p> | Collegial Interactions and Continued Professional Development | Novice teachers need the collaborative benefits of working within a professional learning community (PLC) and the advanced job skill development from continuous professional development workshops.               |

In Maslow's hierarchy theory, Maslow identified two levels of self-esteem; one he named the lower level and the other the higher level (Poston, 2009). The first finding directly aligns to the lower level of self-esteem need which is met when a person is

recognized, appreciated and validated (Poston, 2009). Maslow (1970) stated that individuals develop positive feelings of self-worth and self-esteem by receiving positive recognition, by accomplishing work and personal goals, and by growing in confidence. For teachers, these factors act to foster pride in their work and in themselves as individuals.

When the teachers were asked to discuss some positive aspects about working at the local school during the focus group, Teacher C stated that “whenever I contact my parents about a concern or to even give praise about one of my students, the parents are so appreciative.” Teacher C went on to state that to the parents it’s the little things that matter. Positive notes home, providing extra support after school, or even having a class website means the world to them.” The first research question was designed to understand what kept these teachers motivated to remain in the local school based on their experiences and perceptions. During the focus group, I asked a question about factors that contribute to a positive school climate. Unanimously, the focus group participants responded that their positive relationships with students were of primary importance; secondly, the participants agreed that they felt the greatest support from the community comments and interactions. Teacher H, is a first-year teacher in this local school, explained:

Whenever you need help from the parents or local businesses to fund a school project you get it. Parents are very active and play a huge role in the success of the students. Whenever I need help with something I get it from my colleagues. Everyone here is so giving.

When conducting a one-on-one interview with Teacher C, she explained that she enjoyed working at the local school for several reasons. When asked about why teachers enjoy working at this local school, Teacher C stated the following:

I think honestly, it's the fact that we have high test scores. Any teacher with good sense knows that this is something to consider when looking for a school to work at. Parents look at those test scores all the time to determine if their child should attend that particular school, so why not look at test scores to see if I am going to work here. The other part of why people enjoy working here is the family engagement. We have a strong Parent Teacher Association that hosts various events for the school and community.

One thing that was present through her answer was the relationship building that she has done with her teacher colleagues. Teacher C stated, "I love my colleagues and how we support each other. I am not completely sure everyone enjoys working here. We do not hate it, but we also are not head over heels about it."

Teacher A was asked the same question about why teachers enjoy working at this local school and shared during her one-on-one interview that teachers enjoy working here because of the community. Teacher A stated that the following:

There are no behavior issues. We do not have to write a lot of referral or suspensions. We get to focus on instruction. There are high expectations of the teachers. We are different from most schools in our area because we have consistent great test scores and an excellent Autism program.

She went on to explain that the teachers work together in this local school. “Most teachers are there for the kids and go above and beyond and make sure that the school looks good.” The participants discussed the various programs at the local school that they look forward to each year. During each one-on-one interview, I asked what activities or events of this local school do you believe impacts the decision to remain here and Teacher B was excited about one particular program where men from the local community come in once a year and spend the day with the students. Teacher B stated:

Having this program is highly important for our students, especially those who do not have role models in their lives. Students look forward to this day because they are able to see examples of positive role models and that is something that excites me as a teacher.

It is also important to note that this school also has two other major programs that are male driven to increase engagement from their parents. According to Pogodzinski (2013) establishing informal relationships and support with other colleagues as well as with parents, can help novice teachers succeed in their roles as teachers in a new school.

Not all the participants perceived that everyone wanted to remain in this local school. Teacher D was very vocal about how teacher morale is low. This participant’s response in the focus group and one-on-one interview with questions centered around Research Question 1, responded with ongoing issues they were having in the school. Teacher D explained that although teachers have a positive working relationship and the students behave well, there was nothing that could influence this particular teacher to return to this local school. Teacher D’s comments counter the argument of Sedivy-

Benton and Bolden-McGill (2012) who stated that administrators are very influential in a teacher's decision to remain in the profession. Three out of the eight participants agreed with Teacher D during the focus group question that referenced the relationship and interactions between the administrators and teacher. The answer was simple; non-existence. Santoro (2011) argued that workload and compensation was a major factor for teacher turnover. Finding 1 revealed that compensation was not a factor for this study as it was for Santoro (2011); in fact, compensation was not even mentioned. This study revealed the importance of the school administrators' behaviors that could provide support and guidance to novice teachers. Teacher D went on to explain that they are even lucky if they ever got a chance to see the administrator during the day. This was not an angry response stated the teacher, but more of a realistic fact due to their demanding schedule set by the school district.

Teacher A wrote about an experience that happened in the local school: Meeting with children individually always puts a smile on my face. I love that my job allows me to meet with children and get to know them on a deeper level. Also, going into classrooms and having students say that I am someone they can talk to if someone is bullying them also makes me really enjoy the job I have. Meeting with colleagues also makes me enjoy working as a school counselor when we work towards the same vision.

Teacher E went on to provide a specific example in the reflection journal that echoed the same sentiments of the participants about how they enjoy working at the school because of the students. The entry stated:

This week I got to watch my students, who are placed in a self-contained classroom, participate with the entire school in the Vocabulary Parade around the school. While we were walking, many students were calling out my students' names and saying hi to them. They were asking for high fives. I got to see my students' faces light up during this event. I was nervous because I thought it would be overstimulating for my students, but they loved the attention, the music, and the walking.

The data collected and reviewed indicated conclusively that support from the students, parents, and the community is significant as a deciding factor for novice teachers about decisions to remain in the profession or leave. Teacher motivation and strength is drawn from support and collaboration.

**Finding 2.** The second finding revealed that novice teachers need both administrators' support and adequate resources to perform job responsibilities successfully. At a base level, the teachers' needs illustrate a need for what Maslow (1943) initially identified as security and safety. People want control and order in their lives; to accomplish this, teachers need administrators to provide them with the autonomy and the material resources to perform to the job expectations. Personal job security and safety are achieved when teachers have the tools, the support, and the trust to manage their classrooms.

However, Maslow's (1970) original 5-point hierarchy was revisited and revised to include the cognitive needs of individuals which provides for an individual's need to know and understand. Maslow believed that humans have the need to increase their



intelligence. In the local school environment, this need is accessed through the support and trust the teachers' received from the school administrators. Maslow (1970) asserted that cognitive needs include the natural human need to learn, explore, discover and create; teachers in this local school expressed their need for administrators to value and support their work, thus fulfilling their need to grow cognitively. This growth need for learning is directly related to the openness of the relationships between teachers and administrators. Maslow (1970) argued that a humanistic educational approach could develop people who are willing and able to grow and develop and who are capable of actively changing the society in which they live.

The teachers in the study described vivid experiences and relationships that connect the importance of the administration in a school. For instance, during the one-on-one interview when asked about the role administration plays in her decision to remain at the local school, Teacher A described the administration as supportive. She also indicated that administrators do not micromanage which makes it comfortable for teachers to have creative freedom in the classroom. In addition, Teacher A stated that the leadership style is reflected in the success of the school. While Teacher A felt content with working in the school, the teacher acknowledged that everyone does not have the same experiences. I asked Teacher D the same question about the role administration plays in the deciding factor to remain at the school, and Teacher D felt as though the administration played no role in whether to remain in the profession. Teacher D felt that there was a lack of connectedness between the administration and staff at times. The teacher cited examples such as the school no longer has staff meetings, which Teacher D felt was important for

new teachers. She also noted that communications are sent digitally through email and that teachers do not receive consistent and timely instructional feedback or observation reports. Teacher D added the following:

It is impossible for me to be doing everything correctly or else my students would be performing 100% on every assessment. As a teacher, I expect to receive feedback for my own professional growth. I understand being an administrator is a demanding position, however so is being a teacher. They do a great job leading the school and providing resources, sometimes we just need to feel connected to our administrators or else I may have to consider going to another school.

Some teachers felt that it all depends on how you examine the situation. During the focus group, when I asked about the interaction between administrators and teachers, Teacher E explained that the administrators in the building are passionate about the success of the students and teachers. Teacher E further acknowledged that teachers enjoyed that aspect, however the passion must be accompanied with support, advice, and supplies. Teacher E made the following claim:

The support is there but it arrives late at times. That can be a result of the administrators' busy schedules, not being in the building because of school district responsibilities, or sometimes just overlooked, and not on purpose. If the administrators provided professional development for some of the initiatives they want to implement, then before implementation it would help to demonstrate and set the expectations. It may help avoid issues and cause them to be more proactive

then reactive. Sometimes they do not control every aspect of their schedule, so we do understand that it's a tough role to be in.

I asked Teacher E during the one-on-one interview what role the administration plays in returning to the local school, and Teacher E suggested that the administrators play a major role in their decision to return to this school next year. While discussing reasons teachers leave their positions, teacher E mentioned the lack of communication between the administrators and teachers, the lack of coaching needed to develop teachers, and the reduction of support. According to Brunsting et al. (2014), teachers who do not feel supported by administrators begin to feel exhausted and decide to leave the teaching profession. Teacher E felt that support from the administrators could be impactful to the morale among the teachers in the building. In addition, Teacher E shared that it would be a great idea if administrators provided experiences for teachers to grow and become proficient in their craft during the school year. During the one-on-one interview, Teacher G expressed feelings of being content with administration and gave a detailed response about the role administrators play in teachers' decisions about remaining at the local school:

The administration is not a factor at all in my decision to stay at this school. I come to work because I love the kids. The administrators are fine with me. They do their job which may upset some, but that is the nature of the job. They have implemented a hierarchy system where you depend on your team leader or grade level chair to help you before asking an administrator. I think it's great to have an experience teacher who can help you. Most people appreciate that. Sometimes

you do not always need to consult with the principal about a decision. Older teachers or those who have been there longer may have experienced what I am going through, so I can ask them. I think that is what upsets some people. The previous administrators allowed teachers to come to them every time they needed something which is not the style of our current administrators. We have to make our work about the kids and less dependent on the administrators. We are professionals.

Teacher G's response is the opposite of what Torres (2014) stated about the significance of the administrator's role in a teacher's decision to leave the profession. Teacher G made it clear that administrators are not factors in teachers' decisions about remaining in the profession. Teachers who participated in the study expressed various viewpoints on the support they received or wish to receive from the administrators. Administrators' support and resources are necessary in order to foster the relationships in the school among professionals, and they are needed to build the capacity of the teachers and to retain quality teachers.

**Finding 3.** The third finding is that novice teachers need the collaborative benefits of working in a professional learning community (PLC) and the advanced job skill development from continuous professional development workshops. This included but was not limited to more leadership experiences, professional development in their content and grade levels, and new opportunities that would enhance their instructional practice. Self-actualization is the highest level of Maslow's hierarchy (Maslow, 1970). This level of need pertains to what a person's full potential is and realizing that potential.

Opportunities for teacher growth and development are the foundation for self-actualization. Through PD and PLCs, teachers are provided with structures to become more productive members of their profession. Maslow (1970) described this as the desire to become everything that one is capable of becoming.

During the focus group, the teachers were asked about professional development in the local school and Teacher C explained that the professional developments they receive should be planned in advanced and should reflect all content areas. Teacher C responded to a question during the focus group about the types of professional developments needed for teachers, and expressed that there is a heavy focus on special education professional development. Teacher C stated that there are other populations in the building that teachers need support in like gifted learners and those who speak English as a second language. In addition, that Teacher C felt that more time to collaborate among teachers will help build their capacity because they would be able to exchange instructional practices. Martin, Buelow, and Hoffman (2016) explained that collaborative planning time must be intentional and that administrators have to provide embedded professional development for the growth of teachers. In addition to that De Neve and DeVos (2016) also stated that teachers who collaborate and participate in PLCs become more effective in their practice and increase student achievement.

While Teacher D shared some of the same examples as Teacher C did during the focus group, Teacher D elaborated on why intentional professional development is needed, especially for novice teachers. “When you are new to this career you need all the professional development necessary to achieve greatness in the classroom. There is a

certain way a school does things and we are not taught this information in college. It is vital that a plan of professional developments is put in place and provided to novice teachers so that we feel supported, prepared, and valued as professionals!” Owen (2016) explained that teachers participating in PDs become highly effective, supportive of their colleagues, and exude nurturing positive emotions.

Professional growth in various areas of the profession is something the teachers discussed and Teacher F shared thoughts on why technology should be a focus during the one-on-one interview. The questioned that I asked were about what systems needed to be in place to help retain teachers in this school. Teacher F responded by saying “In order for us to meet the needs of our learners we must meet them where they are and build them up. This includes utilizing and exposing them to the latest technologies so that they are well versed and able to demonstrate proficient on their state assessments. We need to be trained on these new tools, and provided the opportunity to expose this to our students.” Teacher C mentioned during the focus group that teachers needed to be provided leadership opportunities. “Not everyone wants to be an administrator, but we do want to lead. We want to be valued and have a say in decisions that are being made in our building. I think that having grade level chairpersons are great, but we need to move beyond that. Buttram and Farley-Ripple (2016) explained that administrators need to delegate responsibilities and allow teachers to lead professional developments (PD) because that can lead to successful collaborative meetings and build their capacity as teacher leaders. Teachers need to be leading the professional developments and providing demonstration lessons, but that only comes when the leaders in the building understand

that.” Teacher G cited opportunities for growth is how you sustain and retain your teachers.

Finally, the teachers revealed that professional growth is needed in order for them to remain at the local school. Teacher A shared an experience during the one-on-one interview when I asked about what actions or characteristics should an administrator demonstrate to help increase teacher retention. Teacher A discussed when she was given feedback from administrator at the local school. Teacher A felt that the feedback was specific to teaching behaviors and helped with delivering effective instruction.

The principal sat me down and went through the whole lesson. It started with the objective and ensuring it aligned to the academic work the students were engaged in. The principal also focused on the questions that I asked during the lesson and provided examples of what I needed to use in order to make them more rigorous for the students. We also examined the assessment that I used to make sure that it was aligned to the objective. My whole purpose in stating this is to demonstrate how when a teacher receives feedback that is specific to the expectations of the school and the school district it helps the teacher grow. It sure helped me grow and I am grateful for that experience. These are the type of experiences needed to make sure your teachers enjoy coming to work and shows how an administrator is sensitive to the needs of his or her teachers.

Teacher G explained during the focus group that sometimes engaging in virtual professional development is helpful when it is not given at work. Teacher G stated that sometimes as a teacher you have to go and seek the strategies and support needed for

growth. Teacher G shared that using tools such as Twitter and Facebook have helped enhance his professional growth at the local school. “Every Tuesday and Thursday, a group of teachers and I go on these social media sites and participate in online professional development. We exchange ideas and practices from people all over and bring them back here to the school. Sometimes we have to make it work for us and share those practices.” Baker-Doyle (2013) justified that the use of social media networks is essential to helping novice teachers maneuver educational challenges in schools and will help with their growth in the profession.

