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Moving On: A Phenomenological Study on the Experiences of Migrating Teachers in Disadvantaged School Districts

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Moving On: A Phenomenological Study on the Experiences of Migrating Teachers in Disadvantaged School Districts

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Educational Administration

by
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May, 2018

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my peers in the doctoral program at UNO. Going through this process without such wonderful friends and peers would have been unbearable! A special thanks to Ellen and Zina for their friendship throughout this program. I can't imagine going to classes without you both!

Thank you to Dr. Beabout for being my committee chair and for all of your help along the way. Also, thank you to committee members, Dr. Marc Bonis and Dr. Chris Broadhurst. I appreciate all of your feedback throughout the dissertation process.

I cannot thank my family enough for their support throughout this process. To my mom and dad, thank you for everything you have done for me to help me finish this degree. Thank you for all the sacrifices along the way. Patrick, thank you for keeping me laughing and smiling. Thank you to my husband, Seth, for your support as I spent many weekends at the library. Lastly, to my sweet Matthew, I am so lucky to be your mommy. Now that I'm finished with school, I can't wait to spend our weekends doing fun things and watching you grow!

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Abstract

Teacher migration occurs frequently in public schools across the United States. As teachers transition and move to new schools, this can have implications for student achievement (Adnot, Dee, Katz, & Wyckoff, 2017; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013), school/family relationships (Simon & Johnson, 2015), and school administrators (Ingersoll, 2003b). The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study is to better understand the experiences that led teachers to voluntarily migrate to different schools within their district. Data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Public district documents were evaluated to better understand specific policies and/or restrictions on migrating teachers. All data was compiled and categorized into four major themes: 1) school characteristics, 2) school-based relationships, 3) professional atmosphere, and 4) leader support. While this study shows that there was no essence to the phenomena of teacher migration, it does make light of the fact that extremely negative relationships with either teaching colleagues or the school principal were important considerations in teacher's voluntary, intra-district migration decision.

Chapter One

Introduction

The priority for public school systems in the United States is to provide all students with a quality education (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). In fact, the United States Department of Education (2014) has a strategic plan that identifies areas for improvement and touts a mission that seeks to "promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access" (p. 5). Further, states have recently submitted consolidated plans to the United States Department of Education which included outlines and justifications for programming aimed at educational improvement funded through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The collective goal being improved educational outcomes and increased achievement for all students.

Identifying situations that negatively impact student achievement and creating a plan to disrupt those impacts seems logical. For example, teacher turnover, defined as the movement of teachers around and outside of the teaching profession (Keesler & Schneider, 2010), could have implications for students and stakeholders, alike. Minimizing turnover and reducing movement could offer continuity with instructional practices (Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005), opportunities for teachers to build on current relationships with students and families (Simon & Johnson, 2015), promote collaboration (Guin, 2004), and positively impact student achievement (Adnot, Dee, Katz, & Wyckoff, 2017; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013).

Teacher turnover can be separated into two main categories: teacher attrition and teacher migration. Teacher attrition is defined as teachers leaving the teaching profession while teacher migration is categorized as the movement of teachers from one school to another (Ingersoll,

2001a). Teacher attrition has been a hot topic area for educational research for many years

because it focuses on the high rates of teachers leaving the profession (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland,

2008; Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2007; Hancock & Scherff, 2010; Imazeki,

2005; Ingersoll 2001a; Ingersoll 2001b; Ingersoll, 2003a; Ingersoll, 2003b; Schaefer, Long, &

Clandinin, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Attrition was typically a focus because it contributed

to the loss of teachers in the teaching profession (Ingersoll, 2001a) which means that schools and

districts are constantly working to fill vacancies, specifically in hard-to-staff schools (Darling-

Hammond & Skyes, 2003).

Research specifically focusing on teacher migration is much sparser. As opposed to

attrition, teacher migration is a way for teachers to relocate without having to leave the teaching

profession entirely (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008). Teachers may have many different

reasons for leaving a particular school; these reasons may be personal, professional, or both.

Ariko & Simatwa (2011) assert that, "teacher transfer requests raise questions about the

professional satisfaction of teachers and have potential implications for school overall

performance" (p. 1271). This assertion suggests that there may be a correlation between the

transfer requests and professional satisfaction and, further, that there may be important links

between professional satisfaction and the overall performance of the organization. The

connection between professionals and their impact on an organization is an important

consideration. According to Morgan (2006), organizational theorists believe that employees

have complex needs and, when satisfied, their work performance is more effective. Any school

leader would always want to staff the most effective teachers in their schools because research

suggests that teacher effectiveness is directly related to student achievement (Heck, 2009; Sirait,

2016; Tucker & Stronge 2000). Therefore, it would be important for leaders to identify ways to

meet and satisfy professionals' complex needs. This could help to increase the employee's effectiveness, thus, improving the organization as a whole.

Teacher migration requests bring into question an employees' satisfaction in the work environment. Because professional satisfaction seems paramount in the effectiveness of an organization, Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman's (1959) Motivation-Hygiene Theory will guide this research. Herzberg et al., (1959) suggested that employee motivation cannot be explained using a single continuum. Instead, employers could do things to increase motivation and hygiene, this creating a more satisfied employee.

Once the research question was answered, the data gathered could provide specific information as to why teachers voluntarily chose to leave their current school to move to a different school. This information could offer suggestions to school leaders and school districts in their efforts to reduce high rates of migration. Moreover, this data could suggest ways to increase administrative supports and build community within schools.

Problem Statement

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2014), of the over three million public school teachers during the 2011-2012 school year, 84% of them remained at their current school while 8% left the profession and the other 8% migrated (transferred) to a different school. That means that over a quarter of a million teachers migrated to new schools in a single school year. There are multiple factors that could contribute to this statistic. Research suggests that these teacher turnover rates can be impacted by inadequate administrative support (Headden, 2014; Ingersoll, 2001b; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Moreover, Ingersoll (2001b) goes on to suggest that, in addition to the lack of administrative support, poor student

discipline, lack of faculty influence, lack of student motivation, and lack of community support, can also contribute to the teacher turnover rate. Nonetheless, this statistic should be considered as it directly impacts stakeholders in our educational system. Continuous turnover can have negative impacts on student achievement (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013; Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Felsher, 2010), can disrupt the formation of cohesive teaching communities (Guin, 2004), and can be financially costly for both districts and schools (The Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005).

These negative impacts do not serve schools and stakeholders well. As teachers move from school to school or leave the profession all together, this can impede progress towards higher student achievement. Blank (2011) suggests that student achievement levels and their change over time are critical markers of progress in a state's public education system. Similarly, turnover also impacts teacher collaboration. Vesico, Ross, and Adams (2008) suggest that strong professional learning communities (PLCs) positively impact teachers and students alike. This opportunity to collaborate to better instructional practices and academic material could be hindered by teacher movement and turnover. Lastly, the movement of teachers is financially taxing on schools and districts. Teacher turnover in public schools costs billions annually (The Alliance of Excellent Education, 2005).

Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff (2008) argued that teacher mobility was not looked at closely by teacher attrition researchers and Ingersoll (2001a) offered that teacher migration is not as much of a focus as teacher attrition because it does not contribute to the teacher shortages that many districts are currently experiencing. While this is true, the migration of teachers from one site to another could contribute to an imbalance at the school the teacher left. According to Guin (2004), schools with high turnover rates could not effectively plan and implement curriculum

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and struggled with maintaining positive working relationships among staff members. An inability to effectively plan lessons and maintain established relationships among staff could contribute to disruptions in instructional coherence and staff interconnectedness (Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005). Further, as teachers migrate, they left vacancies that need to be filled. However, the supply for teachers did not meet the demand. Johnson at al., (2005) suggest that this is because of increased student enrollment, non-entry of certified teachers entering the education workforce, and teacher turnover. Moreover, as schools and districts work to fill the vacated teaching positions, they sometimes relied on outside groups like Teach for America (TFA) and other local teacher preparation programs whose aim is to help fill teacher shortages (Heilig & Jez, 2010). However, research suggests that students scored higher when they were taught by traditionally certified teachers versus teachers from alternative certification programs or non-certified teachers (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002). Teacher migration can contribute to the equity problems within and between school districts as teachers move from lower performing to higher performing schools.

Having a better understanding of teacher turnover in public schools and working to identify solutions to minimize turnover would likely have positive effects (Guin, 2004; Neild, Useem, Travers, & Lesnick, 2003; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013; Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Felsher, 2010). School leaders also have a responsibility to provide students and stakeholders with consistent staffing and learning expectations. Having a faculty that is in flux year after year, potentially due to migration, decreases consistency (Neild, Useem, Travers, & Lesnick, 2003) and it could also negatively impact parent-teacher relationships (Guin, 2004). Working intentionally to build strong parent-teacher relationships could have numerous benefits for students. Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie (1978) suggest that when parents are involved

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in their child's education, this could have positive implications for student achievement, student

behavior, attendance, student's attitudes towards school, and homework habits. Additionally,

highly involved parents were more likely to have children that "take personal responsibility for

their learning" (Gonzalez-Detlass, Willems, & Doan Holbein, 2005, p. 117). Family

involvement in education proves to have positive impacts; however, that relationship starts with

school leaders and, more specifically, teachers' relationships with students and their families.

This is not to say that a family cannot establish relationships with a new teachers. However,

those relationships take time to build trust and comfort. This important dynamic can be lost with

teachers migrating to a different school.