### **Discrepant Cases**

The findings in this study were consistent among the participants. All participants agreed that there needed to be a new teacher academy or some form of professional learning community in the local school to help acclimate all new teachers to the profession and the school. Teacher C made it clear by saying during the focus group and her one-on-one interview “professional development is needed at the school level from the administrators, more focus on something other than special education, time for us to collaborate without mandates, mentor programs at the school level, checking on new teachers often, and offering more workshops on how to be an effective teacher is needed to sustain teachers.” All the participants agreed that was an accurate statement of what is needed. There were no discrepant cases found in the study. I believe there no evidence of discrepancy due to the transparent data collection method and the use of member checking.



## **Evidence of Quality**

The processes and methods used to conduct a study can easily define the quality of the research (Merriam, 2009). A major component of ensuring the quality of research is the accuracy of reported findings. The researcher must maintain an authentic tone throughout the written report to portray credibility of process and findings and to establish trustworthiness. Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2012) explained that as a researcher, one must consider the complexities of the study and be able to explain the problem. In addition to that, a researcher must include as much as detail as possible so that the readers will be able to develop a picture for themselves; this will help with transferability (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012).

The first thing I did was conduct a focus group with the participants, in a secluded classroom in the local school that was provided and approved by the local school administrator. I explained the protocol (Appendix E) to all the participants and provided time to answer any clarifying questions that they may have had. The focus group was recorded with the permission of all the participants so that it would be easier for me to transcribe after it was over. Each participant was able to share their responses during the focus group as there was no interruption to their responses. At the end of the focus group I went back and reviewed my notes and listened to the recording to transcribe the discussion. I sent the information to the participants to allow them to provide feedback and ask any questions. The goal was to ensure the information was accurate and I captured their voice in the study. In qualitative research, a member check is a technique used by researchers to help improve the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability

of a study. It allows for informant feedback on the initial findings of the study. In many member checks, the data interpretation and the initial findings report is given to participants in order to check the authenticity of the work. Their comments serve as a check on the viability of the interpretation. I followed this process for the focus groups and the interviews.

I then conducted the one-on-one interviews with the participants. The questions were developed based on the research questions (Appendix D). The interviews were held in a secluded classroom in the local school. The participants were explained the nature of the interview and that we have been scheduled for a total of sixty minutes to complete the interview. I never interrupted the participants during the interview and I did not use a timer to conduct the interview. My goal was to make sure each participant was comfortable in answering each question with adequate response time. The interviews were recorded on an audio device. At the conclusion of each interview I did a preliminary transcript and sent a copy through email to each participant to provide feedback and to make sure that the notes were accurate. This was done for accuracy and credibility of the information provided for the study. None of the interviews ran over time.

Lastly, I collected a reflection journal from each participant weekly for a total of four weeks. These journals were completed through a google form in which was shared between only me and the participant(s). The journals provided authentic and current experiences based on two questions. These questions focused on experiences that made them want to remain in the profession and experiences that made them want to leave. The information from the reflection journal was coded and then placed into themes. From the

themes that emerged from the reflection journal I placed them in the findings with the first two research questions. This was done to align with the study.

As the researcher, it was my job to ensure that the information is accurate and valid to those who read my study. According to Creswell (2009) reliability includes reviewing the transcripts to alleviate mistakes made during the transcribing process and making sure the meaning of the codes does not change throughout the coding process. With all of the data gathered, the process of validating it will demonstrate the strength in this qualitative research. One way of doing this is through triangulation. I triangulated multiple sources of data in order to establish the validity of the findings. Creswell stated (2009) triangulation refers to using different sources of data to compare and to find consistent themes among those sources to confirm the validity of the study. Triangulation was done to provide a more thorough and complete study, but to also demonstrate a study that would be more conclusive with multiple data sources. This was done by taking the three sources used to collect data and comparing the results to make sure that information was valid and consistent. I compared the three data sources to get a deeper understanding of the participants' responses. I was able to cross reference from the focus groups, interviews, and reflection journals to ensure there was no bias information or problems in the data. Through a focus group, one-on-one interviews and a reflection journal, this data was triangulated in order to demonstrate evidence of teacher perceptions and to answer my research questions.

## Summary

This study allowed me to collect information, but more importantly the perceptions of factors that influence teacher turnover. The research questions were addressed throughout the data collection through a focus group, one-one-one interviews and reflection journals. The research questions were aligned to the participants' experiences and perceptions of what could potentially have them leave the profession and what could have them remain in the profession, additionally the participants provided suggestions to help reduce teacher turnover.

Research Question 1: What are the novice teachers' experiences and perceptions about factors that influence teachers to remain? Teachers shared various experiences and factors in the interviews, focus groups and reflection journals that identified some clear conditions that could influence teachers to remain in the profession. During the data collection process, teachers discussed how they are motivated and encouraged by the support they received from students, parents, and the community. They shared activities such as annual community events held by the school, Parent Teacher Association events, and local businesses funding school projects. Teachers also shared their perceptions about good student behavior, strong parental support, collaboration among colleagues, and high academic test scores that are achieved by the students. All participants consistently shared that their decisions to remain as teachers in the local school are driven by their genuine care for the students. The teachers described their academic progress and lack of behavior issues as strong factors to remain in the profession.

Research Question 2: What are the novice teachers' experiences and perceptions about the factors that influence teachers to leave their place of employment? Throughout the collected data, teachers described how they needed support from their administrators and adequate training and resources in order to be successful in the profession. Teachers provided several explanations during the focus group and reflection journals as to what role an administrator played in their decision to leave the profession. Teachers shared that they understand the demands of the administrator, so they usually collaborate with other teachers to grow in the profession. The teachers also indicated that they prefer having monthly staff meeting instead of receiving monthly updates electronically. Teachers described that having more professional developments during the school year would be impactful to their success in the profession and would cause them to stay instead of wanting to leave. Some teachers even cited that the lack of training was a huge consideration in considering future teaching employment.

Research Question 3: What suggestions do teacher participants offer that might reduce teacher turnover? Finding 3, revealed that novice teachers need the collaborative benefits of working in a professional learning community and the continuous job skill development that accompanies professional development opportunities. Teachers described that growing professionally would help reduce teacher turnover. Participants provided several examples of professional developments that would help enhance the professional growth of novice teachers. Teachers also shared the need to have intentional time to collaborate together in order for them to grow and reduce teacher turnover. These things were described in detail with several examples of what they could look like.

To help reduce teacher turnover, I will develop a professional development project to encourage the creation of a professional learning community (PLC) to improve teacher practices. This is the logical next step because the collected data consistently identifies teacher collaboration and teacher professional development as needed resources. I have acquired knowledge on how teachers would like to have the ability to intentionally collaborate in order to grow and remain in the profession. The professional development that I will create will focus on conducting a teacher needs assessments, initiating PLC teams, and creating sustainable team practices to improve the skills and knowledge teachers and to develop collaborative and cohesive practices among teaching peers. This PLC professional development will be designed based on the data shared by the teachers during the study. In Section 3, I introduce the project. The section starts with an introduction, followed by the description and goals, rational, review of literature, project description, project evaluation, and implications for social change.

## Section 3: The Project

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore teachers' perceptions about the factors that influence teacher turnover. The findings revealed that teachers need to collaborate in professional learning communities (PLCs) in order to receive adequate resources and professional development and thus be better able to perform their job responsibilities and decrease turnover.

This section outlines a project, based on professional development model, that can be used by school teachers and administrators to create and sustain PLCs. PLCs build teacher capacity and can reduce the number of teachers who want to leave the school. I provide a description of the project goals, rationale, implementation, potential barriers, potential resources, and supports to help teachers and administrators create PLCs. I include a review of the literature to deepen and expand the findings from my study. Finally, I evaluate the project to offer a framework for reflection on the project's success and possible improvements.

### **Description and Goals**

This project is a 3-day professional development (PD) series for teachers and administrators to support their professional growth through the collaborative benefits of PLCs. PLCs provide job skill development and resources for teachers and administrators to perform their jobs effectively. I created this project based on research findings which indicated that teachers would like to engage in PLCs to collaborate and exchange job skills for professional growth. In this section, I outline the purpose and goals of the

project. The overarching goal is to present teachers and administrators with the skills and strategies necessary to implement PLCs and to provide educators with guidance and ideas to sustain PLCs. Furthermore, each day of the PD will have a distinct purpose along with additional goals.

During the Day 1 of the PD, I will provide an overview of the next 3 days. During Day 1, I will establish an atmosphere of support for the development of PLCs by assessing PD needs and knowledge of collaboration, in addition to helping teachers and administrators identify strategies needed to collaborate. Teachers and administrators will then discuss their results and analyze them to determine the top three PD needs of their particular school. Next, the participants will be engaged in two group activities to help organize them for collaborative work and problem-solving. Participants will learn about essential elements of working together, how to build a successful team; they will participate in various team-building activities. The goal of the Day 1 of the PD is to foster cooperation and collaboration between the teachers and administrators and to engage them in building a working relationship to establish a PLC. At the conclusion of Day 1, the participants will complete a formative assessment to determine whether the information and the activities presented were useful in meeting their needs and learning.

During the Day 2 of the PD, teachers and administrators will engage in a trust activity. I will randomly assign participants to working groups. The first activity will ask the participants in groups to use a T-chart and outline the various behaviors that build and break trust. Each group will then present their findings to the whole group of teachers and administrators, and the participants will be asked to provide feedback to each other. I will



post the T-charts in the meeting room as a reference throughout the PD, and I will refer to them when we discuss the development of PLCs. Next, I will then ask the teachers and administrators to participate in a team building activity. The team building activity will focus on building trust with their colleagues, so they can understand how trust is needed to collaborate. I will define collaboration and engage the teachers and administrators in a group activity in which they will develop and explain a symbol of collaboration.

Participants will switch groups to identify various stages of collaboration. Each team will be responsible for explaining each stage and its value. All this information will be recorded on chart paper and groups will then participate in gallery walk, in which participants will walk around the room to examine the various stages listed by each group and to provide feedback. These chart papers will be left in the school at the conclusion of the PD to reference as teachers and administrators customize their own PLCs. The goal for day two of the PD is to promote teacher and administration collaboration and to learn the various stages of collaboration.

On Day 3 of the PD, I will present the definition of a PLC to the teachers and administrators. The goal for the third day of the PD is for teachers and administrators to develop strategies for creating PLCs and to identify best practices in sustaining PLCs. I will identify three significant ideas of PLCs: learning, collaboration, and results. I will also present what are norms and solicit from the participants' norms that will be useful in their PLCs for them to operate efficiently. The participants will then be asked to reflect on what a meeting look likes at their particular school. Next, in their assigned groups the teachers and administrators will collaborate and identify how should a PLC operate in

their school, what needs to be the focus, and who should participate. At the conclusion of that activity, each group will present their findings by role playing, and the groups watching will have to provide feedback. I will then provide resources that include a targeted questionnaire (Appendix A) that focuses on sustaining their PLC, an assessment that should be used before engaging in a PLC and after engaging in a PLC, and tips that will assist them in facilitating a PLC beyond this PD. Each participant will complete an evaluation which will provide feedback on what they have learned, what they will use to help implement their own PLC, and what needs to be revised in the presentation for a better learning experience. The results of the PD final evaluation will be used to assist in structuring a plan that schools can use to create, implement and sustain their own PLC.

### **Rationale**

The problem that prompted this study is that teachers in a Maryland suburban school had a high teacher turnover rate. Maslow's theory of motivation (Maslow, 1970) provided the conceptual framework for this study which led me to create a PD project. This PD project was chosen because the findings from the study indicated that novice teachers need the collaborative benefits of working in a PLC. Maslow (1970) stated that people are motivated to achieve five interdependent levels of basic human needs that must be satisfied in a strict sequence to reach their full potential. The novice teachers need for collaboration aligns with Maslow's (1970) needs for self-actualization. His theory assisted me in designing a PD that reflects directly on what the participants expressed during the study. I chose to use a professional development genre to educate teachers to create, implement, and sustain a PLC in their own school.

Conducting a PD project is appropriate because professional development is aligned to the day-to-day work of teachers (Mizell, 2010). My findings from Section 2 revealed that teachers needed the collaborative benefits of a PLC and advanced job skills development in order to perform their jobs effectively. Using a professional development project design was the best way for me to demonstrate how to implement a PLC by utilizing collaboration activities and strategies and how to sustain the PLC. Furthermore, the project genre was chosen because teachers who engage in professional development activities enhance their knowledge on their instructional practice and growth in student achievement (Akiba & Liang, 2016).

PLCs have been cited as an important factor for teacher professional growth (Popp & Goldman, 2016). The use of PLCs was created with the intention of teachers collaborating and sharing effective strategies and learning through a collaborative interactive effort. Popp and Goldman (2016) explained that the importance of knowledge building among teachers happens with collaboration, with improvable ideas being exchanged, and with teachers working towards value for themselves and the school. Effective strategies of using a PLC include the collaborative efforts of teachers' participation in professional discourse. I created a PD project to address the study of the problem by including current findings into a series of collaborative activities and sessions, discussions, and planning. The information gained through data collection guided the development of the PD project. The participants indicated their needs for resources and collaborative time in order to perform their jobs effectively.

I designed several PowerPoint presentations to help with defining and implementing PLCs in schools. These presentations will provide participants with informative PLC material and activities that teachers and administrators will be able to use beyond the PD series. All participants will receive a folder each day that will include presentation handouts and resources that will be used for that day. Using an online survey generator, a link will be sent to participants' school email addresses. The email addresses will be collected during the sign in process for the PD in order to send the participants the survey at the conclusion of each PD day. This survey will be used as a formative evaluation of each PD session that will include rating the experience and providing feedback about enhancing their learning. The PD will include activities that will engage teachers to collaborate and participate. My experience with leading PDs has taught me the value of allowing participants to actively participate and to exchange ideas and experiences, rather than passively listen. According to Mizzell (2010), novice teachers who do not experience effective PD will have minimum professional growth and student achievement will have little improvement. In addition to that, Mizzell (2010) states that PD will help teachers learn effective instructional practices and will assist school districts in retaining their teachers.

The PD series developed for this project is designed for participants to collaborate about implementing and sustaining a PLC. The first day of the series will engage participants in assessing their PLC knowledge and learning about the benefits of PLCs as a precursor to collaborative work. The last two days will engage participants in learning activities in which ideas, needs, and experiences will be exchanged; new learning for

successful implementation of PLCs will be provided to deepen their contexts about the importance and benefits of PLCs.

### **Review of the Literature**

A review of the literature helped me connect the novice teacher participants' reflections to the literature on PLCs. I used Walden University's library education databases such as Education Source, ProQuest Central, and ERIC to complete my search. I searched scholarly literature with keys words such as *professional learning communities, professional development, teacher collaboration, teacher learning, and job-embedded professional development*. The review of the literature expanded on my findings and allowed me to capture the following ideas that were revealed from the findings and research. A review of the literature helped me connect the novice teacher participants' reflections to the literature on PLCs. The review of the literature expanded on my findings and allowed me to capture the following ideas that were revealed from the findings and research.

1. Novice teachers are motivated and encouraged by the support they receive from students, parents and community members and their participation in community events strengthens their relationships.
2. Novice teachers need adequate administration support and resources of a PLC to perform job responsibilities
3. Novice teachers need the collaborative benefit of working in a PLC

In the following sections, I will discuss the research related to these essential themes. Scholarly studies helped me to demonstrate the significance of this study.

### **Novice Teachers Are Motivated by the Support They Receive**

Most school district officials rely on college preparation programs to prepare teachers, while some districts depend on a school based program to help prepare novice teachers (Yow, Eli, Beisiegel, McCloskey, and Welder, 2016). Yow et al. (2016) stated that there are needs expressed among staff in school districts to increase the support and mentorship of novice teachers as they make the transition from college to their new roles. In addition, Yow et al. (2016) also indicated that it is important for novice teachers to be professionally developed in their local schools. Since teachers are able to learn in their actual work environment, the PD content can be designed in the context of the local site. One way that school districts have improved working conditions for novice teachers is by offering support is through the implementation of various induction programs that are also designed to provide resources (Pogodzinski, 2013). Novice teachers can receive support and resources informally from colleagues in their schools. The novice teacher's ability to maintain professional relationships with veteran teachers in the building is often used as a mechanism for survival in the teaching field (Pogodzinski, 2013). It is also important to note that novice teachers' perceptions of their workplace and career is heavily influenced by the quality of formal and informal support they receive from their perspective schools. Pogodzinski (2013) explained that informal relationships and support with other colleagues as well as with parents help with the success of novice teacher success in their school. The resources and support received can have an impact on how valuable they see themselves in their profession which feeds the self-actualization of Maslow's theory (Maslow, 1970).

It is also important to recognize that teachers interact with more than just teachers in their profession including paraprofessionals, support staff, and parents. Teacher collegiality also relates to the quality of relationships among colleagues and includes trust, care, and mutual respect (Ning, Lee, & Lee, 2015). Interacting with different level of experiences can potentially expose the novice teachers to an overload of information that could become significant to the level of support they may need in order to sustain themselves in their profession (Pogodzinski, 2013). According to Hoaglund, Birkenfeld, and Box (2014), most teachers exit their teacher education program and work in schools where there is little to no support. Most school districts do not require a mandatory training period or support like other professions, leaving novice teachers responsible for their learning. Typically, novice teachers can find the support they need, by engaging their teaching profession through collegial interactions (Charner-Laird, Kirkpatrick, Szczesiul, Watson, & Gordon, 2016). Novice teachers need collegial interactions, activities in which they review student data, plan curriculum, and dialogue about their work to feel valued in their profession (Hoaglund et al., 2014). In a study in which participants participated in a PLC during a college preparatory program before teaching, the findings revealed teachers learn to be more supportive, organized, and learn how to take the lead on various tasks while working in schools that have PLCs (Hoaglund et al., 2014).

The support received from peers and mentors is essential, and Charner-Laird et al. (2016) have shown that peer support has an influence on higher retention rates in the profession, on student achievement performance, and on teacher satisfaction levels. In a

study conducted by Martin et al. (2016), five teachers were observed to explore the effects of collegial support on beginning middle school teachers. One finding revealed that teachers benefit from observing veteran teachers and by debriefing what they observed. Through observing and conferencing with veteran teachers about their teaching practices, the novice teachers gained ideas about how to implement curriculum content, organize classrooms, and set clear expectations for students (Martin et al., 2015).

Charner-Laird et al. (2016) explained that although collegial interactions are important and necessary, some can provide experiences that counteract the policies of a school. In a study conducted by Battersby and Verdi (2015) in which they focused on supports given to new music teachers to improve student achievement, they found that new music teachers experienced isolation and found it difficult to collaborate with their colleagues. Novice teachers could potentially avoid isolation during their early teaching years by participating in PLCs that provide scaffold experiences, intentional collaboration, and collegiality (Hoaglund et al., 2014). Collegial interactions and support can be important for new teachers, but if a PLC is not present, if valuable relationships are not formed, and if support is not given, novice teachers may leave their workplace or the profession. Anrig (2015) stated that collaborations among teachers and administrators help teachers grow professionally, and they may improve student outcomes and decrease teacher turnover. Organized collaborative experiences guided by clear expectations may provide the type of support needed by novice teachers.

Novice teachers should to be presented with opportunities to develop new learning in the profession and to learn new skills for survival their early years (Charner-



Laird et al., 2016). Collaborative learning is critical for novice teachers, and it enhances their learning by sharpening their instructional skills, inspiring creativity in pedagogy, and providing opportunities for professional dialogue. Owen (2016) stated that strong relationships, positive emotions, full engagement, and consistent collaboration opportunities are needed by teachers. Novice teachers often respect and admire veteran teachers, yet many still prefer hearing from other novice teachers who have a little more experience (Teague & Swan, 2013). The collegial support is beneficial because teachers gain an understanding of the organizational structures of their schools, as they provide the essential instructional support needed during the early years of being in the profession. This collegial support motivates increased retention efforts (Charner-Laird et al., 2016).

Abel (2014) suggested that novice teachers need to experience activities that incorporate family engagement to acquire the skills necessary to interact with parents. These skills are added to their best practices and teaching repertoire for future uses. Teachers who increase their skills of engaging parents receive the most support from engaged parents, most often the parent population that is sometimes hard to reach. Hard to reach parents are those who are working, less educated, and single parents (Abel, 2014). Teachers are as strong as their support systems. In a recent study conducted by Martin et al. (2015), they found that novice teachers in middle school settings who did not have sufficient training and continuous support found it difficult to be successful in instructing adolescents and quickly were becoming burned out. Through developing relationships and support among colleagues, these teachers developed trust and were open to feedback to improve upon their practices. Strong relationships, effective support,

and continuous opportunities to interact are the things that are needed to help a novice teacher survive early in their careers.

### **Novice Teachers Need Adequate Administrator Support and Resources**

School administrators are important participants to creating effective PLCs. (Buttram & Farley-Ripple, 2016). The role of the principal includes being an effective communicator who presents information about school initiatives. For PLCs to be successful, administrators have to provide adequate training and support for teacher collaboration to grow; without administrator support, teachers can potentially fail to become skilled practitioners (Bauml, 2016). Administrators should offer organizational structures including curriculum guidance, systems to build the professional capacity of teachers, and leadership to enrich stakeholders (Anrig, 2015). Patton, Parker, and Tannehill (2015) stated that the continued learning experiences of teachers are important to the process of building teacher capacity and improving student learning; school leaders must stop using a one-size-fit all approach for teachers' professional development. Buttram and Fraley-Ripple (2016) explained that teachers rely on administrators to assist them in comprehending policies and mandates.

School leaders are responsible for facilitating the process of education development, and they perform a critical function of harnessing the potential of all teachers (Carpenter, 2016). Administrators prepare PLC goals and expectations and, they provide collaborative activities for teachers. The actions of administrators in PLCs include providing clear expectations, delegating others to lead, promoting collaboration, and establishing trust (Thornton & Cherrington, 2014). PLCs alone will not improve

instructional practice; administrators must intentionally focus on teachers' collaborative work and provide the appropriate resources for success (Buttram & Farley-Ripple, 2016). Administrators are responsible for creating an environment that is conducive to teacher learning and risk taking. In addition, school leaders should ensure funding is appropriated for professional learning opportunities for teachers (Patton, Parker, & Tannehill, 2015). Some of those resources that may be needed to move the desired goals of the PLC include providing protected uninterrupted time for teachers to meet, instructional coaches to assist with support with instruction, and the supportive resources, materials, and supplies.

There has been an increase in school oversight by state governments to ensure local educators are meeting accountability expectations. School administrators implement PLCs to help teachers improve their practices, analyze student data, and identifying student learning needs (Thessin, 2015). The Delaware Department of Education officials believe that PLCs are productive when teachers are provided with opportunities to collaborate about the academic performance of students and to develop coordinated strategies to increase student performance (Buttram & Farley-Ripple, 2016). Administrators provide sponsorship, a supportive foundation, and distributed leadership; they also nurture a climate of teacher empowerment (Owen, 2015). Creating norms of collaboration, having a relentless focus on student achievement and instruction, access to resources, and accountability for student improvement, are key components of a successful PLC.

Effective school administrators need to create structures in which teachers can organize, plan, and reflect on their practices, preferably during the school day (Martin et al., 2015). In Delaware, school administrators are mandated to provide a 90-minute block of collaborative planning time every week for teachers to review student achievement data and plan for instruction (Buttram & Farley-Ripple, 2016). Novice teachers need to have the ability to collaborate to improve the quality of student learning, and this is done through developing trust between school leadership and colleagues (Thornton & Cherrington, 2014). Thornton and Cherrington (2014) developed a PLC model which includes instructional planning, analysis of student work, and coordination of instructional practices. Buttram and Farley-Ripple (2016) studied the actions of four principals. They identified the processes developed by each principal to implement a PLC (Buttram & Farley-Ripple). The researchers found that the principals were successful in creating a culture of collaboration, growing teachers professionally, providing resources, and developing teacher collaboration (Buttram & Farley-Ripple, 2016).

Administrators can shape the culture through focused efforts on instructional planning, adjustable pacing, and using data to communicate their expectations with the teachers more consistently and effectively. Creating that culture and monitoring the process is critical to setting high expectations focused on student achievement. Part of the monitoring included attending these meetings and examining the notes and agendas. It is important to point out that principals' schedules are busy, and of the four principals in the study, they were able to attend about 60% of the PLC meetings (Buttram & Farley-Ripple, 2016). Thessin (2015) argued that effective PLCs are successful when supportive

administrators offer continued PD focused on collaborative work and provided accountability based on the desired goals of the PLC.

It is crucial for principals to allocate resources in various forms to the implementation of programs that will improve effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce. One resource that can be used effectively by the principal is the allotment of time. Principals are responsible for providing an appropriate amount of time for teachers to participate in the PLCs (Charner-Laird et al., 2016). Another resource to understand is the allocation of support which will be given in the PLCs. Support allocation come in the form of human capital, which includes an instructional specialist, special education department chairperson, data coach, etc. that will help guide the work being done in the PLC. Administrators are key factors to ensuring that PLCs and resources are available in schools to help retain their teaching staff members.

### **Novice Teachers Need Collaborative Benefits of Working in a PLC**

In an effort to improve schools, many administrators are implementing the use of PLCs to increase the capacity of its teachers intentionally but also to support the school-wide plans for teaching and learning (Hairon, Goh, Chua, & Wang, 2015). Dillard (2016) found that teacher across the United States provide better educational opportunities for students when they participate in PLCs. A huge benefit of a PLC is understanding that teachers learn best from each other and also by collaborating with their peers. Collaboration is done by exchanging ideas, analyzing student work, and discussing ways of improvements (Sheehy, Bohler, Richardson, & Gallo, 2015). Schools are being charged with the ability to create PLCs to not only retain staff but to also impose

educational change (De Neve & Devos, 2016). Novice teachers need more than just time to collaborate and plan for their content or grade level teams, but they also need the opportunity to exchange ideas school-wide and be able to articulate the goals and vision of the school with all teachers. De Neve and Devos (2016) stated that trust needs to be established before any teacher feels comfortable enough to participate in any professional learning and that a culture of clear expectations needs to be established first. Ning et al. (2015) found that participation in successful PLCs can lead to significant changes in the culture of teaching and provide a high level of support for achievement.

Teacher empowerment to achieve results for their students, for their team, and the school has been linked to the benefits of participating in a PLC (Dillard, 2016). Professional collaboration is beneficial for all new teachers (Martin et al., 2015). Without this professional collaboration, new teachers can begin to feel isolated, alone and frustrated. Being left alone to figure out various issues for a new teacher can cause stress and eventually prompt them to exit the profession. Dillard (2016) found that novice teachers who participate in a pre-service training program about PLCs increased their level of confidence in their professional practice and to collaborate with others. Baum and Krulwich (2017) state that true collaboration occurs when professionals can collaborate daily on the work they are engaged in and discuss how they can collectively improve that work. The shared goal of a PLC is to promote collaboration among teachers and offer the structure to develop supportive cultures and conditions for teachers to become effective in their work (Battersby & Verdi, 2015). Teachers benefit from meetings in which ideas are being exchanged among experienced and novice teachers

(Martin et al., 2015). Collaboration meetings provide a voice for novice teachers. Martin et al. (2015) further explained that novice teacher benefits from analyzing student work together because it taught them how to identify quality work and provided another opportunity for them to build a bond and working relationship with their peers.

Another form of PLCs that is growing in today's society is through the use of social media. Sack-Min (2017) explains how social media assist teachers in building professional learning communities. Many teachers are engaging and collaborating with social media platforms like Twitter to participate in PLCs with colleagues and other teachers around the world. When teachers collaborate, it provides a new way of thinking about content, pedagogy, and strategies used to deliver instruction (Bauml, 2016). In addition to that Ning et al. (2015) stated that PLCs could be conceptualized by the collective learning that takes place and a shared personal practice among teachers. Sack-Min (2017) states that we need to realize that social media creates a space for teachers to learn new ideas, collaborate and ask questions. Social media PLCs reach across so many users immediately and provides PD at the teacher's own pace (Sack-Min, 2017). Teachers have started using social media PLCs since it provides access to people who are knowledgeable and because of that, they can perform their jobs more efficiently. Whether participating in PLCs through the use of social media or traditional meetings, collaboration is critical.

Owen (2016) found that teachers build new skills, and change their belief in classroom practices when participating in PLCs. Bauml (2016) further explained that teachers who collaborate and are new to the profession also benefit from sharing the

workload with others and the potential reduction of stress and isolation. PLCs can be successful when teachers participate in the authentic interaction among their colleagues and have spirited conversations about the failures and successes they have experienced (Battersby & Verdi, 2015). DuFour (2004) stated that although teachers may serve on various committees in a school that focuses on specific operations, nothing is stronger than participating in a PLC that provides an opportunity for professional dialogue that can potentially transform a school.