Additionally, turnover makes it difficult for teacher teams to become cohesive and

effective, thus impeding the idea of institutional memory (Neild et al., 2003). Ingersoll (2001b)

suggests that high turnover of teachers in schools is not simply an indicator of a staffing issues,

but more importantly it suggests a lack of cohesion. Further, institutional memory is lost when

information is not shared from past to future members of the social system (Stein, 1995). When

there is constant turnover in a school, leaders need to be reflective and determine why there is a

constant struggle to maintain teachers year after year. When turnover is high, Guin (2004)

suggests that the school is essentially struggling to function as an organization. Further, she

noted that because teaching is a profession that relies heavily on teamwork and sharing of skills

and ideas, turnover negatively impacts trust among colleagues and the momentum of an entire

group of teachers. Because education is constantly evolving and changing to meet the demands

of school improvement while considering the needs of the individual student, it is critical that

teachers build trust and establish positive relationships with their colleagues (Bryk & Schneider,

2003). Without this, teachers could work as islands instead of as part of a collaborative group,

which could negatively impact student achievement (Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, & Grissom, 2015).

Maintaining a quality staff and minimizing migration could help to foster such parent-teacher relationships that could have lasting impacts on students' educational and future goals (Neild et al., 2003). Similarly, recruiting and retaining effective staff year after year allows teachers to continue to build and refine their capacity to work collectively to create and deliver high-quality lessons (Johnson, et al., 2005). If the school's faculty is constantly turning over, it could be difficult to establish and maintain such critical relationships (Guin, 2004).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand what experiences led to teachers' decisions in making a voluntary, lateral transfer to a different school within the same district.

It is typical for professionals to migrate throughout their career. Iredale (2001) suggests that one way that professionals can gain return on their investment in their education is by moving to find the highest paying and most rewarding employment. However, this study did not intend to focus on financial gain. The participants in this study voluntarily choose to move to a different school even though their salary would be the exact same as if they had stayed in their previous school. District to district migration could potentially result in an increased in salary. Because teachers' migration records are confidential, district to district migrators would only be considered for this study if I could not find enough participants that were school to school migrators within a school districts.

To better understand the phenomena of teacher migration, and the specific experiences and decisions that led teachers to voluntarily migrate, a qualitative research design was used. Participants from a southern school district were interviewed and asked to share specific examples of their experiences at their prior school (the school they worked at prior to migrating to their current school). Teacher turnover rates in the United States have hovered between 12% and 16% over the last 20 years (Ingersoll, 2000; National Center for Education Statistics, 2014; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003). Doing this research offered both individual schools and school districts information about why teachers voluntarily requested to transfer and may provide implications for job satisfaction, leadership style, and organizational structures. Motivation-Hygiene Theory (1959) was used to frame this study and better understand components of job satisfaction for a classroom teacher that had recently migrated to a different school.

Research Question

The research question below was developed to guide the design of the study. While there are many steps in the teacher migration process, my research focused on the beginning process. This research question offered opportunities for participants to share personal experiences, which are core to my research. Once my research question was answered, it provided useful data in helping to understand why participating teachers choose to transfer voluntarily.

- What experiences contributed to teachers' decisions to migrate to a different school in the same district voluntarily?

Completing this study helped to provide additional information regarding why teachers choose to migrate to different schools. Much turnover literature provides quantitative data that

attempts to explain why teachers migrate through the use of surveys (Boe, Cook, Sunderland, 2008; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2011; Feng, 2009; Hancock, 2009; Ingersoll, 2000; Ingersoll, 2001a; Ingersoll, 2001b; Ingersoll, 2003a; Ingersoll, 2003b; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; Lee, Gerhart, Weller, & Trevor, 2008; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005).

Using a qualitative research design allowed me to better understand the phenomena of teacher migration and why teachers choose to participate in it. Interviewing participants allows them to provide real-life examples and discuss situations that led to their decision to migrate. Further, because interviewing was used, participants provided a context or background to the stories that they shared. This data could potentially provide information to both schools and districts and possibly provide implications for future practices on recruitment and retention.

Limitations

This study sought to better understand the experiences of teachers that contributed to their decision to migrate. As the researcher, I found it best to consider this phenomena from a qualitative perspective. Denzin and Guba (2011) suggest that "…qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalist approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). So, the findings from this study were based on the individual experiences of the participants and does not necessarily account of all other teachers' migration experiences. The State of Louisiana employed 48,336 teachers in the 2015-2016 school year (Louisiana Department of Education, n.d.). Therefore, it would be impossible for a single qualitative study to account for all teachers' experiences and, for that, additional research would be needed that could consider experiences of all types of teachers in all school settings. Because there is such a small sample size when compared to the number of teachers in

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Louisiana, follow up interviews were used, when necessary, to clarify participant responses in an effort to better understand the circumstances that led the participant to voluntarily migrate to a different school.

Also, this study used interviews as a means of data collection. Because this was a phenomenological qualitative study, this method is appropriate. These interviews served to allow participants to share their lived experiences as it related to their decision to transfer to a different school. When needed, follow up interviews were conducted for clarification purposes. As the researcher and the data collection instrument, I served as the person who interprets the interview data. It should also be noted that in order to participate, participants had to have migrated within the last three years. Therefore, they will likely provide stories from their recollection that may be slightly different that the reality that occurred.

Delimitations

The delimitations, or boundaries of this study that were intentionally put in place (Simon, 2011), in this study were connected to the sample of participants. This study selected participants from a single, southern state and pulled from a two-school district area. Therefore, a large majority of the participants could come from the same school district. This could provide data that is similar because if many participants come from a single school district, they are likely bound by the same policies and expectations. Even so, each school has its own set of policies and other factors such as collegial relationships and leader expectations that could be reported differently by participants.

Secondly, this study did not consider parochial school and charter school teachers' experiences because this study is focused on public school employees' experiences. Also, while

there are many school-based positions that can voluntarily migrate to different schools, this study only considered the perspectives of teachers. Although this study discussed school leaders, their perspectives were not considered or included in this study. These boundaries are somewhat limiting to transferability because multiple types of teachers from different organizations are not considered.

Implications

Because this study seeks to better understand the lived experiences of teachers that have voluntarily migrated to different schools, this study could have implications for leaders in school districts and in individual schools. School principals, also known as instructional leaders, are responsible for the organization as a whole; their responsibilities include, but are not limited to, managing the staff and handling other human resource activities (Lundenburg, 2010). In addition, the principal is responsible for the organizational performance and change initiatives (Murphy, Smylie, Mayrowetz, & Louis, 2009). If the staff is not consistent and teachers are frequently migrating to new schools, it impacts organizational performance and it makes initiating change in the organization difficult to withstand and complete. At the school level, it is important for leaders to have a comprehensive understanding of why teachers choose to migrate. Previously mentioned research suggests that migration impacts student performance (Adnot et al., 2017; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). This could influence administrators' leadership styles and how they provide support to teachers which could positively impact retention of teachers at their respective schools.

At a district level, information presented could offer recruiters reasons why teachers have migrated and this information could transform the way they recruit and place teachers in

schools. Minimizing teacher migration would seem to have positive impacts for all stakeholders in the education arena.

Definition of Terms

Involuntary Migration

In the field of education, an involuntary migration occurs when an administrative decision is made which forces a teacher to transfer from one school location to a different school location without considering the migrator's opinion (Riordan, 2013). This migration is a lateral move that sometimes requires teachers to teach in new subject areas and/or grade levels.

Teacher Attrition

This term is a sub-category of teacher turnover. Teacher attrition refers to teachers or a group of teachers that choose to leave the teaching field (Ingersoll, 2000). Typically, these former teachers find employment outside of the field of education.

Teacher Migration

Similar to the term teacher transfer, teacher migration is when a teacher voluntarily or involuntarily moves to a different school within or outside of their current school district (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008). For the purposes of this study, teacher migration will refer to teachers that have voluntarily migrated to schools within their current school district/system.

Teacher Retention

Retention refers to the act of retaining something. In this instance, teacher retention refers to teachers staying at their current school from one school year to the next.

Teacher Turnover

This is a term that is used when discussing staffing measures within a school. Teacher turnover is when a teacher leaves their current teaching position at their current school (Ingersoll, 2001a). This term can be further broken down into two separate categories: teacher attrition and teacher migration.

Voluntary Migration

Voluntary migration occurs in educational organizations when an educator volunteers to move from their current school setting to a different school setting (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008). This is a lateral move but may require the migrator to teach a new subject or grade.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized though multiple chapters. Chapter one discusses the problem statement, purpose, research questions, limitations/delimitations, and implications. Chapter two provides a review of literature and discuss the theoretical framework used in this study. Chapter three provides an overview of the methods used to conduct this study. Chapter four provides an analysis of the data collected during this study and chapter five provides a concluding discussion connecting the data to the current literature.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Having a better understanding of teacher turnover in American public schools and working to identify solutions to minimize turnover would likely have positive effects for the millions of students that attend school daily. For example, opportunities to build and nurture relationships between teachers and students and families are hampered if teacher turnover rates are high in schools (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Similar to families building relationships with teachers, teachers must work together to plan for instructional activities. However, high rates of teacher turnover thwarts efforts to establish coherent instructional practices (Loeb et al., 2005). Minimizing turnover in school would not only promote collaboration among teachers and staff (Guin, 2004) but also help to increase student achievement (Ronfeldt et al, 2013). This literature review discusses in detail teacher turnover while differentiating between attrition and migration, the impacts of teacher migration, and job satisfaction as it relates to administrative support. The final section of the literature review discusses Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory (1959) which is used to frame this study.