### **Project Description**

#### **Potential Resources and Existing Supports**

By offering this PD series, I can support teachers with strategies and skills needed to successfully implement and sustain PLCs in their schools. To implement this project, I will need several resources that will be vital to achieve success. First, I will meet with the principal of the school to share my findings from the study and to discuss the need for the PLCs. Next, I will need to outline dates and times for the PD series to occur and provide an agenda. It will be important that this PD series takes place during the beginning of the school year, during the school's leadership retreat or during the designated professional development days built into the school calendar. I want to provide that option to the principal, so the PD does not directly impact the schedule the principal has set for the school and will allow time for teachers to be in place. In addition to that I will need to have a projector, access to a meeting room that accommodates the size of the instructional staff, and access to a copy machine for handouts. I will supply my own paper, writing utensils, and chart paper.



### **Potential Barriers**

A potential barrier that may exist is the principal finding time to fit the PD series into their schedules of PDs they may already have for the school. One way to solve that is by scheduling an appointment to professionally meet with the principal and the leadership team. Sometimes it's important to share the vision with more than one person, but also with the people who will directly benefit from the PD. The meeting will be brief but informative. The purpose is to gain the support of the principal and leadership team to implement this PD and to demonstrate the benefits of developing PLCs. Once that is established, we can discuss various dates that work best. Being added to a leadership retreat or placed on a PD calendar may be the easiest way to confirm the PD is scheduled. One reason the principal may decline the PD is because of monetary resources to pay for the PD that will be beneficial to the growth of their staff. I will ensure that the principal understands that there is no cost or charge associated with this PD series and that the overall purpose is to build the capacity of the staff.

One last potential barrier is that the teachers may not understand the benefit of participating in the PD series at all. They may feel that this is just another initiative and there is no real value in their participation. To help solve this barrier, the teachers will be given resources each day during the PD series that they can take and use with their own teams. The teacher created chart papers with the collaboration and trust building can be used as a reference when starting their own PLC at the school. Teachers love resources, but they also love something that is tangible that they can reference after the PD is over. I will share with teachers the benefits of collaboration and how this will help them expand

their knowledge as professionals and impact student achievement. Highlighting various studies with facts and figures will be helpful in this case. Even creating a one-page document that highlights the benefits and success stories of other schools will help persuade teachers to participate in the PD series.

### **Proposal for Implementation and Timetable**

The implementation for this PD series will occur during the beginning of the academic school year (See Table 3). I will contact the principal of the school at the end of the previous school year and begin to dialogue about plans and goals for the upcoming school year. I will then schedule a meeting to discuss the PD series with the principal and the leadership team during their summer leadership training. At the conclusion of the meeting, we will decide on dates in which the PD series will occur. If the dates have been decided for the welcome back week PD agenda, I will then email the teachers and inform them of the PD, benefits, and what to expect. The email will include the session dates and allotted time duration given by the principal. The teachers will be informed this PD series will occur over three days and that they will be provided with all presentations and conclusion at the end of each session.

Table 3

*Implementation Schedule*

| Dates          | Tasks  | Person                                    | Deliverable                                     |
|----------------|--|---|---|
| June 2018      | Contact Principal and discuss PD   | Principal and Researcher                  | Date to meet with leadership team               |
| July 2018      | Meet with leadership team and discuss PD series, coordinate time for PD series | Principal, leadership team and researcher | E-mail, announcement of PD series, presentation |
| August 2018    | Contact teachers and inform them about the upcoming PD series                  | Researcher, Principal                     | E-mail, agenda                                  |
| September 2018 | Conduct PD sessions  | Researchers, Teachers, Principal          | Slide Show, resources, PLC plans                |

**Roles and Responsibilities**

My roles and responsibilities will include organizing all meetings, facilitating the PD series, and communicating with all stakeholders involved in the project. I will also develop the evaluation for the project and provide my own materials. The principal and leadership team are important to ensuring teacher buy-in and being able to articulate the vision and goals of implementing the PD series. Principals are important because they are needed to support the work and to outline the vision for the staff. They will also be critical in monitoring successful implementation of the PLCs during the school year and assisting teachers with measuring the success of them. The leadership team will be

essential because they will be the ones leading the work. Their role will help cultivate the ideas of PLC implementation and guide the work as they lead their teams. The roles of the teachers will be to actively engage in the PD and build on their own learning.

## **Project Evaluation**

### **Formative Evaluation**

Formative assessments are any type of assessment tasks in which student learning is promoted (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2017). Formative assessments provide feedback to both the student and teacher; lessons can be adjusted based on the results of the assessment to ensure student learning (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2017). In order to gain authentic feedback from the participants about the progress of their learning, evaluations will be continuous throughout the three-day PD series. Each participant will be expected to complete an evaluation at the conclusion of each day. The evaluation will allow participants to rate their experience, and they will answer questions that will assess if the information presented was beneficial to improve their practice. In addition to that there will be an open-ended question that will allow the participants to suggest what areas of the presentation may need to be changed or improved. Using this type of formative evaluation will help me better prepare and enhance the presentation for future presentations. Using open-ended responses provides more thoughtful answers and participants can clearly write their experience rather than just using a rating of a good or bad or a number scale. This type of formative assessment will provide descriptive feedback to determine if the PD series is beneficial for teachers or needs to be altered to fit their needs. It is also important to note that

participants will be formally assessed throughout the presentation. The use of open-ended dialogue questions can be used to determine if learning is occurring during the presentation and their participation. At the end of each presentation I will review the feedback to determine if I need to make adjustments moving forward for the following days of the PD series and/or the next time using the presentation.

### **Summative Evaluation**

In order to determine the success of the overall PD, I will use a summative evaluation. A summative evaluation occurs at the end of the PD and will help determine how effective the PD was for the participants. According to the Guskey (2000) using a summative evaluation will help guide decisions for the future use of the PD. At the conclusion of the PD, the teachers and administrators will complete an evaluation of what they have learned and how it could influence their instructional practices. For the summative evaluation, I will provide each participant with a Google Evaluation form in which the participants will respond to the following five narrative questions:

1. How can you apply the information about PLCs from this PD to your school setting?
2. Were the delivery methods and activities presented in the PD beneficial to your learning?
3. What information presented will be most useful for you when implementing your PLC?
4. To what extent did this PD meet the overall needs?

5. If you could change anything about the PD series in order to enhance your learning what would it be and why?

### **Overall Evaluation Goals**

The evaluation method is directly aligned to the PD goals to ensure the participants will be able to implement and sustain a PLC in their school. Schools and the participants of the PD will be able to use various resources and strategies in order to allow and provide effective opportunities for teachers to collaborate with a focus and purpose. It was important for me to embed formative assessments in all of the sessions during the PD series by intentionally asking open-ended questions, allocating time to complete the evaluations and allowing participants to engage in meaningfully conversations and discourse about PLCs. The summative assessment will help me determine how successful the PD was for the participants and will guide me to make necessary enhancements or alterations. I will use the overall evaluation goal as a guide to assess whether or not participants have acquired the skills necessary to implement and sustain a PLC at their school.

### **Key Stakeholders**

When I created this PD, it was done with findings from this study. Through data analysis it was evident that teachers are important stakeholders, but they do not do the work alone. It is critical to include all the stakeholders in the implementation of PLCs. Administrators play an important role when developing PLCs as well as any instructional specialist who are school based. Participants for this PD will include teachers and administrators. Administrators will be asked to participate in all the sessions, and if they

are unavailable, they will be asked to designate someone to sit in their place and report back to them. The teachers will be the core group for this PD. The presentation will be based on the number of participants provided by the principal before the PD occurs. This PD will more than likely occur during a time where all teachers have to be present, so it is designed for all instructional staff members. The teachers will be participating in engaging activities in which they will be problem-solving, collaborating with each other, and creating norms and plans for the implementation of their own PLC. Their level of experience does not matter for this PD because all levels of experience and knowledge will be necessary for participation in the project.

The administrators are important to implementing this PD because ultimately, they have to make the decision to allow for implementation in their buildings. My initial meeting with principals before presenting the PD is important because I can learn the needs of the building from their perspective, and they can have input about the implementation of the PD in their building. Administrators or designees will be invited to participate in all activities, discussions, and evaluations. This will demonstrate to the teachers the importance of this PD and help with their learning. Hearing the views and perspectives from their employees will also be important for the administrators. During the PD, teachers and administrators will be able to exchange ideas and dialogue about PLC implementation in that school.

### **Implications Including Social Change**

To create a culture of collaboration for teachers, PLCs must be implemented with fidelity. The effective implementation and the ability to sustain them will be critical to

social change. Improvement on teaching and learning could significantly improve student performance as a result of teachers using more customized teaching approaches. Those who participate in an effective PLC may build resiliency to overcome challenges and meet the needs of all learners. Sustaining PLCs over time will impact the collegial interactions of teachers which can foster a sense of belonging and decrease teacher turnover. This PD series was created with the data that has been collected from participants in a local school to address the problem that prompted this study. The PD sessions included in this project are designed to enhance the knowledge of teachers and administrators and to provide them with the tools and skills to participate in collaborative team planning meetings. By implementing PLCs, teachers and students will benefit. Teachers will learn and exchange effective instructional practices. By engaging in collaborative work and a relentless focus on improving student achievement, teachers who participate in PLCs can implement the various strategies they have learned with their students (Thessin, 2015). Successful implementation of PLCs that has an ongoing process that focuses on producing better results for students and set high expectations for student learning assists in ensuring there is improvement in student achievement (Battersby & Verdi, 2015). Hairon et al. (2015) stated that PLCs are becoming more attractive to school districts with the intent to increase the professional growth of teachers and to support school-wide learning.

This project could be important to local stakeholders because I will offer it in the district where I currently work. By providing a structure to collaborate for novice teachers where they can exchange ideas and grow professionally are some of the benefits



that my school district will receive by participating in this PD project. In turn, this will allow novice teachers to collaborate with their colleagues and feel supported in the profession, and this could help reduce teacher turnover. The local school district has over 200 schools, which makes it difficult for all novice teacher to get together and collaborate. This PD can be used at a school level in order to provide opportunities of new learning for teachers in order to for them learn new instructional practices and gain new teaching ideas that may benefit the students. This PD could provide an important learning experience for teachers and administrators who are seeking to grow in the profession and sustain a high retention rate among their staff. This project has the potential to impact professional growth among all teachers at the study site. PLCs provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate, develop improvable goals, and to help teachers see the value in their careers (Popp & Goldman, 2016).

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate teachers' perceptions about the factors that influence teacher turnover and teacher retention in a suburban Maryland school outside of Washington, DC. Novice teachers in a local school located have been leaving the profession in high numbers. The findings from this study indicated that teachers need the collaborative benefits of a PLC in order for them to be effective in their careers and perform their responsibilities. To address this finding, I created a PD workshop for teachers and administrators that would help them implement and sustain PLCs in their school. This section discusses my reflections on and conclusions about the project.

### **Project Strengths**

This project's strength is directly aligned to the research and analysis of findings. Maslow stated that human needs arrange themselves into hierarchies, which start from a basic need level, to safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization (Fisher & Royster, 2016). Fisher and Royster (2016) explained that Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be aligned with the transition that teachers experience when they begin their careers in education. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory provided a conceptual framework for this study, which led me to develop a PD project that would allow teachers to engage in collaborative activities and learning. PD is an opportunity for teachers to collaborate and feel as if they belong to a group; PD can also be used as a forum for change and

validation in their professional practice (Patton, Parker, & Tannehill, 2015). Teachers who participate in a PLC PD? understand the importance of achieving for a common purpose, and therefore, they promote a collaborative culture in a school (DuFour, 2004).

As a result of the PD, teachers will demonstrate professional practice while collaborating with their peers and exchanging ideas that can enhance their skills. I developed the PD sessions for teachers to work together to problem solve, dialogue about professional practice, and to learn skills and strategies that could help implement and sustain effective PLCs. The teachers who participate in this PD will be given the chance to engage in team-building activities that will allow them to build relationships with their peers, learn each other's personal learning style and work style. The greatest strength of this project is that teachers get a chance to foster relationships with each other, exchange best instructional strategies, and collaborate in order to become effective in their career. Furthermore, this study will contribute to the research needed to promote teacher retention of novice teachers.

### **Project Limitations**

A lack of interest and support from teachers and administrators would be a limitation in this study. I have developed this PD project to create an enthusiasm among teachers and administrators to engage in this project and to collaborate and exchange best practices so that they can become effective in performing their duties. By offering this PD, I seek to motivate teachers who are considering leaving the profession to encourage them to remain. Participation in effective PLCs may help eliminate teacher turnover due to the intentional focus on peer collaboration and professional growth opportunities

(Hoaglund, Birkenfield, & Box, 2014). The emphasis and importance of PD has been mandated by some school districts to ensure that there is time built into their schedules for teachers to collaborate and develop their craft (Battersby & Verdi, 2015).

Another limitation of this PD project is that after teachers engage in the PD, they may not transfer the information when trying to implement their own PLCs in the school. It is my suggestion that the conversation of PLCs and accountability of establishing them in the school is supported by administrators. This can be done by establishing common norms and expectations so that everyone is held accountable and deliverables are provided as evidence. This will also include making sure PLCs are a continuous PD throughout the school year and a monitoring structure is put in place to measure the success of the PLCs. I will ask schools to provide their testimonies on how effective the implementation of PLCs is in their schools, and to share evidence of how its influenced their professional practice. Moreover, I will provide support to the schools and maintain a working relationship with them to make sure the implementation and sustainability of PLCs are successful.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

#### **Alternate Approaches of the Problem**

In the previous section, I identified limitations of the PD project. Due to the limitation that teachers may not implement the PLC correctly, a different approach to the problem may be needed to provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate and learn effective strategies needed to perform their job.