Teacher Turnover

Teacher turnover is a term that has become a catch-all for any type of transition connected to a teacher's movement within or outside of the profession. Examples of turnover include attrition, temporary attrition, teaching area transfer, and migration (Ingersoll, 2001a; Boe, Cook, Sunderland, 2008). Teacher turnover, like in other professions, is inevitable and in small doses, can be considered normal (Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005) and not all turnover is bad, specifically as it relates to the exit of lower-performing teachers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). Within an organization, too little turnover can be connected to stagnancy and a lack of new

ideas and energy (Ingersoll, 2001a; Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009). However, too much turnover can limit the growth potential of an organization. Reasonable turnover can contribute to eliminating low-performers that are not meeting the demands of the job, as well as, recruiting innovative individuals that can bring new ideas and techniques to an organization (Ingersoll, 2001a; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). Because education is continuously evolving to establish policies that promote high-performing students who are ready to compete in a global economy, schools also have to evolve meet these demands. Therefore, it is reasonable for a small degree of turnover to occur as public schools cannot afford to become complacent; a certain percentage of employees retire or otherwise stop working each year. However, high turnover rates within schools could lead to questions regarding the organization as a whole (Guin, 2004). The Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) is a national survey given every few years by the National Center for Education Statistics and the most recent data available is from the 2012-13 school year. This data indicated that of the 3.37 million teachers that participated in the survey, over a half million teachers were "in flux" because they were part of the turnover statistic and are either moving to different schools or leaving the profession (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). This equates to one-in-seven classroom teachers who are moving or leaving each year. In a typical high school with 100 teachers, that means 14 are leaving each year, with the district having to recruit, hire, and train each replacement teacher at a tremendous cost. Reducing these numbers would seem to provide a more stable teaching workforce in which teachers could continuously work to enhance their practices and skills.

Migration and Attrition

Much of the literature on teacher migration is lumped together with teacher attrition (Boe et al., 1997; Boe et al., 2008; Ingersoll, 2001a; Ingersoll, 2003a; Ingersoll, 2003b; Simon &

Johnson, 2015). In order to better understand teacher migration, it is important to differentiate it

from attrition. As previously mentioned, both fall under the umbrella term teacher turnover

because both involved some type of movement (whether away from a school or to a different

school). Teacher attrition has been researched in depth because of the anticipated teacher

shortages since the 1980s due to an aging workforce and increased K-12 student enrollment

numbers (Ingersoll, 2001a). However, literature specifically focused on teacher migration was a

bit more limited. Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff (2008) suggest that most teacher attrition researchers

have not looked closely at teacher mobility and Feng (2009) concurs that intra-district mobility is

disregarded in the literature. Ingersoll (2001a) maintains that

> …most of this research has tended to emphasize only one component of the overall
>
> turnover of teachers from schools: those who leave the teaching occupation altogether,
>
> usually referred to as *teacher attrition*. Researchers have often de-emphasized the other
>
> major components of turnover: those who move to different teaching jobs in other
>
> schools, usually referred to as *teacher migration*. This component is largely
>
> deemphasized because it does not change the overall supply of teachers, as do retirements
>
> and career changes, and hence, is assumed to not contribute to teacher shortages and
>
> school staffing problems" (p. 2).

To their (Hahs-Vaughn, & Scherff, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001a) point, teacher turnover, including

migration, can negatively impact student achievement (Ronfledt et al., 2013) and organizational

effectiveness (Guin, 2004). To provide a deeper breakdown of differentiation of attrition and

migration, Boe et al., (2008) clarify the three different types of teacher turnover by classifying

teachers' movement, or lack thereof, in six different ways. Within the attrition category, teachers

are referred to as *leavers* (leaving the profession) or *continuers* (teachers who continued

employment). The category of teaching area transfers refers to teachers that continue to be employed in the teaching profession. These teachers can be categorized as *switchers* (transferring from one teaching area, to a different area-moving from math to science for example) and *remainers* (those that remained in the same teaching area). Lastly, the school migration category is separated into *movers* (who migrated from one school to a different school) and *stayers* (those that stayed at the same school).

Building on the attrition category definitions above, Olsen and Anderson (2007) suggest that a subset of the group *leavers* could also be categorized as *shifters*. Boe et al., (2008) suggest that *leavers* leave the profession altogether. However, Olsen and Anderson (2007) argue that not everyone that leaves the classroom is leaving the profession. There are educators choosing to *shift* into other career pathways within education that take them out of classrooms but still allow them to participate in educational processes in some capacity. For example, *shifters* could be teachers that have furthered their education and obtained leader certification which led them to an administrative role in a school. Similarly, teachers leave classrooms to further their own career goals by moving into roles at the district-level setting. These examples are linked to the teacher turnover numbers but provide a clearer subgroup for them to fall under.

Different literature might suggest different definitions for a single term. Authors have the discretion to define terms for their studies as a way to provide context for the reader. Similarly, for this study, teacher migration was used to describe the actions of teachers moving from one school to another, regardless of grade level or subject area, from one school year to the next.

Teacher Attrition

Permanent teacher attrition can stem from many reasons. However, when a teacher leaves the profession, it can have many implications. Wushishi, Foor, Basri, & Baki (2014) suggest that teacher attrition is one of the greatest problems facing schools across the world. As teachers leave the profession, it can impact student achievement (Ronfledt et al., 2013). Ingersoll, Merrill, & May (2014) assert that teachers contribute to student's learning and growth. Furthermore, when teachers leave, the remaining teachers may have a larger workload as a result and this can make the profession more stressful (Wushishi et al., 2014). This larger workload may result in burnout and lead to more turnover.

Many look to recruitment and retention strategies to maintain the current teacher workforce and overcome teacher shortages (Lindqvist, Nordanger, Carlsson, 2014). However, Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012) suggest that to modify attrition trends, the conversation must shift from retaining teachers to sustaining teachers. Further, they suggest not only sustaining teachers but sustaining them throughout their careers.

As teacher attrition persists at unprecedented levels, novice teachers are brought in to fill the vacancies and, while they can offer a fresh, new perspective, they are not as effective in their first few years (Headden, 2014). However, Henry, Bastain, & Fortner (2011) suggest that novice teachers' have a large capacity to learn in their beginning years noting that large performance gains occur between the first and second year of teaching. Therefore, if districts incorporate professional developments tailored for novice teachers, perhaps this could help to remedy high levels of novice teacher attrition. Similarly, Gonzalez, Brown, & Slate (2008) suggest looking at retention and attrition in schools rather than looking at the perceived teacher shortage problem.

This suggest that, perhaps, if retention was increased, thus decreasing attrition, the teacher shortage issue may work itself out.

Migration and Attrition Statistics

When considering who migrates and who leaves the teaching profession, it is important to reflect on why teachers report leaving and what demographics trends are connected to this information. Having a clearer understanding of this can lead districts and schools to adjust practices in an effort to improve retention rates for multiple demographics. The National Center for Education Statistics (2014) compiled responses from the Teacher Follow Up survey regarding teacher attrition and mobility. In that survey, male and females moved at similar rates, but females left at higher rates than their male counterparts. When considering race and ethnicity among movers and leavers, minorities moved and left at higher rates than their white colleagues. Moreover, it was most common for teachers to leave the profession with experience in excess of twenty years. Most would consider that typical due to retirement. The second most common time to leave was in the first three years of teaching and, similarly, moving occurred most frequently during the first three years of teaching. Lastly, teachers indicated several different reasons for voluntarily moving. These reasons include, but are not limited to, personal life factors, salary and other job benefits, and other factors. In thinking about teachers that chose to leave the profession, they listed that salary, advancement or promotion, autonomy, and personal prestige, among other things were ranked higher in their new jobs versus their teaching job. (Figure 2.1). While this survey noted a few reasons for teachers voluntarily moving to a different school, this qualitative study sought to understand why voluntary migration occurred based on specific events that took place at the school and/or interactions between colleagues and the school's leader. Salary, job benefits, and personal life factors are not necessarily things that

can be impacted positively or negatively by a school leader or staff members. This research

focused more on how school-related experiences played a role in a teacher's decision to

voluntarily migrate to a different in-district school.

Years of Experience	Movers	Leavers
1-3 Years	12.5%	7.1%
4-9 years	11.7%	6.8%
10-19 years	5.6%	5.9%
20+ years	5.4%	11.4%
Sex	Movers	Leavers
Male	7.9%	6.4%
Female	8.1%	8.1%
Race/Ethnicity	Movers	Leavers
White	7.5%	7.5%
Black	10.1%	11.7%
Hispanic	8.0%	12.6%

[1]*Figure 2.1*: **2012-2013 Migration and Attrition Statistics**

Teacher retention numbers fluctuate slightly from year to year but strides need to be

made in an effort to reduce the numbers drastically in a timely manner. Hancock (2009) notes

that "the considerable amount of teacher turnover in U.S. public schools is a consequential and

disconcerting phenomenon" (p. 92). Ingersoll (2000), suggests that data shows teaching has high

rates of turnover: "14.5% in 1988-1989, 13.2% in 1991-1992, 14.3% in 1994-1995 and 15.7% in

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[1] Teacher attrition and mobility: Results from the 2012-13 teacher follow-up survey. National Center for Education Statistics. (2014). *U.S. Department of Education*.

2000-2001" (p. 3 & 4). More recently, in the 2011-2012 school year, teacher turnover was about 16% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). This 16% of teacher turnover accounts for over 500,000 teachers moving around in the profession or leaving the profession altogether. With so many teachers being in flux, it can leave schools and districts with immense financial and organizational burdens (Olsen & Anderson, 2007).

Impacts of Migration

As mentioned earlier, much of the literature discusses migration as a piece of teacher turnover and frequently references turnover and not teacher migration specifically. However, it is important to remember that because teacher migration is a component of teacher turnover, it will be reflected in literature discussed throughout this chapter.

Understanding the impacts of teacher migration are crucial to determining reasonable rates of migration and the best solutions to continuously minimize such transition. Acknowledging and discussing the potential impacts teacher migration has on student achievement, staffing, parent/teacher relationships, and financial costs can lead to a greater understanding of the potential consequences of teacher migration.

Student Achievement and Teacher Migration

Student achievement in the United States has become a prime focus as evidenced by such legislation as No Child Left Behind (2002) and Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) both of which reauthorized the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965). The two most recent reauthorizations have included accountability measures which intended to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, achieve at minimum acceptable levels set by the state. Many of these accountability measures require that students take standardized tests which quantifies their

learning through a scaled score. This score is used to determine teacher effectiveness, student achievement and placement, and rank schools among their peers. Further, the U. S. Department of Education (n.d.) suggests that with these continued reforms, the United States will continue to see an increase in high school graduation rates and a decrease in the student dropout rate. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016), in the 2012-2013 school year, the public school graduation rates was at an all-time high of 82% which means that roughly 4 out of every 5 students graduated high school on time. Moreover, the dropout rate for the 2014 school year was 6.5% which is almost cut in half from the 1990 dropout rate of 12.1%. Thus, there is some reason to view the nearly twenty-year effort at public school accountability positively. This also suggests that accountability policies are unlikely to fade into the educational policy background anytime soon.

With accountability continuing to play such a prominent piece of the current educational fabric in our country, it seems appropriate to consider how student achievement is impacted by teacher migration. Ronfelt, Loeb, & Wyckoff (2013) assert that schools with high turnover rates demonstrate lower academic performance for students and has a "negative impact on student achievement in both English/Language Arts and math" (p. 30). The negative impact that teacher turnover, like migration, causes on student achievement seems to undermine the efforts of the public education system. Policy makers, district and school leaders, and teachers, alike, are working towards a common goal of preparing our students to be able to contribute compete in the global economy. If turnover is something that impacts those efforts, then measures should be considered to limit these actions. Guin (2004) suggests that districts and schools are transparent about turnover rates, including migration, with stakeholders. Publicizing this data could motivate school and districts to create action plans to minimize such impacts created by teacher turnover.

But this data is only actionable if districts know *why* their turnover rate is at its current levels. The study proposed here will add a level of data below simply headcounts and give districts a glimpse into the decision-making process of migrating teachers.

Staffing in Low Income Schools and Teacher Migration

Turnover is particularly high in high-poverty, low income schools (Imazeki, 2005; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; National Commission for Teaching and America's Future; Ronfeltd et al., 2013). A Teacher Follow-up Survey for the 2012-2013 school year shows higher rates of mobility for teachers in high poverty schools as opposed to their counter parts. In schools where free and reduced lunch rates were between 0-34 % of students, teacher mobility rates stood at 5.6%. The teacher mobility rate increased steadily as the percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch grew. For schools serving in high-poverty settings (75% or more students received free or reduced lunch), that mobility rate rose to 12.2% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013b). As teachers turnover and leave high-poverty schools, those teachers are often replaced with novice or less qualified teachers (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2011). Finding and retaining high quality teachers in low-income schools is a difficult task. The constant churn of staff greatly impacts teacher effectiveness, specifically in schools serving low income students where the achievement gap is not closing and the teacher quality gap widens because these schools are constantly rebuilding their staff with inexperienced, novice teachers (The National Commission for Teaching and America's Future, 2003; 2010). This suggests that schools and districts may have to sacrifice teacher quality in an effort to fill vacant teaching positions. Typically, because these students come from high-poverty backgrounds, their exposure and experiences may be more limited than that of other students (Peske & Haycock, 2006). Further, these disadvantaged students come in to the early school years already having to

play catch-up. Without quality teachers providing appropriate instruction and learning tasks to students, these students will remain disadvantaged and further the current status that many high poverty schools are scoring below average in rates of student achievement and graduation (Machtinger, 2007). While education was intended to be equitable for all students, with turnover being highest in low-income schools, school districts may end up furthering, rather than eliminating, educational inequity.

Teacher quality in low-income schools. The quality of teachers providing instruction in our nation's schools has to be of the highest degree if we want to offer our students a world-class education. As it relates to retention, keeping quality teachers is not only important but crucial to the future of students. Teacher quality is a factor in shaping and growing students (Ingersoll, Hoxby, & Scrupski, 2004; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005). Oscillating back and forth between high-quality to low quality teachers is not acceptable and does not lead to educational gains. Sanders and Rivers (1996) suggest that "groups of students with comparable abilities and initial achievement levels may have vastly different academic outcomes as a result of the sequence of teachers to which they are assigned." They further noted that "teacher effects are both additive and cumulative with little evidence of compensatory effects of more effective teachers in later grades" (p. 5). When high-quality teachers leave the profession, everyone within education suffers. Their wealth of knowledge is lost and is not always duplicated by the teachers that replace them. Staffing schools with inexperienced teachers perpetuates the erosion of teacher quality and, in turn, student achievement (National Commission for Learning and America's Future, 2003). High turnover in disadvantaged school results in an unstable teaching staff in schools that would benefit most from consistency (Grissom, 2011). Thoughtfully

recruiting and intentionally retaining quality teachers in disadvantaged schools would help to minimize turnover, and the costs that go with it, while improving student growth.

Teacher Culture and Migration

School leaders wear many hats and are responsible for all parts of a school (Kimball, 2011). As the instructional leader, they are responsible for ensuring that all staff are trained in best practices and understand expectations associated with curriculum standards. When there is inconsistency with staffing, leaders may have to spend more time recruiting new staff and less time providing necessary training for the teachers. Likewise, when staffing is inconsistent, building necessary relationships between colleagues becomes difficult (Guin, 2004).

Building trust between colleagues and staff can have positive benefits. When teachers trust each other and their leaders, it is typically easier to establish a reform initiative and gain collective buy-in. This cultivates environments for teachers to learn from one another, thus improving their instructional delivery. Furthermore, higher levels of trust were associated with marked improvement in student learning (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). As teachers establish relationships rooted in trust, they may be more willing to take risks with regards to their instructional practices and openly discuss what did and did not work for his/her students. This collaborative practice can help to improve the instruction of all the teachers on the team. This approach is typical in learning communities or study group. Murphy & Lick (2005) describes these communities/groups as structures to support teachers with implementing practices to address the needs of the students they serve. The lack of such communities can lead to stagnancy and mediocrity. Because of the potential benefits of teachers participating in these types of learning communities, Mullen & Hutinger (2008) recommend that leaders promote the development and implementation of such

groups. Therefore the inclusion of such support structures could help to establish stronger collegial relationships while focusing on improving the achievement levels of students.

As teachers work together to construct units and lessons to teach, having a grade-level team that is ever-changing can disrupt this process. Guin (2004) suggests that when turnover rates are high, not only does it impact the momentum of the grade-level team and/or school, but it also makes it more difficult to implement the curriculum with fidelity and in a comprehensible manner. Creating, planning, and implementing the appropriate curriculum to ensure that students are prepared for standardized tests, as well as the next grade, is a critical component of teaching. Without doing so, students' opportunities to learn would be more limited and potentially less rigorous. Hargreaves (2000) suggests that teachers' "collaborative energies" be focused on improving both teaching and learning. Using Hygiene Motivation Theory (1959) as a lens, one could view a collaborative teacher culture as a motivator that could serve to minimize turnover in schools because of established relationships built on trust and comradery.

Parent/Teacher Relationships and Teacher Migration

Just as collaborative teacher cultures have been shown as a key ingredient in school improvement (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010), strong parent teacher relationships are also correlated to improved student outcomes (Shah, 2009). As teachers migrate into and out of a school, this can become detrimental as teachers and school staff work to build strong relationships with their children's teacher(s). When families are highly involved in their child's education, positive outcomes are typical (Reynolds, Crea, Medina, Degnan, &McRoy, 2015; Shah, 2009). Therefore it seems reasonable to consider how teacher turnover impacts parents' ability to establish trusting relationships with their children's teacher. Hoglund, Jones, Brown, & Aber (2014) suggest that it is of most importance that schools encourage parent involvement, especially for students that are

from low-income backgrounds. Establishing strong parent/teacher relationships allows for open communication between families and educators and encourages families to become members of a community group. Without such relationships, families may feel disconnected from a child's school and lack the information to support their child's academic progress. There has been a continued push from educators and policymakers to establish strong partnerships between schools and families (Shiffman, 2012). This would help to facilitate open discussions between teachers and parents regarding students' academic progress and allow families and teachers to build lasting relationships. Relationships that students have with their teachers is also important and integral in their success. As students build strong, trusting relationships with their teachers, this offers opportunities for academic improvement and encourages family involvement. Hoglund et al., (2014) offers that children's strong, positive relationships with teachers can lead parents to become more involved in schools because the parents are more comfortable with the teacher. So, this research would seem to suggest that teacher migration could have a negative impact on parental involvement, specifically parent/teacher relationships. This seems counterproductive since parent involvement in schools is connected to positive outcomes for students.