### **Alternative Definitions of the Problem**

The problem that prompted this study is that a large number of novice teachers transition to positions or change schools each year, and there is no system in place to retain and support the growth of novice teachers in an elementary school located in the eastern suburbs of Maryland. I worked with a group of eight teachers who not only met the criteria of teaching 3 years or less, but who were willing to provide context to the problem. The data that were captured as a result of three forms of data collection indicated that teachers need the collaborative benefits of working in a professional learning community (PLC) and the advanced job skill development from continuous professional development workshops. In the project that was created based on this study, I support the opportunities for teachers to collaborate and learn skills through PD. By participating in this project's PD, the teacher participants will be able to exchange professional dialogue with their peers through collaboration, problem solving activities, all while learning how to implement and sustain PLCs. Nonetheless, teachers may not engage in professional learning about PLCs beyond the PD and possibly will not implement the PLCs in their schools. Therefore, two alternative definitions of the problem for this study are as follows:

1. Reveal ways in which teachers can be provided the opportunity to collaborate and learn skills that will help them develop
2. Reveal ways to create networking opportunities for novice teachers to collaborate and develop their instructional practices with peers outside of their schools

These alternative definitions of the problem align with the problem that prompted this study because all alternative statements have been written to reveal how to reduce teacher turnover.

### **Alternate Solutions to the Local Problem**

Teachers whose workplace may not provide an opportunity for teachers to engage in PLCs, so they can collaborate and learn skills for job advancement may benefit from alternate solutions. Such alternate solutions may be created to allow teachers to engage in collaboration in order to develop their craft through learning skills and exchanging instructional strategies. Alternate solutions are a good way for the researcher to pinpoint the benefits of collaboration and skill development.

**Ways in which teachers can be provided the opportunity to collaborate and learn skills that help them develop professionally.** It is important for the administrators to provide protected time for teacher collaborative meetings. This must be intentionally done with systems and structures in place for them to be effective. One way to make sure teachers have the opportunity to collaborate is for the administrator and school leaders to develop schedules in which collaborative planning meetings are embedded. Collaborative planning meetings that are embedded provide the security of protected time needed for teachers. The leadership behavior can be demonstrated by an administrator or school leader developing a monitoring system. During these meetings, it is also important that norms are developed so that there can be a focus to help build the instructional capacity of the teachers. Systems and structures such as examining student work, analyzing data, and using a standard agenda could be in place to help promote the atmosphere of

collaboration. These meetings can take place once or twice a month, depending on scheduling conflicts, human capital and resources available.

Administrators and school leaders could also develop activities and PDs to better organize teachers for collaborative work. To establish these activities or PDs, there can be a shared vision created among the teachers and administrators. By collaborating on the vision and goals of their professional growth, teachers and administrators can take ownership of the learning process and may feel more invested in the process. These activities can be done during grade level meetings, staff meetings, or on designated PD days. The timeline will depend on the academic calendar of the school district.

**Ways to create networking opportunities for novice teachers to collaborate and develop their instructional practices with peers outside of their schools.** Often, school districts offer PD to their teachers outside of the school building and outside of the traditional school day. Teachers can participate in systemic PDs in which they can collaborate with other colleagues. By attending district-wide trainings, teachers can begin to network and develop relationships. Networking opportunities allow teachers who work in different buildings to collaborate. When teachers intentionally collaborate, they can begin to learn about each other, understand their passion for the profession, and exchange ideas that will help their professional practice. Teachers can also join professional education organizations and attend their national conferences. This could help teachers exchange professional ideas and dialogue about their common practices and differences in the profession. During national conferences teachers could also attend different PD presentations with other members of the professional organization and begin networking

with them. In addition to that, teachers can also participate in discussion forums on these professional education organization websites.

A growing networking opportunity for teachers is to utilize social media for PD and collaboration. Many teachers use social media to find resources, gain ideas, and network with their peers. Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter provide social learning access and help teachers connect with other teachers around the world. This type of effort can be the beginning of a global PD initiative. These alternate solutions could help teachers collaborate and enhance their professional practice, if they are done with fidelity.

### **Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change**

As I started this journey to complete a doctoral study, I was informed that this work would be time consuming, demanding, but more importantly, rewarding. One of the lessons learned throughout the process was managing and dedicating time to thinking and writing. I chose a topic that I was passionate about and assumed that I had enough information to conduct a thorough study; however, after I completed the first section of my literature review. I understood there was so much more to learn. As I engaged myself in the research process, I have come to understand that examining scholarly literature provides a concrete understanding for the topic being researched. I have developed an appreciation for the scholars who have engaged in this work and provided information about teacher turnover as it relates to novice teachers. By conducting this study and researching factors that influence teacher turnover, I developed findings from the data provided by novice teachers who were eager to discuss the topic. In my role as a



principal, I have observed novice teachers struggle and eventually leave the profession for various reasons, and I have also observed novice teachers who are committed to the profession and stay. As a researcher and principal, it is important for me to understand the factors that influence teachers to leave the profession.

The work that I have done in this project study helped me to deepen my understanding of teacher turnover, and the more I engaged in research, the more I learned. I wanted to learn what was causing teachers to leave the profession so soon, but also how to retain them. I also wanted to understand the barriers and challenges novice teachers faced early in their career. That information can potentially assist me as a principal to ensure that I work hard to eliminate those barriers or challenges the novice teachers face. While conducting this study I learned that it was important for me to withdraw my opinions and focus on the participants. As they shared their experiences, thoughts, and ideas I had to just capture the information and remain neutral. There were moments when I wanted to insert my thoughts and suggestions, but maintained my integrity and held back the passion that I have for this issue.

### **Project Development and Evaluation**

I selected a project that addressed the information gained from the three forms of data collected from the participants of the study. The eight novice teacher participants were dedicated and provided detailed experiences for the project study. In a week after sending out the invitation to participate in the study, the eight teachers volunteered quickly. I then begin to schedule the focus group, the interviews, and send out the reflection journals to each participant. Once I completed the data collection and created

the findings from the information obtain, I begin the process of developing the project. It was essential that I used the research findings to develop a PD opportunity for teachers. The PD that was developed focuses on PLCs. This was to ensure teachers were given the opportunity to collaborate, plan, and exchange ideas that would help them be effective in their careers. Through using PLCs teachers could potentially remain in the profession and appreciate the knowledge and experience gained from participating in PLCs.

As a scholar engaged in this project study, I created this PD to address the needs of the novice teachers. By addressing their needs, it could create a situation in which teachers buy into the information being provided to them, and encourages them to see how this could impact their responsibilities as teachers.

### **Leadership and Change**

Although I have observed teachers exit the profession due to different reasons both personal or professional, it continued to happen. As a leader, I have found myself reflecting on my own practices, and this was one of the reasons that prompted me to conduct a study on teacher turnover. I am familiar with the influences that leaders have on novice teachers; however, I was unaware how teachers' professional needs, job satisfaction, and their decisions to leave the profession were connected. While conducting my literature review for this project, I learned about leadership factors that influence the decisions that cause teachers to leave. One of the findings from this study revealed that teachers needed the collaborative benefits of PLC in order to perform their job responsibilities effectively. This study revealed how school leadership related to teacher turnover. This study also allowed me to understand that retaining novice teachers is

closely linked to leadership behaviors of administrators who provide collaborative opportunities. Allowing teachers to be a part of the process demonstrates change and will impact the long-term success of decreasing teacher turnover.

### **Analysis of Self as Scholar**

My journey to completing a doctoral program started with my commitment and willingness to engage in the work, but I quickly learned that my willingness to do the work was just the beginning of what I needed to be successful. The journey included learning new knowledge that needed to be applied to my study, as well as demonstrating application of becoming a researcher. Through gaining insight as an interviewer, I started to gain the confidence needed to conduct a study with fidelity. I begin to examine things differently while going through the research process. When I would observe the actions of teachers in my own school, I was always thinking about why teachers made decisions and what actions I may have displayed to make them want to stay or leave the profession. Even though my curiosity about how my behavior influenced teachers' decisions to want to leave the profession, I also had to remember to remain focused on my study. The desire made me more anxious to conduct my study and excited to see what the data would reveal.

As I was engrossed in this study, I started demonstrating qualities of a researcher. I started analyzing articles, methodically collecting data from the participants, and transcribing information to develop findings. I learned to listen closely to the participants and not interject my biased ideologies about why teachers may decide to leave the profession. Becoming a scholar was more than just taking courses to complete a program.

The greatest scholarly growth that I have experienced was being authentic in my practice as a researcher and being humble enough to ask questions when I did not understand. The collaborative efforts among my colleagues and other doctoral students helped to push my thinking. The advice and guidance of my chairperson help me understand how scholarly research can add to my growth, but also to the body of work of those engaged in a research process. It was more about taking the skills and knowledge that I've learned in each course and applying that thinking to my project study and to my career. I learned the importance of transferring those skills gained from becoming a scholar and applying them to my role as a principal. By conducting this study, I collected data through live conversations in a setting where participants shared their experiences with me and help me understand the factors that influenced their decisions to want to leave the profession. I concluded that if I stayed focus on the data collected from my study, I could potentially add to the work done by other researchers.

### **Analysis of Self as Practitioner**

The research I conducted influenced my growth as a practitioner significantly. The first evidence of influence that I experienced was in my role as a principal. Although my career comes with many responsibilities, I started making a conscious effort to ensure my novice teachers felt supported and were provided with resources that would help them be successful in their early years in the profession. I instantly saw the work that I was doing as a researcher had a direct impact on my career. I made sure that I implemented a PLC for novice teachers by developing a new teacher academy that met monthly to provide PD opportunities for them. I explained to the teachers the benefits they would

receive by participating in a monthly PD in which they get to collaborate with their colleagues and receive strategies and skills from veteran teachers that would help them perform their job effectively. It was exciting to see the information that I was learning was being transferred in my workplace.

The second evidence of influence were the conversations I began to have with other administrators and district leaders in the school district. My career involves collaborating with other administrators to discuss strategies on how to ensure our teachers, especially our novice teachers, are being successful in their work. By being engaged in this study I was able to share more insight on factors that can potentially drive teachers away from the profession. I was also able to discuss with scholarly research, the leadership behaviors we must demonstrate as administrators for teachers to remain in the profession. By conducting this research, I can now confidently present information to all stakeholders in education about what influences teachers to leave the profession. My school district has already requested that I present this information at our new teacher orientation workshops and leadership meetings throughout the district.

### **Analysis of a Project Developer**

By designing this project, I wanted to make sure that I was providing teachers and school leaders with the skills that were necessary for them to create collaborative opportunities for teachers. Developing this PD offered teachers and school leaders a way to reflect on their current instructional and leadership practices, and to use this learning to build the capacity of how to be effective in their day-to-day work. In order for this to happen, I had to examine the findings for actions that promote decreasing teacher

turnover among novice teachers. From the findings, I learned that novice teachers needed the collaborative benefits of a PLC to perform their job responsibilities effectively. I developed a 3-day PD for teachers and school leaders that is based on strategies for implementing and sustaining PLCs so that teachers can collaborate and be effective.

In developing the project, I understood that teachers wanted to know the benefits of participating in this type of PD, and what they could gain to help them be successful in performing their jobs. It was important for me to make sure that I demonstrated how collaborating with their colleagues and exchanging best practices could enhance their skills, and also help them to form professional relationships. By offering this project, I am provided with the opportunity to offer quality strategies needed to implement PLCs and to give teachers the opportunity to collaborate in ways they may not have been exposed to previously. As the project developer, I have improved my leadership practice by intentionally thinking of ways for teachers to collaborate using the findings from this study.

### **Reflection on the Importance of the Work**

This work is important because I have obtained the findings from the perceptions of novice teachers about the factors that influence teacher turnover. The participants in the study have taught no more than three years and provided context that would explain why many colleagues with their same teaching experience may decide to leave the profession. It was important to gain the data from this core group of teachers to help understand the factors in order to one day change how school districts and school leaders develop supports for novice teachers. This study could potentially help principals design

PLCs for their novice teachers in their own schools, but also impact the leadership behaviors needed to help retain teachers in the profession.

This study could also potentially influence the way school districts are designing PDs for new teachers. With the information obtained from novice teachers about what causes them to leave the profession, school districts can create strategies that influence their decision to stay by possibly mandating collaborative time, providing extensive PD, and being consistent with the support. This can also be done at the local level, and may be able to expand to the state or the national level. As a reflective practitioner, I chose to use a PD project for assisting schools in providing PLC implementation and sustainability to enhance the practice of novice teachers that provide collaborative benefits. This PD project was rooted on the findings and peer-reviewed research, and it is my belief that implementing PLCs will provide the support needed for novice teachers remain in the profession and equip them with the tools to be successful professionals. While there are various PD structures that can be used to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills, implementing this PD could potentially impact social change by increasing the number of teachers who want to stay in the profession and could influence the success of school climate and student achievement. The life of this PD will be dependent upon the success of the outcomes and the reputation viewed by the participants and various school leaders. This project is one that could model a process for use in other schools and school districts and that could influence how teachers collaborate and are grow professionally in their careers.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

This study adds to the literature about teacher turnover in which researchers state the need for PD and collaboration are essential for the growth of teachers (DuFour, 2004). By developing my findings based on eight novice teachers, I was able to capture their experiences as novice teachers and their perceptions of what drives them out of the profession. When I analyzed the data, and revealed the three findings, I created a PD to assist with the implementation of a PLC to provide opportunities of collaboration among teachers.

### **The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change**

The findings from this study will add to the existing literature about teacher turnover. The development of this project may contribute to social change by providing teachers with collaborative sources for continued professional improvement. According to Hancock and Algozzine (2006) experiences gained from a qualitative study can have an impact on social change and school actions. I have learned that collegial relationships, administrative support, and collaboration can influence the decisions of novice teachers to remain or leave the profession. This information can create social change by changing how novice teachers are supported in their careers. By listening to their perceptions and experiences, I can take that information and share it with my administrator colleagues or other districts who may benefit and learn how to retain novice teachers. This study also provides proactive measures to provide supports that can be used to guide novice teachers to collaborate and exchange ideas. I have generated and collected data, analyzed the data,



and learned ways to improve novice teacher experiences through collaboration and providing a PD experience that will aid them as they grow in effectiveness.

All the participants in the PD will bring their knowledge and experiences which will be used to implement a successful PLC. When I first started this study, I wanted to investigate what prompted novice teachers to exit the profession so quickly, and I learned more from the participants in this study than I could have imagined. Previously, I thought that teachers' salaries were a major factor for teachers' decisions about staying or leaving, but the participants in this study rarely discussed money. Through the data collection process, I was surprised at the factors participants discussed as reasons for wanting to leave the teaching profession. It was the perceptions and experiences shared by these teachers that provided the substance needed for this study.

Therefore, it was imperative for me to design a project in which teachers will be able to collaborate with their colleagues and build their knowledge with the possibility of being retained. The perceptions provided by the teachers provided informative data that can push a social change agenda that can potentially impact school policy. Furthermore, real social change will be evident once school leaders see the need to focus on retaining teachers and eliminating the factors that drive them away from the teaching profession.

### **Methodological, Theoretical, and Empirical Implications**

The problem that prompted this study focused on factors that influence teacher turnover which has important methodological, theoretical and empirical implications. Solutions that can potentially solve this problem have emerged from the experiences and perceptions offered by the novice teachers of this study and the use of scholarly research.

The methodology used for this study provided an opportunity for me to communicate with the novice teachers during one-on-one interviews and the use of a focus group. Participants for this study also completed a weekly reflective journal entry for a total of four weeks. This format allowed the participants to be reflective on their experiences by answering the research questions designed for this study in order to offer more detailed information through the use of three data collection methods. Learning the perceptions of novice teachers about factors that influence teacher turnover was the focus of this study, and a qualitative design provided the best approach to gather that information.

The conceptual framework for this study was based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory in which he stated that human needs arrange themselves into hierarchies (Fisher & Royster, 2016). Fisher and Royster (2016) stated that Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory could be related to the transition teachers may experience when they begin their careers in education. Patton, Parker, and Tannehill (2015) explained that the use of PLCs improve teaching practices, enhances student learning, and has a positive impact on teaching collaboration. Theoretical implications of this study express that by giving novice teachers the format and platform to collaborate, their needs of belonging can be fulfilled.

The empirical implication of this study suggests that novice teachers are a great source of information about their instructional practice and professional responsibilities. Additionally, researchers can understand this through meticulously analyzed data, driven by a conceptual framework that focuses on how a teacher's need of belonging needs to be met for them to remain in the teaching profession. The data indicated that teachers need

collaborative benefits and job skill development to perform their responsibilities effectively. The empirical implication of this study suggests that additional studies that identify the perceptions and experiences of novice teachers may be useful to school leaders and school districts that wish to retain novice teachers. Some of these studies can potentially illustrate how to implement PLCs and effective strategies for building the capacity of novice teachers but create collaboration opportunities.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

There are plenty of chances for future research in the education field that focuses on collecting the experiences and perceptions of novice teachers. The findings from this study demonstrated that novice teachers were motivated and encouraged by the support they received from students, parents, and the community members, and their participation in community events strengthened those relationships. The findings also stated that novice teachers needed the collaborative benefits of a PLC, administration support and resources of a PLC to perform job responsibilities. Additional studies that focus on establishing a collaborative school culture may be useful for novice teachers and school leaders. Research that focuses on PLCs in which teachers collaborate can improve their instructional practice, promote teacher growth, and impact student achievement (DuFour, 2004).

Further research that focuses on teacher induction programs and new teacher academies can be beneficial because teachers may be exposed to a variety of strategies and PD opportunities that will build their capacity as a teacher. In addition to that, teachers may also network and collaborate with other colleagues who could exchange

skills and ideas to perform job skills effectively. Finally, research that focuses on leadership behavior of administrators can be of some value and can eventually help retain more teachers. The participants of this study communicated the need for support from their administrators and the need to collaborate with other teachers to improve their skillsets as a teacher.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout my coursework and experiences at Walden University, I have acquired a variety of research skills that enhanced my professional knowledge and helped me to make decisions based on best practices. Conducting this qualitative case study in which I worked with eight novice teachers, provided useful information and experiences needed to address the problem that prompted this study. Teacher turnover can have an effect on student learning and school culture. This study focused on what drives teachers away from the teaching profession early in their careers. The PD that has been developed, based on the findings of this study, may have a direct influence on social change and a positive influence on novice teachers. If the PD project is implemented with fidelity, it may help reduce teacher turnover and improve the instructional practices of novice teachers.

This study is important because it sheds light on novice teachers' experiences that may cause them to leave the profession. By understanding the perceptions of novice teachers, school leaders may provide greater supports and PD opportunities to novice teachers for their successful performance as teachers. As teachers are entering the profession, they must be provided with adequate support, resources, and professional

developments that will aid them in being effective in their practice. Novice teachers cannot afford to be the forgotten group; rather, they must be the priority group if we want to maintain consistency, longevity and professionalism among career educators.

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## Appendix A: The Project

**Goals:** During the 3-day PD, teachers will be provided with the content, skills, and strategies that will help them understand what a PLC is and how to implement it and sustain it. This PD will include teachers engaged in problem solving activities, norm development, collaboration and planning of PLC implementation. Teachers will also review the various stages of collaboration and the roles need for operating a PLC. In order for this to be an effective PD, the trainer will be responsible for utilizing best practices and research based strategies needed for a successful implementation of a PLC. These best practices and strategies will assist teachers with collaborating with other teachers and exchanging ideas. This will then help teachers perform their jobs effectively.

**Learning Outcomes:** Teachers and administrators will be able to identify strategies needed for collaboration. Teachers and administrators will understand the value and importance of relationship building needed for implementing PLCs. Teachers and administrators will also develop strategies for creating a PLC and identify best practices to sustain a PLC. At the conclusion of the PD, teachers and administrators will create a PLC they plan to implement at the school detailing how they will get started, what strategies they will use to sustain it, and how they will evaluate the effectiveness of the PLC.

**Target Audience:** Thirty elementary school teachers and two administrators (principal and assistant principal), who have volunteered to participate, will be the target audience for this project.

Components: The PD will be divided into the following topics that will assist the participants to accomplish their goal of implementing a PLC.

Day 1: Organizing for Collaborative Work

Day 2: Collaboration, Relationship Building & Beyond

Day 3: PLC- Implementing & Sustaining

To plan for the PD project, the three findings are the foundation and guide to illustrate the components that need to be established in order to develop and sustain an effective PLC. The project was designed to assist teachers and administrators, who enlist to participate, to learn efficient strategies they can use to design and implement their own PLC.

PowerPoints and trainer notes will be provided for each day's activities for the trainer to use. All presentations are developed with information, logistics, and references that can be used. Additionally, all participants will receive a hard copy and electronic copy of the presentation. Formative assessments are embedded in each presentation, with a summative assessment that will be sent electronically at the conclusion of the PD series through the use of a Google Form. The charts below outline the time, topic and methods used for each day of the PD series:



## Day 1

*Organizing for Collaborative Work*

| Time        | Topic  | Method   |
|-------------|--|--|
| 8:00-8:30   | Welcome Registration, Sign-in                            | Participants will sign in using a laptop to record name, date, email addresses, and collect all materials needed for the day.  |
| 8:30-9:00   | Overview of the PD series and introductions              | Trainer presents, participants introduce themselves, review norms of engagement  |
| 8:45-10:00  | PD Assessment Needs and Strategies Needed to Collaborate | Individuals assess the PD needs of school, collaborate with group members and determine  |
| 9:30-11:00  | Problem Solving & Team Work                              | Groups will work together to determine personalities types by Sean Covey, design the characteristics needed for a team, be presented with several problems that they must collaborate and solve. |
| 11:00-11:15 | Break  | Participants will be given a 15-minute break   |
| 11:15-12:00 | Elements of Collaborative Work                           | Participants will engage in a presentation about organizing for collaborative work, role play and demonstrate strategies   |
| 12:00-1:00  | Lunch  |  |
| 1:00-2:00   | Collaboration Activities                                 | Participants will engage in two collaboration activities   |
| 2:00-2:15   | Reflection (Plus/Deltas)                                 | Summarize the learning from the day, apply into action and preview day 2   |
| 2:15-2:30   | Evaluation   | Complete evaluation and be dismissed   |

## Day 2

*Collaboration, Relationship Building and PLCs*

| Time        | Topic                         | Method   |
|-------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 8:00-8:30   | Welcome Registration, Sign-in | Participants will sign in using a laptop to record name, date, email addresses, and collect all materials needed for the day.  |
| 8:30-10:00  | What is trust?                | Trainer presents, participants engage in group discussions and trust activities  |
| 10:00-10:45 | Team Building Activity        | The Golden Team Member, participants will collaborate and identify their strengths within their own personalities and share them with their group. Design the “Golden” team member on chart paper. |
| 10:45-11:00 | Break                         | Participants will be given a 15-minute break   |
| 11:00-12:00 | Collaboration at Our School   | Trainer will present, participants will define collaboration using symbols and drawings and share their meanings   |
| 12:00-1:00  | Lunch                         | Lunch  |
| 1:00-2:00   | Stages of Collaboration       | Trainer presents, Participants will engage by identifying various stages of collaboration  |
| 2:00-2:15   | Reflection (Plus/Deltas)      | Summarize the learning from the day, apply into action and preview day 2   |
| 2:15-2:30   | Evaluation                    | Complete evaluation and be dismissed   |

## Day 3

*PLC Implementation and Sustaining*

| Time        | Topic                       | Method  |
|-------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 8:00-8:15   | Sign-in                     | Participants will sign in using a laptop to record name, date, email addresses, and collect all materials needed for the day. |
| 8:15-10:00  | Defining a PLC & Your Roles | Trainer presents, participants engage in group discussions about implementing PLCs  |
| 10:00-10:45 | Implementing a PLC          | Trainer identifies best practices; participants apply knowledge and collaborate to identify a problem of practice             |
| 10:45-11:00 | Break                       |   |
| 11:00-12:00 | Norms and Meetings          | Trainer identify norms and meeting basic, participants identify norms and role play meetings to apply understanding           |
| 12:00-1:00  | Lunch                       |   |
| 1:00-2:00   | Sustaining a PLC            | Trainer presents, participants will learn how to sustain a PLC and engage in a group activity                                 |
| 2:00-2:15   | Reflection (Plus/Deltas)    | Summarize the learning from the day, apply into action and preview day 2  |
| 2:15-2:30   | Evaluation                  | Complete evaluation and be dismissed  |

### Trainer Notes for Day 1

On the first day of the PD series the trainer will take care of the following steps prior to beginning the training:

- Be sure the desk or tables are organized into groups of 4 with no more than 5 participants in each group depending on the size of the staff.
- Introduce yourself to the team and provide a sense of comfort by sharing some personal background information and a testimony of how you have used a PLC or see the benefits of engaging in one. Next welcome the participants to the PD series. Be sure to explain to the participants that they will be participating for 3 days to learn various strategies. Also allow time for the participants to introduce themselves to you and each other so that everyone knows who is in the PD.
- Start by introducing the norms of engagement. By introducing the norms it is going to be beneficial in the end as the presenter is modeling good practice of running an effective meeting. Point out to the participants that later on during the 3-day PD series they will have an opportunity to develop norms. Once that is done be sure to go over the objectives for the day so that the participants are well aware of what they will be engaged in for the day.
- When you get to slide 4 explain to the participants that they will be taking an assessment that will help determine what the PD needs are for their school (from their perspective). You will then ask them to take out the document titled “Our Needs.” Please allow 5 minutes for the participants to take the assessment. It may be best to use the timer on your watch, cell phone, or an online timer that has an

alarm to help participants determine when the 5 minutes are up. Next allow them to share their answers with their group. Provide each group with a sheet of chart paper so that each group can chart their top 3 needs. Allow each group to post their chart paper with one representative from each group standing beside it to explain their answers. Please allow a minimum of 30 minutes for completion of this activity. Then at the completion of the activity on Slide 5 review the definition of professional development.

- During slide 6 allow the participants to turn and talk and answer the questions on the slide. Solicit responses from each group and remind them this information will be helpful when designing your own PLC for your school.
- Display slide 7 on the screen. Give participants 2-3 minutes to read the slide to themselves. Ask each participant to answer the questions on their own. Give them about 5 minutes to do so. Next, allow them to share their responses with their group members then solicit answers from each group. You will want to allow time for discussion. But do not go over 20-25 minutes.
- Slide 8 read the quote and ask the group to answer the question.
- Slide 9 allows participants to answer each question alone first for about 5 minutes. Then give them 10 minutes to discuss as a team and then solicit responses from each group. You will then present the information on slides 10-11. For slide 11 be sure to explain to the audience that cooperation is key before collaboration. When discussing the strength of a team, you want to highlight the importance of knowing each person's strength. It would be a good idea to site some examples

such as a Compass Point Activity, Strength's Finders Assessment. Be sure to tell the group to create written explanations for a collaboration that lays out the common goals and working relationships for the entire group in order for the collaboration to be successful


- For Slide 12-13 allow participants to read the slide than use the guiding questions on slide 13. Have each group prepared to share.
- The presenter should present slide 14 and 15. For slide 16 give each group a picture. One can be a picture an angry parent, a happy teacher, a classroom full of students, a picture of a meeting, etc. You can find any of these images easily on the internet. For copyright purposes, I did not include the photos. Explain to the directions on the slide and explain to the participants that the purpose of this activity is to build collaboration and creativity among the team. On slide 17 is another collaboration activity in which they will work together to fix the situation. Allow them to chart their responses on chart paper. The directions are on slide 18. Use slide 19 to do a mini evaluation for yourself. Be sure to distribute a copy of the formative evaluation for today's session. Remember you are to use the Formative Assessment with each session for each day.

Day 1 Introduction Presentation Handout, Session 1

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE TEACHER TURNOVER

HAROLD MCCORMICK

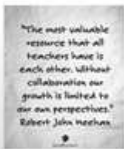
### NORMS OF ENGAGEMENT



- Behave well
- Take an inquiry stance and participate in all activities
- Keep all student communications in a safe place
- Provide feedback for professional growth

1

### WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF COLLABORATING WITH OTHER TEACHERS?



### WHAT'S THE PROBLEM

- The problem that prompts this study is that teachers in a Maryland suburban school had a high teacher turnover rate.

### THE PURPOSE

- This study will examine the perceptions of novice teachers about factors that influence their satisfaction levels with their career and their perceptions about their future employment. Further by examining the perceptions of novice teachers, recommendations for possible improvements may be made to encourage retention of teachers and to provide insight/ information about why novice teachers decide to leave.

### FINDINGS

- Novice teachers are motivated and encouraged by the support they receive from students, parents, and community members, and their self-empowerment strengthened from their participation in community activities.
- Novice teachers need both administrative support and adequate resources to perform job responsibilities successfully.
- Novice teachers need the collaborative benefits of working with a professional learning community (PLC) and the advanced job skills development from continuous professional development workshops.