Financial Cost of Migration

As teachers enter and leave a school, this can be exceptionally costly for the school and/or district. Watlington et al., (2010) suggest that when high quality teacher turnover is high, not only does that have implications for student's academic progress but it can also generate significant fiscal costs for districts or schools to absorb. While there is not a single consensus on how to calculate these costs, many have made an attempt to quantify the cost of teacher turnover. Each calculation includes a different set of variables to reach their total cost. These variables include, but are not limited to cost associated with: recruitment, hiring, induction, orientation, and

professional development. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (n.d.) has created a calculator that schools and districts can use to estimate the cost of turnover in a single year. This tool does not require firm numbers and uses national averages in instances where firm numbers are not readily available. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2005) suggests that public school teachers that leave the profession cost upwards of 2.2 billion annually and when migrating teachers are included, that total reaches 4.9 billion annually. While this is a national estimate, individual schools and districts may pay different amounts. Schools with a student population that is high-poverty, high minority, and low performing face higher amounts of turnover than their counterpart schools. Therefore, those schools spend more money on teacher turnover than do schools with low poverty, low minority, and high performing students (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). This cycle maintains that these disadvantaged students continue to get the short end of the stick.

Teacher induction and mentoring programs. The high turnover rates of new teachers has encouraged schools and districts to create programs that are more supportive of new teachers. About 12% of teachers leave after their first year of teaching, about one quarter leave after their third year of teaching, and a little over 40% of teachers leave within their first five years of teaching (Perda, 2013). While it is true that some teachers leave the profession temporarily and return to teaching, it does not change the fact that turnover directly impacts students. Yusko & Feiman-Nemser (2008) suggest that when the goal of induction programs is to retain and grow teachers, then mentors should be seen as a form of professional development for the novice teacher. Teaching demands more independent work from novice teachers than many other professions, which creates challenges. "Our schools regularly put rookies into the starting lineup and are surprised when they strike out" (National Commission on Teaching and

America's Future, 2003). Every teacher has to be a rookie at one point or another so the supports from mentoring and induction structures can serve to better novice teachers' practices. If novice teachers are striking out, it directly impacts the students they service. Therefore, the inclusion of such programs could be helpful in decreasing the turnover rates of novice teachers.

Recruiting and retaining high quality teachers would help to decrease the costs discussed previously. Research indicates that new teachers that participated in a teacher induction program left at smaller rates than their peer that did not participate in an induction program (Ingersoll, 2003; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). As novice teachers enter the workforce, they are often met by other individuals that have more experience and a much larger repertoire of teaching skills. In positive situations, these new teachers are matched up with a veteran. This mentorship provides opportunities for learning from both parties while simultaneously improving their teaching practices (Holloway, 2001). This partnership opens the door for friendly collegial relationships that can positively impact the students they serve. Ingersoll (2003; 2012) suggests new teachers that did not participate in any type of mentoring/induction programming were more likely to succumb to teacher turnover than new teachers that participated in some type of mentoring programming. Turnover rates for first year teachers that did not participate in mentoring/induction were at 40% while first year teachers that did participate in full mentoring/induction turnover rates were at 18% (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). This data shows that teachers are more than twice as likely to turnover when they receive no mentoring. Districts and schools have a responsibility to set up new teachers for success. Without such intentional action, turnover is more likely which is costly for both student progress and school/district budgets.

Turnover is disruptive and costly, to schools and stakeholders (Ingersoll, 2001b; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). As teachers leave and enter a school, this pattern disrupts the staff's ability to maintain and build upon relationships deteriorating the sense of community (Ronfledt et al., 2013). With some schools working with depleted budgets and minimal resources, teacher turnover comes at a high cost for both schools and students alike. The inclusion of both mentoring programs and collaborative communities in schools may be a way to help integrate teachers into a school's culture which may help to lessen migration and turnover.

Professional Migration

American workers change employers many times while trying to establish careers (Fuller, 2008). In the United States jobs are increasingly less secure, and with the corporate ladder crumbling, employees are facing new hurdles when trying to build their careers (Kronberg, 2013). While in the past it was typical for employees to remain at a single employer for 15-20 years and continue to earn promotions, Kronberg (2013) suggests that employees are increasingly moving up through the ranks via employer changes. Moving between employers is seen as a way for employees to move up the ranks and earn higher salaries. However, Fuller (2008) suggests that employees that move between employers often earn less than their counterparts that stay with a single company long term. Lam, Ng, and Feldman (2012) note that early-career mobility and late-career mobility report greater salaries than their non-moving peers yet, mid-career movers earned less than their peers.

Like teachers, other professionals and workers migrate between jobs for different reasons. Some for financial gain as discussed above and others for personal reasons. Professional football players, for example, may transition to a new team either voluntarily or involuntarily. Nonetheless, just like when other professionals migrate, they have to learn and

understand the dynamics of the new place. These transitions can either be referred to as "successful transitions" or "crisis transitions" (Samuel & Tenenbaum, 2011). Successful transitions suggest the athlete adjusted nicely to the new environment and crisis transitions suggest the athlete is struggling in the new environment.

Similar to professional athletes, nurses also migrate to new jobs for a myriad of reasons. Nurses' motivations to move include financial, professional, political, social, and personal factors and, while financial reasons were commonly referenced, they were not the sole reason for migration (Bonner, Dywili, & O'Brien, 2013). Further, health professionals respond to the ebb and flow of the situations surrounding them (Buchan, Wismar, Gilnos, & Bremner, 2014). Professionals' migration decisions can occur for many reasons. Some are linked to job dissatisfaction while others move for personal gain or to be closer to family. Regardless of the reason, professionals will continue to migrate when they think the new work environment and/or the benefits of the new environment are a better fit.

Job Satisfaction

Ingersoll (2003a) suggests that 25% of leavers and 32% of movers listed dissatisfaction as their reason for leaving their changing schools or leaving the profession. While the evolution of our education system and reform efforts continue, so too does the need for teachers to be satisfied in their work. Employee satisfaction measures the happiness of the employee with regard to job-related tasks and working conditions (Sageer, Rafat, & Agarwal, 2012). Within the profession of teaching, there are many influences that can impact satisfaction. Among them, are the school leaders themselves (Hooda & Singh, 2014). This is an important note for school and district leaders as teachers are a precious asset and without them, educating students would be impossible. Additionally, experiences that are positive with environments that are supportive is

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influential in job satisfaction (Perrachione, Rosser, & Peterson, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Administrative support that is inclusive of a distributed leadership approach while focusing on curbing student discipline problems may promote job satisfaction and potentially minimize turnover. Leaders play an important role at the school level and being intentional in working to increase job satisfaction among teachers may reap positive benefits.

Administrative Support

As a new teacher, it is important for them to feel as though they are being set up to be successful. This will require that they use the skills they learned in college and as a pre-service teacher along with the additional support of school leaders to ensure that their instructional practices are pushing their students to work to their fullest potential. Without continued support, it is easy for teachers to become detached from their jobs and leave the school or profession. Furthermore, lower levels of teacher turnover are found in schools where there is more support from administration (Allensworth et al., 2009; Ingersoll, 2000). Their support can help teachers to work through some of the most demanding parts of the being a teacher. Finding a work-life balance is important for a novice teacher. Sometimes the workload and demands can be overwhelming and lead to burnout. Because maintaining a good work-life balance is positively correlated to job satisfaction (Erdamar & Demirel, 2016), it is important for leaders to provide mentoring and support to help young teachers through the early years. This support can improve chances of retaining teachers and decreasing turnover.

Student discipline. Providing teachers with classroom management skills is an essential component of any teacher education program. Similarly, it is important that teachers feel supported by the administration when discussing student discipline. Teachers list student discipline problems and lack of administrative support as reasons for dissatisfaction (Ingersoll,

2004; Loeb et al., 2005). Many students come to school without their basic needs being met and before learning can take place, those basic needs have to come first. Also, when students are behind in the curriculum, they tend to act out to shift attention away from their lack of knowledge on the topic. And, when bullying or other disruptive behaviors occur, it can create an unsafe learning environment that detracts from instruction (Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005). A supportive administration that is willing to engage with both the teacher and the family to create a plan of action can offer novice teachers ideas and solutions for curbing such behavior in the classroom. Because student discipline issues can be limiting to all learners in the classroom, it is important that they be addressed and supported in a timely manner that is inclusive of school leaders. The lack of support with regard to student discipline can lead to teachers getting frustrated and leaving the school or profession.

Distributed leadership. As the demands place on teachers continue to rise, it is important for them to feel a part of the decisions being made within the school. The top-down decision making procedures do not allow for teacher autonomy and buy-in. The complexities of our evolving education system require a diversity in leadership and expertise to meet the demands and challenges associated with success (Harris & Spillane, 2008). With distributed leadership, teachers are more likely to participate in the decision-making process and to actively engage in the discussions leading to decisions. Furthermore, opening discussions for decision making encourages multiple perspectives and prior experiences to come up with a solution that is considerate of all stakeholders that will be impacted. Incorporating distributed leadership can positively influence the organization as well as student learning outcomes (Harris & Spillane, 2008). Bridges (1967) suggests that of the multiple activities that a principal engages in, continuously involving teachers in decision making is the most crucial. As a means to increase

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job satisfaction and, in turn, lower rates of turnover, the inclusion of distributed leadership practices would allow teachers more of a voice and a feeling of being invested in a school.

Understanding specific reasons why teachers chose to migrate to different schools can help leaders to implement practices that lend themselves to teacher satisfaction and retention. The proposed study considered teachers' experiences and question the administration's role in the teacher choosing to voluntarily migrate to a different school. This qualitative study offers leaders specific accounts as to what experiences or actions led teachers to migrate voluntarily.

Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Understanding what motivates employees would help employers to motivate their workers to being more productive. It seems easy to understand that as employees are more productive, it is likely more lucrative for employers. Herzberg et al., (1959) considered job satisfaction in the workplace. They interviewed over 200 engineers and accountants about specific moments in their job that led to job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction (Boe, 1970). Ideally, everyone goes into a job with a neutral stance or attitude and therefore, as different factors begin to come into play at work, one's attitude may begin to change from its once original neutral stance. Provenzo (1987) suggests that while the presence of some factors can promote job satisfaction, the absence of those exact factors does not necessarily lead to job dissatisfaction. Herzberg et al., (1959) claims that the motivating factors and hygiene factors are each on their own continuum and separate from each other. This can also help in understanding their stance that the opposite of job satisfaction is not job dissatisfaction, but no satisfaction and the opposite of job dissatisfaction is no dissatisfaction.

Based on the interviews they conducted, Herzberg et al., (1959) proposed that there were two separate categories to understanding job satisfaction in the work place: motivating factors and hygiene factors. The motivating factors consist of: achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, and advancement. The hygiene factors are: interpersonal relations with subordinates, interpersonal relationships with peers, interpersonal relationships with superiors, technical supervision, policy and administration, working conditions, personal life, salary, possibility of growth, status, and job security. Notice that the motivating factors are connected to what one can receive based on what the person does in the work place and the hygiene factors consider their work situation or environment in which the work is performed (Boe, 1970). Furthermore, Timmreck (1977) asserts that frequently employers misuse hygiene factors as motivators. However, hygiene factors, because they are not linked to personal growth, cannot be used as motivators. He points out, "To experience personal growth, one has to achieve through tasks that are meaningful to him individually. Because hygiene factors do not involve a task, they lack the capability to provide meaning…" (p. 109). This is an important point for employers to note and understand when considering how job satisfaction impacts employee performance.

All of the motivators listed can be influenced in some way by the school's leader. These motivators help to promote job satisfaction, according to Herzberg et al., (1959), thus decreasing migration or turnover. Similarly, many of the hygiene descriptors can be influenced by the school's leaders as well. Working to establish and maintain positive relationships with staff members and creating policies that are in the best interest of all staff and students would not increase job satisfaction, but helps to ensure no dissatisfaction. The proposed study considered teachers' experiences as it related to both motivators and hygiene descriptors to better understand

what specific events, situations, or policies led to the teacher voluntarily migrating to a different school.

Criticisms of Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Few theories are without critics and opposing views. That being said, some critics of this theory disagree with idea that the factors are on two separate continuums. Instead, the suggestion of a single continuum means that the opposite of job satisfaction is job dissatisfaction. Medved (1982) says that using a single continuum means that the same factors that can lead to job satisfaction, if not present, can lead to job dissatisfaction and vice versa. Or, as House and Wigdor (1967) present, the same experience might cause one person to link an event to job dissatisfaction and the other to job satisfaction. Brenner, Carmack, and Weinstein (1971) attempted to recreate Herzberg et al., (1959) study and concluded that participants indicated that they received job satisfaction and dissatisfaction from both motivating factors and hygiene factors. This is contradictory to the Motivation-Hygiene Theory (1959) and suggests that of the listed factors, either set can influence job satisfaction positively or negatively. Additionally, Gawel (1997) disagreed with salary as a hygiene factor. He suggests that Motivation-Hygiene Theory (1959) may have applicability for the business world but in education, "these findings may begin to explain why good teachers are being lost to other, higher paying positions…" (p. 4). While criticisms exist, this research has been long-standing and provided a frame for my research on teacher migration.

Applicability to Education

Herzberg et al., (1959) interviewed over 200 people from the business world seeking to better understand what motivates them and impacts their level of job satisfaction. Similar to the business world, the education world would benefit from having a better understanding of what

factors impact job satisfaction. Because being satisfied in one's job can be linked to loyalty (Hunter & Tietyen, 1997), applying this concept to migrating teachers could provide a clearer explanation as to why some teachers choose to migrate to different schools. Using Motivation-Hygiene Theory (1959) categories to frame discussions with participants offers a potentially rich dialogue that could help to articulate how specific situations or circumstances influenced teachers' decisions to migrate.

Within the current education rhetoric, the issue of student achievement and how to increase it frequently comes up. Closing the achievement gap between students and broadening the academic abilities of students was a major initiative in recent legislation (No Child Left Behind, 2002; United States Department of Education, 2004). Increasing students' academic abilities and closing achievement gaps must be intentional and requires hours of planning, lesson delivery, and reflection. Motivation-Hygiene Theory suggests that superiors can help to increase job satisfaction by addressing motivators. For example, when leaders recognize the efforts of their teachers, it continues to motivate them and is a means to promote job satisfaction. And, in turn, job satisfaction is likely to minimize teacher migration, thus providing students with a more stable academic environment to be successful. Moreover, a positive the relationship between a leader and the teacher is a hygiene factor that can lead to no dissatisfaction. Because teacher turnover can negatively impact the organization (Guin, 2004), attempts to better understand why teachers are choosing to move from one school to another school are necessary. This study sought to better understand teachers' experiences and discuss what motivators or hygiene factors were addressed, or not addressed, at the teacher's previous school.

Taking Herzberg et al., (1959) Motivation-Hygiene Theory and applying to an educational setting is core the this research. Timmreck (1977) proposed an adapted version of

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Motivation-Hygiene Theory that was aligned to the terminology and circumstances of education. His version is from the perspective of the student and still has a total of 16 motivators and hygiene factors; however, his breakdown includes six motivating factors and ten hygiene factors. The motivating factors are identical to Herzberg et al., (1959) with the addition of a sixth category labeled growth. The hygiene factors deviate somewhat from the original to include the use of educational language and ideas. The ten hygiene factors include: school and class rules and policy, supervision, relationship with teacher, class environment, rewards and punishment, peers, home life, relationship with administration, status, and security. The language that he provides in his adaptation more applicable to the education world. Timmreck's (1977) adaption shows that Herzberg et al., (1959) theory can be applied to different career settings to better understand how factors are related to job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction.

The intention of this study was to understand why teachers voluntarily chose to move to a different school based on the specific experiences at their previous schools. The problem with teacher migration is that it has negative impacts student achievement (Adnot et al., 2017), disrupts coherency of instructional practices (Loeb et al., 2005), and stifles staff interconnectedness (Johnson et al., 2005) which is damaging to the effectiveness of an organization. Motivation-Hygiene Theory suggests that leaders can impact job satisfaction and limit job dissatisfaction for workers. This study addresses motivators and hygiene factors in the interview protocol and encouraged teachers to share specific circumstances that led to their departure from their school. This information could provide leaders with specific information as to why the participants chose to leave their schools and move to a different in-district school. The implications from this study could help leaders to establish a culture that encourages teachers to be retained at the school site.

Conclusion

The research discussed here indicates that teacher turnover, in almost all cases, is detrimental to the education processes. The migration of teachers in and out of schools places additional stress on both districts and individual schools. In addition to the high cost of teacher turnover, students are impacted. Turnover negatively impacts students' achievement and this impact is more pronounced with disadvantaged student populations. This qualitative research intended to better understand why teachers migrate based on their lived experiences. This could help schools and districts alike to implement practices that limit teacher migration and the negative impacts that go along with it.

Chapter Three

Methods

Research is a systematic process in which data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted to have a better understanding about a certain phenomenon that is of interest to the researcher and, further, formal research is intended to be shared with the broader scientific community (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). For this research study, I used a qualitative research approach to better understand teachers' experiences as it related to participants decisions to migrate to different schools. In addition to providing a rationale for using a phenomenological approach, this chapter also discusses participant selection, data collection and analysis, and researcher identity.

Qualitative Research Design

For this research study, a qualitative research design was selected. Creswell (2014) suggests that qualitative research is an approach to understanding social or human problems in which the researcher makes interpretations as to the meaning of the collected data. Moreover, Lichtman (2013) argues that qualitative research focuses primarily on the "why." She goes on to discuss that qualitative research relies on data from observations, interviews, and focus groups and is not focused on measuring or counting (Lichtman, 2013). Much of the research on teacher migration is quantitative (Boe, Bobbitt, & Cook, 1997; Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001a; Ingersoll, 2001b; Ingersoll, 2003). Most data is drawn from survey data and lacks the personal hallmarks of experiences and examples that is intended to inform this study. Therefore, to better understand the experiences of teachers, a qualitative research design was fitting.