### OBJECTIVES FOR OUR 3 DAY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

- During this 3 day professional development, participants will be provided with the knowledge and strategies that will help provide not only the benefits of implementing and sustaining a PLC in order for teachers to collaborate and grow professionally
- Participants will learn about identifying professional development needs, professional learning skills, understanding of PLCs, roles associated with PLCs, steps of collaboration, and how to measure the success of PLCs

### GOALS



- Day One
  - Know the ten Critical and Core Competencies
  - Identify the 100+ standards
  - Complete the Learning Development Teacher Collaboration & Engagement Norms & Charter
- Day Two
  - Define trust
  - Always consent practices of collaboration as a team
  - Learn how trust is needed in a group
  - Understand norms and collaborate to develop expectations for PLCs
  - Learn and discuss various steps of collaboration

### GOALS

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- Day 1
  - Understand norms and collaborate to develop expectations for PLCs
  - Learn how to write PLCs
  - Identify a PLC needed and develop norms, meeting dates, time and format
  - Collaborate on 3 strategies used for successful implementation
  - Release the PLC

### BY THE END OF THIS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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- Participants would have engaged in discussions on their professional development needs and identify participants learning styles in order to determine how to best help collaborate.
- Understand the various stages of collaboration and various PLCs in order to set appropriate norms for engagement.
- Develop and learn strategies on how to implement PLCs and how to measure their success.

## Organizing for Collaborative Work

Day 1

### Norms of Engagement



- Be here now
- Take an inquiry stance and participate in all activities
- Keep all sidebar conversations to a minimum
- Provide feedback for professional growth

### Session objectives

- Teacher will complete a self-assessment on collaboration & learning styles
- Engage in collaborative discussions about how our learning styles impact our ability to work together
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional development needs

### Professional Development for Us


- You will take out the assessment title "Our Needs." Read each statement to yourself and decide which statement best describes where you think your school is when it comes to professional development. You will have 5 minutes to complete the assessment.
- When the alarm rings, please then share your responses with your team. Be able to explain your thinking. Then chart your top three responses on chart paper as a group. Once each group has posted their response we will engage in a gallery walk. Choose one group member to stay behind to explain your group response. (30 mins)

### Professional Development

- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**— The term "professional development" means activities that—
- **A**re an integral part of school and local educational agency strategies for providing educators (including teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraeducators, and, as applicable, early childhood educators) with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the challenging state academic standards; and<sup>(b)</sup> are sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short-term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused

• Learning Forward <https://learningforward.org/who-we-are/professional-learning.html>

### Turn and Talk



- Do you think the PD you receive is effective? Why or why not?
- How is PD provided for you? Which format do you prefer?
- How do you retain and implement the information provided during a PD?



### Appropriate professional development

At Fossil Elementary School you have been charged with developing a PD program for teachers who struggle with lesson planning. Your team has been chosen to design an appropriate PD program for the issue of lesson planning. Fossil Elementary School is a Title I school and has been provided with various resources for professional development. Individually answer the questions below and then work as a group. Compare and contrast your answers and be able to share out.

- What resources will be needed to conduct this PD?
- What makes a PD effective?
- What are some challenges that Fossil Elementary School may face?

### What is the benefit of collaborating with other teachers?



### How do you collaborate?

Think about the follow questions and prepare the answers on a separate sheet of paper. Then you will then share the answers in your groups and chart the group response for each question.

- Are there distinguished collaboration systems and structures in place to collaborate? If so what are they and do they work?
- Is the professional development you receive aligned to your instructional practice? If not what needs to be in place?
- What support is needed for collaboration?

### Strategies needed for collaboration

- **Team Work.** It is better to solve problems, work with others to develop, create, and make improvements. Provides various perspectives to many situations.
- **A clear focus.** Collaborating with others will require to intentionally work together with a solid goal in mind. Through collaboration all members need to understand the goal and have the ability to articulate it.
- **With a focus comes clear terms and expectations** for collaboration. There needs to be a development of norms.

### Strategies needed for collaboration

- There needs to be cooperation. This is a basic need for people to begin engaging.
- Learning and understanding each other's strength.
- Understand the mission and vision of the collaboration.
- Establish a plan so that everyone understands the "end" product of the collaboration.

### The team that does not work

- The 4<sup>th</sup> grade team at Rosemont Elementary School are having difficulties getting things accomplished as a group. There is always an argument and time being wasted during their weekly grade level meetings. The grade level chair is always belittling everyone, never has an agenda prepared, and no one is ever able to share an idea without being criticized by all the group members. At the last meeting one teacher walked out and would never to return until a new group of teachers are on the team.

### Questions to guide the work

- What plan of action would apply to help this team to collaborate?
- What are some strategies that may help this team collaborate and operate effectively?
- What are some questions that you may have that may help try and understand the dynamics of this team? What solutions can you offer? Explain the rationale as to why you chose these items.
- Each group needs to be prepared to share.

### How should we organize for collaborative work?

- Organize for collaborative, work each team should.
  - Adopt a system in which a team can set structures, a purpose, and outcome.
- Get to know all team members and build on each other's strength and weaknesses.
- Set a time and specific date for meetings to occur.
- Use a form of agenda for note taking and accountability.

### What should results look like when educators collaborate (Bringing it together)

- Conversations about beliefs and expectations occur because of effective collaboration.
- Teachers can identify, articulate, and explain learning standards to work together to impact student achievement.
- Teachers share their own learning with others and build their capacity as they matriculate through their career.
- Teachers able to articulate what they are doing and why they are doing it. No longer working in isolation can be used as a practice when collaboration is effective and efficient.

### Collaboration Activities

- Create the Narrative: Each group will be assigned a picture. From the picture, each group is responsible for creating the narrative and present the story to the entire group upon completion. Each group member must participate and add on to the previous narrative created by the first group member. Each group must determine who will go first by rolling a pair of dice. Whoever has the highest number must go first, and the person with the lowest number goes last.

### Collaboration Activities (Part two)

- You have been working at Blue High School for 6 months. You are part of the English Department Team and enjoy the work but you feel you've not been given the same opportunities that others have in different departments. There always seem to be excuses coming from your Department Chair about the lack of professional development opportunities. You have a meeting coming up with your assistant principal and want to resolve this. You want to persuade your assistant principal and department chair to give you the opportunities to grow and experience more professional developments for the department. How do you fix the situation?

### Directions

- In your group discuss what issues that you identify?
- Together determine some possible outcomes from the meeting. Discuss why you have chosen these outcomes and support them with evidence or detail?
- In your group, collaborate and change the narrative. Develop a new story in which you think the issue should be solved. Try to include other characters and details. Enhance the story, but you must provide a rationale and be able to explain it to the whole group.

### What have we learned today

### Complete the evaluation

- Each team member received a link during registration. Please be sure to type the link in your address bar to access today's evaluation.
- Upon completion, you are dismissed for today.

## Training Notes for Day 2

- Begin with recapping what the participants on what they learned about yesterday. Welcome the participants to the second session and always start with the norms of engagement. Then discuss the objectives for the day.
- On slide 4 present the definition of trust. Then ask the participants do they agree with the definition of trust and how they apply trust in their own lives. Next, on slide 5 read the directions and give each group a sheet of chart paper and marker for them to record their answers. It would be great to just have 5 sheets of chart paper at the table each day with markers. Give them 15 minutes to complete the activity and then allow each group to share their response. See if there are some similarities from each group and highlight them. Next present slide 6. Send the team out for a break. Then set the room up for slide 7 based on the directions.
- For slide 7 and 8 it will be important to read the directions before presenting this session. You need to design the room into a maze using the chairs, textbooks, or even plastic cups to be safe. The goal is that one team member from both teams has to be blindfolded and the person has to be guided by the group. The blindfolded team member may not speak at all and must operate on the trust and directions of the team. For slide 8 follow the directions on the slide. Then present slides 9 and 10.
- For slide 11 be sure to ask the team to sit with their original groups to complete the activity on the slide. On slide 12 is another activity that the group can read and follow the directions. The presenter job is to facilitate the learning, reinforce

important concepts and findings from the group. Slide 12 and 13 are activities that build trust and collaboration and models how PLCs should function. Continue to present slides 14 through 20. Remember to have the participants complete the evaluation for the day.

## Day 2 Presentation Handout, Session 2

## COLLABORATION, RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AND TRUST

DAY 2

### Norms of Engagement



- Be here now
- Take an inquiry stance and participate in all activities
- Keep all sidebar conversations to a minimum
- Provide feedback for professional growth

### Today's Objectives

- Participants will define trust and engage in activities that builds trust among teams.
- Participants will create their idea of an ideal team member through collaboration

### What is Trust?

- According to Merriam-Webster (2017) trust can be defined as: assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something
- According to Tschannen-Moran (2014) trust is defined as: one's willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the other is benevolent, honest, open, reliable, and competent

### Team Activity: Build and destroy!

- In your group, using chart paper, collaborate and determine what are some behaviors that build and break trust when working as a group in school. Be very descriptive and detailed as possible. Then choose one-two group members who will share the responses.



### Why is trust important?

- Trust is important because it deals with the emotional effects of a group
- It helps one to respond tactfully during any emotional situation
- Trust allows one to elicit the perceptions of other team members, helps to address feelings and concerns of others
- Recognizing that conflict is inevitable and using it to strengthen relationships is vital to success of the team. This is needed in order to operate in any group.

### Building trust

- **Activity One:** Using the design of the room, the goal is to get from one end of the room to next blindfolded and by listening to the directions of your team members. The group must be now divided into two teams. Using some type of blindfold, each team has to direct the other to the other side of the room without bumping into anything. If the blindfolded bumps into anything, then each team must start over follow the directions of the presenter.

### Building trust

- **Activity Two:** Using the same groups from the previous activity, form a circle. Each member in the circle must state what they feel their weakness is when collaborating with a group. Next, another group member must provide a solution to the other's weakness. This must continue until each group member has shared their weakness.
- Next, answer these reflection questions on chart paper?
  - What did you learn by participating in this activity?
  - How important is trust in work with others?
  - How can someone's weakness become someone else's strength? Explain.

### Outcomes when their trust is present

- **Trust Encourages Collaboration** - If your team doesn't trust each other they will be very suspicious of each other. When this is done a protective wall becomes present and makes it difficult to work with each other. But when trust is present, each team member feels valued, respect, and makes collaboration easier.
- **Trust fosters Relationships** - If trust is present it makes the task of relationship building effective. Individuals in the team begin to open up to other team members which fosters a bond needed to be productive in a team.
- **What are some other outcomes that are present in a team when there is trust?**

### How is trust established in a team

- Trust begins when all members of the team decide to act in the best interest of the organization (which in this case would be the school).
- It must be modeled by all, but also by leadership (administration)
- To build trust everyone must understand that trust takes time to build. Intentional team building activities will assist in this situation.

### The Golden Team Member

- Each group will have ten minutes to create their idea of a "golden team member." Using chart paper, draw a picture of a person and around it create elements of a perfect team member. What elements should be included? What are the characteristics needed to be the perfect team member? Then each group will present.

### Who do you Trust?

- Individually, on a sheet of paper list all the people in your life that you trust.
- Now examine why you trust these people.
- Based on today's presentation on trust, develop your own definition of trust.
- After the timer goes off, turn and talk to your group members. Share your list, reasons and definitions.



### Let's focus on collaboration & trust

- Reflect on your collaborative meeting, grade level meeting, or content meeting. Do you feel they are effective? Why or why not. In answering this question, you should be able to apply your knowledge of trust and why it is needed in answering this question.
- Next, each group will use chart paper and create a symbol that represents collaboration. Your graphic can be as creative as you need it to be. Each group must be able to explain why they have chosen or create the graphic with details on how this type of collaboration builds trust.

### Stages of collaboration

- Below are 5 examples that schools can potentially use to collaborate when try to have a positive impact of student achievement, advance in their career, or build their capacities as educators.
  - Understanding the mission and vision of the school and make sure it discuss before collaborating. This helps set the tone of the collaboration meeting.
  - Be able to articulate the problem of practice.
  - Think for the common purpose.
  - Set the plan and put it into action.
  - Assess the results and adjust as needed.

### Mission and vision

- What is the mission and vision of the school?
- How does the mission and vision align to the goals of the school?
- What system is in place for the learning community to know the mission and vision of the school?
- Does the mission and vision represent the population being served?

### Problem of practice

- One element needed in order to solve any issue is being able to articulate what is wrong.
- Some think about questions:
  - Does every team member understand why the problem exist?
  - Is there any data to support the claims?
  - What evidence is there to help articulate what is wrong? What are some potential keys/ideas to help make things go right?

### Common purpose

- When collaborating it should be intentional. No one likes to waste time, so the purpose should be clear.
- When collaborating with others be sure that the common purpose is always linked to how to improve. This will help set the focus for outlining what needs to be achieved?

### Set a PLAN & put it into action

- Design a plan
- There should be an agenda present. The agenda should outline or state the goals that need to be achieved as well capture the productivity of achieving each goal.
- Once the agenda has been set, teams should delegate the responsibilities. Remember each person's strengths when delegating and dividing the tasks that need to be completed.

### Examine the results

- Once the team has collaborated and worked on the agenda items you must come back together to examine the results.
- When examining the results, it will be important to review the work that has been done, but also how you will present the work or data that the team will understand.
- How can you apply these steps in your teams at your school?

### Reflection

- What was valuable in today's session that you can take back and use with your own school?
- How important is trust in working with a team of people and why?
- Each team member received a link during registration. Please be sure to type the link in your address bar to access today's evaluation.
- Upon completion, you are dismissed for today.



### Trainers Notes for Day 3

- Begin with recapping what the participants on what they learned about yesterday. Welcome the participants to the second session and always start with the norms of engagement. Then discuss the objectives for the day.
- Present slides 4 and 5. Be sure to ask the audience do they know the definition of a PLC before presenting slide 4. On slide 6 is another slide that define collaboration in a PLC.
- For slide 7 allow the groups to answer these questions on chart paper. Allow 10-15 minutes for the groups to answer the question and present them to the whole audience.
- Present slide 8-9. On slide 10 explain that these are some best practices needed when working in a PLC. Then present slide 11.
- Read slide 12 to the audience. Explain to the audience that they will have 15 minutes to work together and then present their findings. Allow groups to ask questions for clarification. This will help push the thought process behind the groups answers. At the conclusion of that activity be sure to present slide 13 and explain to them the importance of developing norms and how they are beneficial for a PLC.
- Slide 14 is another group activity. Read the directions to the audience. Allow 30 minutes for completion of this activity and allow them to present their findings. Next present slides 14 through 16. For slide 17 be sure to refer to the document “Creating Your Own PLC” and read the directions explicitly. You will have to

allow 45 to 60 minutes for completion of the activity. Then allow each group ten minutes to present.

- For slide 18 summarize the learning that occurred over the last three days.

Remind them that all the work done on the chart paper would be left at the school for their reference in completing their own PLCs.

## Day 3 Presentation Handout, Session 3

## Professional Learning Communities: Implementing & Sustaining

Day 3

### Norms of Engagement



- Behere now
- Take an inquiry stance and participate in all activities
- Keep all sidebar conversations to a **minimum**
- Provide feedback for professional growth

### Objectives

- Participants will learn the definition of a PLC and the elements that are important to create and sustain a PLC.
- Participants will learn about norms and develop norms that are valuable for working in a PLC.
- Participants will apply their knowledge of a PLC and develop their own PLC for their school.

### What is a Professional Learning Community?

- A PLC is when educators commit to working collaboratively in an ongoing process of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for students they serve. (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker 2008).
- According to Education Reform Glossary (2017) a professional learning community, or PLC, is a group of educators that meets regularly, shares expertise, and works collaboratively to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students.
- A PLC has also been defined as a group of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or passion about a topic, who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting with each other (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder 2002).

### What is a PLC?

- A community that is focus on improving student learning.
- In order for a PLC to work there has to be a clear and compelling vision for the group to guide the work. This will bring a focus on how those in the PLC will work but will also reinforce the purpose.
- A PLC must operate in an inquiry stance in which educators collaborate about best practices to implement.
- Understand that the most knowledge gained in a PLC include sharing ideas, but by also putting plans into action.

### Defining a Collaboration in a PLC

- A systematic process in which we work together, interdependently to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve our individual and collective results. (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker) 2008.

### Applying Your Knowledge

- Based on the definition of a PLC, how can you best identify the rationale for having a PLC in your school?
- What benefit do you see in working in a PLC?
- What are some potential barriers of implementing a PLC?

### Teachers Roles in a PLC Include....

- Focus on student and their own learning rather than teaching
- Become students and exchange ideas that will improve their own practice and student achievement.
- Emphasize active student engagement with rigorous academic content that will improve student achievement
- Analyze student achievement and focus on data in order to make instructional decisions.
- Routinely collaborate with colleagues in which a g time

### The Administrators Role in a PLC

- Provide a time and structure for a PLC to exist within the school.
- Discuss and lead certain topics that focus on basic norms of collaboration, and values about students, learning and teaching
- Participate in the PLC and provide meaningful feedback that will build the capacity of teachers and impact student achievement.
- Fostering a sense of collective responsibility and ownership of all learning that occurs in a PLC
- Examine the results and make changes when needed.

### Best Practices of a PLC



### Implementing a PLC

- In order to implement a PLC you have to decide who will participate.
  - Think of the purpose of the PLC
  - Will it support a school initiative that will foster collaboration and an examination of student data?
- Decide on a consistent meeting time, place, and location.
- Make a decision on the structure of the PLC
- Set outcomes, use agendas, and monitoring tool

### Group Activity

- In your group, decide on what designing a PLC for your school. Think about who needs to be involved, what is the purpose of your PLC, when and where should the PLC meet, and what resources need to be present in the PLC. What are some important steps that need to be taken prior to implementing the PLC?
- You will have 15 minutes to complete this activity. At the conclusion of the conclusion of this activity, each group will present their findings.

### Developing Norms

- According to the Business Dictionary (2017) a norm can be defined as an informal guideline about what is considered normal (what is correct or incorrect) social behavior in a particular group or social unit.

Source- <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/norm.html>

### Group Activity

- Each group will use postage notes for this activity. Each person in the group takes (4) postage notes. On each postage note you are going to write a norm you think is important when implementing a PLC.
- Once you have wrote your 4 norms, place them on the group chart paper. Once the group is finished please post your chart paper on the wall so that other groups will be able to view it.
- Once all groups finish we will conduct a gallery walk to view each group's chart to see if we have some common norms. Then as a group we will decide on the top 5 norms.

### Sustaining a PLC

- When trying to sustain a PLC be sure that you have understood your purpose in participating in one.
- Decide will it be a curriculum focus PLC, examining student work, looking at small group instruction, developing common assessments etc.
- Develop guiding questions that will guide the work.
  - What is it that we expect students to learn?
  - What are the best strategies to implement to help our students learn?
  - How will we monitor if what we are teaching is being learned? How will we monitor student achievement?

### PLC Checklist

- Be sure that there is shared mission, vision, and goals that everyone understands and is aware of.
- Make sure that the collaborative team focused is on learning
- Remember that a inquiry process using best practices are present during the PLC.
- Develop a plan of action and implement it.
- Examine the results and adjust when necessary.

### Activity

- Your team is going to develop a plan for implementing a PLC at your school.
- Use the sheet titled "Creating Your Own PLC" for directions for this activity.



### Reflection

- How beneficial was today's session?
- How prepared do you feel with implementing a PLC?
- Please complete the summative evaluation for the entire 3 day PD series and also the formative evaluation for today's session. Upon completion, you are dismissed.
- **THANK YOU!**

### **Our Needs for Professional Development (Handout Day 1)**

Read each statement to yourself and decide which statement best describes where you think your school is when it comes to professional development by placing a circle around the word that fits best.

1. Our school provides continuous support and professional development to build the capacity of the teachers.

Distinguish   Proficient   Basic   Non-Existent

2. Our school provides an onboarding program or process for new teachers.

Distinguish   Proficient   Basic   Non-Existent

3. Our school has a system or structure in place that allows teachers to collaboratively plan.

Distinguish   Proficient   Basic   Non-Existent

4. Our school provides an opportunity to review student data and makes decisions for using best instructional practices.

Distinguish   Proficient   Basic   Non-Existent

5. Our schedule reflects time for collaborative efforts and supports student achievement.

Distinguish   Proficient   Basic   Non-Existent

6. Our school provides training on effectively communicating.

Distinguish   Proficient   Basic   Non-Existent

7. Parents at our school are support by intentional focus on inclusion of families in the educational program.

Distinguish   Proficient   Basic   Non-Existent

8. Our teachers receive feedback about their instructional and professional practice.

Distinguish   Proficient   Basic   Non-Existent

### **Developing Norms and Building a Strong Team (Handout Day 3)**

**Direction: Read each trait. Then rate yourself based on best the trait describes you. Place a check next to the statement the best describes you.**

1. I am willing to participate in a PLC. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I am willing to help my colleagues improve their instructional practice. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I believe in respecting others while talking in a group. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I am willing to follow norms that I may not agree with for the good of the PLC team. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I will hold myself accountable in order to achieve success in a PLC.
6. I am not good with deadline when I have been given an assignment. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I am comfortable in sharing my thoughts and ideas in a group setting. \_\_\_\_\_
8. I consider myself to be a reflective practitioner. \_\_\_\_\_
9. I will always ask for help when I am unsure of something. \_\_\_\_\_
10. I believe effective communication is essential to working in a team. \_\_\_\_\_

In the section below, please identify traits that may have not been listed above that would be helpful in implementing a PLC.

### **Creating Your Own PLC (Handout Day 3)**

**Directions: Each group will create their own PLC that they would like to implement at your school. You will have to apply all of the learning from the PD sessions to help you create your PLC. This should be done using PowerPoint. Each group will have 45 minutes to develop their PLC and 10 minutes to present to the whole group. Use the guiding questions and statements below to develop your PLC.**

- How will your team organize for collaborative work? You need to develop at least two activities. Think about team building and explain the rationale for choosing these.
- How will you decide on the PD needs of the school?
- What strategies will your team use in order to collaborate? How will you identify if your teams have the capacity to collaborate? What structure or system will you put in place to help?
- How will you build trust among your team? What activities will you use in order to build trust among your group? You must identify two activities and explain why these activities were chosen to build trust.
- What is the purpose of your PLC? How did your team determine that would be the purpose? What evidence did your team use to develop the purpose?
- What norms will be used in your PLC?
- How often and when will your PLC meet?
- What monitoring tool will you use to evaluate how successful your PLC is?



**Formative Evaluation for Implementing & Sustaining a PLC (use each day at the end of the sessions)**

Please answer questions 1 and 2 by circling the answer that best describes your learning experience.

- 1- (DISAGREE) This PD session had no impact on my learning about a PLC
- 2- (AGREE) This PD session has made some impact on my learning about a PLC
- 3- (STRONGLY AGREE) This PD session has made a significant impact on my learning about a PLC

1. By engaging in this PD I was able to understand the information presented. The knowledge gained from this PD will affect how I participate in a PLC.

1 DISAGREE                      2 AGREE                      3 STRONGLY AGREE

2. The objectives, skills, and strategies presented in this PD session will help me create and sustain a PLC at my own school.

1 DISAGREE                      2 AGREE                      3 STRONGLY AGREE

3. The presenter who presented during this PD session was knowledgeable of the information.

1 DISAGREE                      2 AGREE                      3 STRONGLY AGREE

4. Please identify what you consider to be the strength of the PD session?

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5. Please identify what you think may need to be changed, eliminated, or added to enhance the learning experience of this PD session.

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**Implementing and Sustaining a PLC  
Summative Evaluation**

How can you apply the information about PLCs from this PD to your school setting?

Were the delivery methods and activities presented in the PD beneficial to your learning?

What information presented will be most useful for you when implementing your PLC?

To what extent did this PD meet the overall needs?

If you could change anything about the PD series in order to enhance your learning what would it be and why?

## Appendix B: Sample E-mail for Participation

To: All Potential Study Participants

From: Harold McCray, Jr.

Greetings:

My name is Harold McCray, Jr. and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I am conducting a study on teacher perceptions of factors that influence teacher turnover. The results may help inform the school district about such factors, and potentially it may provide information that will help retain teachers and decrease high turnover rates. I am specifically focusing on novice teachers, and your current position and experience makes you an ideal participant to provide valuable first-hand information from your perspective.

Your participation in this study has three parts. Should you decide to commit, you will be asked to participate in a focus group, an interview and complete a digital reflection journal. The focus group will consist of eight to 12 participants who will be asked discuss topics about teacher turnover. The focus group will be scheduled for 60 minutes. The interview will be one-on-one with me; you will be asked ten open-ended questions. The interview will be conducted for a total of 60 minutes. Lastly, you will be asked to complete four reflective journal responses. The responses will only be a few sentences summarizing your week. You will briefly describe what happened that made you want to continue teaching and what occurred that may have you considering departing the profession (if anything).

All information will be kept confidential. Participants' personal information will be coded to protect their identities. There is no compensation for participating in this study, however the information provided will be very valuable and may lead to a greater understanding of teacher turnover. Your timely response to this request is critical to

success of the study. You will have one week to decide if you would like to participate. Please respond by email with your name and contact information. Remember if you should you have any questions about anything you can email me at my university email address or call me directly at xxx-xxx-xxxx. If you choose to participate, please read the attached Informed Consent Agreement. If you decide that you no longer want to participate, you may withdraw at any time. Thank you for your consideration I look forward to receiving your response.

Harold McCray, Jr.

Enc.: Participant Consent Form

## Appendix C: Interview Questions

## Interview Questions

RQ 1 What are the novice teachers' perceptions about the factors that influence teachers to remain?

- How would you describe the culture and climate in the building and what makes you as a teacher continue to want to work at this local school?
- What activities or events of this local school do you believe impacts a teacher's decision to continue to work here? Why do you think people enjoy working at this local school? What makes this local school different from any other school?
- What role does the administrator play in your decision to remain at this local school? What types of supports are put in place to help build teacher capacity? Do you feel these supports benefits all teachers? Why or why not?

RQ 2 What are the novice teachers' perceptions about the factors that influence teachers to leave their place of employment?

- Briefly in your own words describe the working conditions here at the local school? What are the expectations of all teachers? Does it vary?
- How would you describe the workload here at the local school and what impact does it have on a teacher leaving?
- What are some reasons you think teachers leave this local school?

RQ 3 What suggestions do teacher participants offer that might reduce teacher turnover?

- What systems need to be put in place to help retain the teachers in this school?
- Considering the workload and working conditions, what would you consider revising that may have an impact on teacher turnover?
- What characteristics or actions would you like for an administrator to demonstrate to help increase teacher retention?
- Considering all things would you consider returning back to this school next year? Why or why not?

## Appendix D: Focus Group

Topic: Teacher Perceptions of Factors that Influence Teacher Turnover

Date:

Interviewer: Harold McCray, Jr.

Location:

Introduction: Good Afternoon! I am so excited that you have decided to be a part of this study. My name is Harold McCray, Jr. and I will be facilitating our discussion this afternoon. I will outline a few general guidelines that will make our discussion be a success.

- Remember the purpose of this study is to learn your perceptions of factors that influence teacher turnover. I hope to learn things that can be used to retain teachers.
- The information you give me is completely confidential, and we will not associate your name with anything you say in the focus group.
- I would like to tape the focus group so that I can make sure to capture the thoughts, opinions, and ideas I hear from the group. No names will be attached to the focus group and the audio will be destroyed as soon as they are transcribed.
- You may refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time.

Ground Rules:

Ask the group to suggest some ground rules. After they brainstorm some, make sure the following are on the list.

- Everyone should participate.
- Information provided in the focus group must be kept confidential
- Please avoid side conversations
- Turn off or mute cell phones
- Have fun

\*\*Ask if there are there any questions before the meeting is started.

Focus Group Question 1: Why did you choose this profession?

Focus Group Question 2: Discuss the positive aspects about working at the local school. (RQ1)

Focus Group Question 3: Thinking of positive school climate, what are key factors that contribute to the positive school climate at the local school? How important is that positive school climate and why? (RQ1)

Focus Group Question 4: How would you describe the interaction between teachers in the local school? How would you describe the relationship between the administrators and the teachers? (RQ1)

Focus Group Question 5: What are some experiences that you believe may lead your colleagues to consider leaving the profession? (RQ2)

Focus Group Question 6: What are some duties or responsibilities that you feel could be eliminated in order for teachers to be productive? Do you think these duties and responsibilities lead to teacher turnover? Why? (RQ2)

Focus Group Question 7: Let's discuss the students of the local school. What role does student discipline play when determining if teacher will leave? (RQ2)

Focus Group Question 8: What are your feelings about the behaviors of the administrators that could help reduce the turnover rate in the local school? (RQ3)

Focus Group Question 9: What might administrators do to better support novice teachers? (RQ3)

Focus Group Question 10: Novice teachers often benefit from professional development workshops that build upon their skills. What professional development workshops might help novice teachers to feel more prepared to be successful in the classroom? (RQ3)

Focus Group Question 11: If you could design a school where teachers would not leave, describe the school for us in full detail. Explain to us why you included some of the elements you did.

Close: That concludes our focus group. Thank you so much for coming and sharing your thoughts and opinions with me. Is there anything additional you would like to add that you did not get a chance to share? If you have any further questions, please contact me directly with the contact information provided in the invitational email.