This research was informed using a phenomenological approach. Phenomenologists seek to illustrate the essence of the participants' lived experiences (Merriam, 2009; Lichtman, 2013;

Creswell, 2014). To better understand why teachers voluntarily migrated to different schools, interpreting participants' lived experiences that contributed to their decision to migrate was critical. Because participants were asked to reflect on previous experiences and recall specific examples, those recollections were likely to not be as vivid as the original experience. Van Manen (1990) notes "the meaning of the lived experience is always of something past that can never be grasped in its full richness and depth since lived experience implicates the totality of life" (p. 36). This research gave a voice to the participants by using their experiences to better understand why teachers migrate. By taking participants' lived experiences and transforming them into "a textual expression of its essence…" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 36), I discussed experiences that contributed to participants' decisions to migrate voluntarily.

Participant Selection

Knowing whether or not a teacher migrated to a different school was not information that was readily available publically. Typically, the only people that would have that information were the district's Human Resources Department or the teachers/administrators in a school where a migrating teacher found a job. Because this study intended to look at the lived experiences and decisions associated with voluntary teacher migration, I used purposeful selection to recruit candidates that had participated in the school migration process within the last three years. As Maxwell (2013) suggests, these participants were selected deliberately because they can provide information that is relevant to this study that others cannot provide. Therefore, to recruit participants for this study, I relied on my former colleagues that I knew that had recently migrated to a different school within the school district. By reaching out to former colleagues, I was able to secure five participants for this study. I was also able to gain two more participants via a colleague in the doctoral program. She reached out to her colleagues and contacts and after

discussion with these two teachers, they agreed to be participants in this study. I secured two more participants through a snowball sampling technique which Lichtman (2013) describes as accessing potential participants contact information through other participants. One of the two participants secured though snowball sampling however, was not able to be a participant because he did not meet the criteria to participate. That participant was from a different district than the other participants. Therefore, all of the participants in this study were from a single school district in southern Louisiana. It should also be noted that convenience sampling was a technique used in this study. Merriam (2009) notes that convenience sampling is based on convenience of time, location, etc. and when used as the only basis for participants, does not produce the most reliable or credible research. Participants came from a school district that was near in proximity so that I was able to conduct in-person interviews with all participants. Therefore, the convenience sampling technique was only with regards to location for this study.

Selection Criteria

As is typical with most studies, this study required participants to meet a certain criteria in order to participate. Maxwell (2013) suggests it is typical for qualitative researchers to study smaller groups of people. As such, this study included eight participants that discussed their experiences connected with public school teacher migration. To participate in this study, teachers had to voluntarily apply to migrate within a public school district during the last three years. The three year window was recent enough for teachers to still reflect on and recall previous experiences and situations that were connected to their voluntary decision to migrate to a different school. It should be noted that teachers that have migrated to a different school on an involuntary basis were not considered for participation in this study. Similarly, teachers that applied for voluntary transfers but did not move to a different school were also not considered for this study. Again, the

participant selection criteria for this study requires that a teacher had completed the voluntary transfer process from one school to a different school within the same public school district during the last three years of their teaching career.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2013a), national teacher demographic data showed that in public schools for the 2011-2012 school year, 23.7% of teachers were males and 76.3% were females. Additionally, white teachers represented about 82% of the teaching force and all other races were represented 18% of teachers. Shifting from the national demographics, Louisiana school teachers are 65% white and 35% teachers of color. This statistics is inclusive of public and charter school teachers in Louisiana. Therefore, when considering participants for this study, I wanted the demographics to reflect the national trends, which did not include charter school teachers. I recruited six females and two males and two participants were teachers of color. Half of my participants came from an early childhood or elementary setting and the other half of the participants came from the middle or high school setting. All participants were teachers in the public school setting and had recently participated in migration within the same public school system. The within district requirement helped to eliminate a potential increase in salary when moving from one district to another. By staying in the same district, the teacher had the same salary at the new school as he/she had at the previous school. A participant's years of experience is not a consideration when recruiting participants for this study.

Site Selection

The participants from this study were teachers from a southern Louisiana public school district. According to the district's 2014-2015 report card (2015), the district served about 50,000 students. The special education population was around 10% with the economically disadvantaged

population around 75%. The school district had a Louisiana School Performance Score of B (Louisiana Department of Education, 2015).

Voluntary Transfer Policy

The school district that the participants work at had a voluntary transfer policy that outlined the protocol that had to be followed in order for teachers to be granted permission to apply for voluntary transfer within the district. The district's migration policy required that teachers seeking to transfer must fill out an application during a specific time frame and submit it before the May deadline. Other stipulations for teachers to apply for transfer were: 1) the teachers had to be certified in the area of the teaching vacancy they were seeking to fill, 2) teachers had to be teaching in their current position for a minimum number of years, and 3) that applicants could not be on any type of instructional assistance plan. This district also required transfer applicants to interview with principals with vacancies and if both the principal offered a teacher the job and the teacher accepted the job, a form must be submitted to Human Resources. Once this form was submitted, it cannot be rescinded. This district had a clear policy in place in an effort to help potential migrators navigate the transfer process easily.

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Data Collection and Analysis

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Since this phenomenological study intendedto better understand teacher's lived experiences, I used interviews as my main methods of data collection. These interviews were about an hour in length. All of the interviews were conducted in person in a neutral setting selected by the participant. All interviews were recorded for transcription purposes and a follow-up interview was conducted with one participant for clarification purposes based on an earlier interview response. For the interviews, a semi-structured approach was used to encourage discussion and rich dialogue. A semi-structured interview, also known as a guided interview,

allows the researcher to come with a general set of questions but additional, follow up questions can be added based on the situations discussed (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Lichtman, 2013). The dialogue and shared experiences gained from the interviews and follow up interview were analyzed to better understand how certain experiences may have contributed to a teacher's decision to migrate to a different school. The participants were asked about their relationships with former colleagues and principal, and the voluntary transfer process. Questions include *Were there times when your principal recognized your efforts and/or accolades as a teacher?* and *Describe your biggest achievement at your previous school*. See the full interview protocol in Appendix A.

The use of document analysis was also included as part of my data collection. Creswell (2014) suggests that document collection and analysis is a viable data collection method. As is typical with school districts and education in general, I reviewed their policies associated with the teacher migration process. Reviewing this document allowed me to better understand the regulations and stipulations connected to the migration process. I reviewed the policy from the school district in which I recruited participants from. The inclusion of document analysis is a way to include triangulation in my study. Lichtman (2013) hints at the importance of triangulation in research and suggests is allows researchers to draw a more accurate picture while remaining less biased. In a phenomenological study such as this one, Thomas (2006) suggests that through the analysis process, we "seek to uncover the meaning that lives within experiences and convey felt understanding in words" (p. 241). After completing all of the interviews, I listened to all of interviews again and typed up the interview transcripts verbatim. Then I reviewed each transcript thoroughly. . Maxwell (2013) advises that this is the initial step in the qualitative data analysis process. As I went through the data line by line, I followed an open coding process in which I labeled the data with a brief code or description. These data pieces

that were labeled with a description could be anything from a single word to a short phrase. From there, I grouped data with similar descriptive codes together which Merriam (2009) describes as axial coding. After the axial coding was completed, I grouped similar axial codes to create categories. Using an Microsoft Excel document, I put coded data into a file based on the categories that had been established. Once the categories were established, I listed each category on an index card and spread them out across the kitchen table to try to find themes that emerged based on grouping categories together. This process took me several days as I would group the index cards and then walk away from it for several hours and then come back and move cards around again. When I found myself continuing to put the same cards in the same groups together, that was how I knew I needed to move on to identifying a theme for each category. Once I had the categories grouped together, I was able to identify a common thread and create a theme for each category. Once the themes and connecting categories were finalized, I created a narrative that explained how the themes and categories were aligned with the participants' experiences that they spoke about in the interviews. It was my intention to capture the true essence of the participants' experiences that led to them voluntarily migrate to a new school.

Ethical Considerations

Shenton (2004) discusses strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research. He discusses that in natural research, there are protocols that can be put into place that promote credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In this study, I attempted to establish and ensure trustworthiness through multiple means.

When studies are credible, the findings are aligned with reality. To make this study credible, I discussed confidentiality measures with each participant as well as the option to terminate participation at any time. Rubin & Rubin (2012) discuss confidentiality as one of the

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ethical responsibilities of the researcher. Because participants are sharing specific information that could potentially hurt or harm someone's credibility, I took steps to remove any identifying information from the transcripts. Maxwell (2013) argues that "there is no such thing as "inadmissible evidence" in trying to understand the issues or situation you are studying" (p. 87). However, he notes that the researcher is "ethically prohibited" to include such information if it breaks confidentiality or is damaging to others. All participants were given pseudonyms in the final manuscript in an effort to protect their identity. Any additional information, such as school name, district or school demographic information, etc. were eliminated or changed to maintain confidentiality.

Further with regards to credibility, I frequently reached out to colleagues to use them as sounding boards to get feedback about this study. This included discussions about methods, analysis, and overall findings for this study. I sent participants a copy of their interview transcript and discussed emerging themes based on their interview data. This was in an effort to ensure that their thoughts came across as they intended in the interview. The member checking process, participant review of emerging themes to ensure that participants feel their words were interpreted correctly (Creswell, 2014), helped to ensure that I have not misconstrued certain circumstances or situations that were discussed in the interview which could skew my findings. Maxwell (2013) suggests that member checks are the most important strategy for ruling out potential misinterpretation of the participants words/meanings and it helps to identify researcher biases. Further, thick description is included in my findings section. Merriam (2009) suggests that "it [thick description] has come to be used to refer to a highly descriptive, detailed presentation of the setting and in particular, the findings of the study" (p. 227). Thick description helped to provide readers with essential details and background information so that

as they read about teachers' experiences, they could better understand the context of those experience.

The use of thick description can also be applied to both transferability and dependability. The transferability of a study considers the likelihood that the information in the study could be transferred, or applied, to other similar conditions (Shenton, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that researchers "sending" the information cannot be responsible for ensuring transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 297); that responsibility lies with the reader. By providing a detailed explanation of the methods and thick description in the participants' responses, this can serve to inform and help to determine if this study's results can be transferred to a certain population or context. Similar to this is the idea of dependability, the idea that similar work (methods, contexts, participants, etc.) shows similar findings. To build both transferability and dependability, I provided background details and information about teacher migration throughout this document. Additionally, I discussed and justified the methods I chose to use for this study with the intention of helping readers understand my methodological decision making process and the effectiveness of these processes as I sought to understand the professional experiences that led teachers to voluntarily migrate.

Finally, to ensure confirmability a researcher must show that they have made the attempt to be as objective as possible when conducting their study. Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggest that when the information in both chapters 4 and 5 are "supported by data and internally coherent" (p. 318), this helps to establish confirmability. To show my efforts to be objective, I included the use of audit trails well as triangulation of the data. The audit trail file shows how data from the transcripts was extracted, coded, and grouped to help categorize emerging themes. Additionally, data was pulled and analyzed from two different sources (e.g. interviews and document analysis)

so that triangulation could occur. Lastly, my biases as a researcher for this study are discussed below.

Researcher Identity

In my quest to complete this research, it is important to share my background and my potential connections to potential participants. I am currently in my tenth year working in a public school system in the southeastern United States. The first four years of my career I worked as a teacher in a high-poverty school. Due to circumstances beyond my control, I was forced to leave that school and taught fifth and sixth grade the next two years at a high-performing school. I completed my administration degree and accepted a position as an Academic Dean at my second school. In this role, I had many responsibilities including conducing professional development sessions for teachers and disaggregating and analyzing student data to create actions plans for student success. I now work at the district level supporting and regulating schools use of federal funds. While working at my second school, the district decided to transition the school from an elementary school to a K-8 school. Each year that a grade was added, there were new teaching positions that had to be filled. Almost all of these new positions were filled with employees through the voluntarily transfer process. This was a positive for the school because the teaching positions were being filled with experienced teachers from within the school district. We did not have to go out and do any recruiting and participate in multiple interviews to find a teacher that was a good fit for the school. There were many in-district candidates that applied for the available positions. At the time I did not think about or realize the consequences that teacher migration could have had on students at the previous schools. Most of the migrating teachers taught in high-poverty schools, low-performing schools and were moving to a higher-performing school. I wanted to better understand why

these teachers chose to leave their previous school to come to this school. This research study

intends to shed light on migrators' experiences and the circumstances that led them to choose to

migrate. Because almost all of my career has been spent in a school, I have worked with and

interacted with many teachers in the district. Therefore, it is possible that I may have previously

worked with some of the participants at the school level.

Conclusion on Methods

This qualitative, phenomenological study sought to understand teachers' experiences that

led them to migrate to new schools voluntarily. A purposeful sample of eight public school

teachers participated in semi-structured interviews. The interview transcripts were reviewed and

coded to deduce common themes to which a narrative could be used to make connections and

conclusions. Throughout the data collection and analysis process, measures to ensure

confidentiality were included.

Chapter Four

Results

While there is sparse research on teacher migration, most research lumps migration and attrition together and discusses teacher turnover as a single component (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010; Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Further, teacher mobility is not looked at closely by attrition researchers (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008) and, more specifically, intra-district mobility is ignored in the literature (Feng, 2009). Moreover, teacher migration research is typically quantitative in nature (Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, 2011; Feng, 2009; Feng & Sass, 2012; Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner, 2007). Therefore, it gain further insight into teachers' experiences that led to migration, qualitative methods were used to conduct a study of eight public school teachers that recently migrated voluntarily to a different school within the same school district, or intra-district migration.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to better understand teachers' experiences that led them to apply for voluntary transfer. This research was guided by a single research question: *What experiences contributed to teachers' decision to migrate to a different school in the same school district voluntarily?* This chapter provides brief participant descriptions, data collected from participants, and an analysis of transfer policies.

Description of Participants

This study is comprised of a total of eight participants. Participants in this study, met the following criteria: currently a teacher working in a public school system, recently applied for an intra-district voluntary transfer and be granted a transfer, and complete a lateral transfer (i.e. move from a teaching position at one school to a teaching position at the new school) so that salary was not a factor associated with the desire to transfer.

Charlotte

Charlotte has been teaching for over 10 years and has worked in a single school system. She has taught at four different schools. She has a bachelor's degree in education and has taught multiple grade levels. She has multiple certifications and is currently teaching in a middle school. She transferred to her new school within the last year.

Brooke

Brooke was recruited to teach right out of college. She has been teaching for more than 10 years in one school district. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree and has taught multiple elementary grades. She migrated to her current school two years ago.

Grace

Grace has been a teacher for approximately 15 years. She holds a bachelor's degree and has taught middle school students her entire career. She has worked in this one district throughout her career and does not have any plans to relocate to a different district. She voluntarily transferred to her current school three years ago.

William

William has been teaching for 10 years. He holds both a bachelor's and master's degrees in education. He's taught at three different schools during his career in education and holds multiple certifications. He transferred to his current school three years ago.

Kennedy

Kennedy has also been teaching for more than 10 years. She has taught at 3 different schools and has only taught in her current school district. She has a master's degree in education and, in addition to being a teacher, has also held positions such as interventionist and master teacher. She arrived at her current school two years ago via a voluntary transfer.

Olivia

Olivia has been teaching for just under five years. She has taught at a total of two schools within the same district and earned both a bachelor's and master's degree. Most recently, she was departmentalized and taught upper elementary students. She was granted her voluntary transfer a year ago.

Mackenzie

Mackenzie has been teaching for over 10 years. She transferred three years ago and has always taught lower elementary students. She has worked her entire career in her current school district. She has a bachelor's degree and is currently working on her master's degree.

Tyler

Tyler has taught for 10 years. He transferred last school year and has taught at two schools in his current district. He has a bachelor's degree and has taught in several states as well as internationally during his teaching career.

Description of Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Race	Years of Experience	Highest Degree Earned	Old School SPS	New School SPS
Charlotte	Female	White	14	Bachelors	B	D
Brooke	Female	White	10	Bachelors	C	B
Grace	Female	White	16	Bachelors	F	B
William	Male	White	10	Masters	C	B
Kennedy	Female	White	13	Masters	C	B
Olivia	Female	African American	4	Masters	C	N/A
Mackenzie	Female	African American	11	Bachelors	C	B

| Tyler | Male | White | 10 | Bachelors | D | D |

Data Collected

The data collected and analyzed for this chapter is intended to explore why teachers voluntarily apply for a lateral transfer within the same school district. In the analysis, four major themes emerged: 1) school characteristics, 2) school-based relationships, 3) professional atmosphere, and 4) leader support. Additionally, data regarding voluntary transfer policies in the district are included.

School Characteristics

A school's characteristics can include many things but are focused completely around the school that those that interact and engage in it. In this study, participants spoke about different levels of student behavior, readiness, and school transiency. Some students were violent and hit their teachers and classroom behavior was not conducive to learning. For others, they spoke about how students' behavior in the classroom was not an issue and did not impede teaching. Similarly, levels of student readiness and transiency for some participants was high and for others it was low at their former schools. This is a potentially significant relationship as high levels of transiency are connected to low levels of academic performance (Xu, Hannaway, & D'Souza, 2009). Ultimately, participants experienced a wide variability in school characteristics, and thus, no global reasons participants chose to migrate were identified.

Student Behavior

Teachers have many duties and responsibilities associated with being a classroom teacher. In addition to providing meaningful, engaging instruction to students, teachers are also responsible for managing the goings-on in their classroom. Part of a teacher's classroom

management responsibilities include managing behavior and reinforcing positive experiences. Charlotte and Olivia discussed how they had few discipline issues in their classrooms. Charlotte notes that there were "not a whole lot of discipline problems" at her former school. Similarly, Olivia goes on to say, "The kids were calm and well behaved and they were happy to come to school." Conversely, Kennedy, Grace, Brooke, and William shared different experiences of how the student behavior was violent and sometimes became physical. In an effort to explain the students' violence, Kennedy offers how this behavior is what the students were accustomed to:

> They're [students] violent…they see a lot of crime in their neighborhood, a lot of prostitution, a lot of drugs, and a lot of death…pretty much anytime that you hear about a murder or something that happened in Townplace (pseudonym), it's like nine times out of ten, it's coming from the neighborhood that we pull [students] from.

Kennedy's explanation of their neighborhood environment helped to demonstrate behavior that they were frequently exposed to and was also typical in the classroom.

Brooke spoke about how the students would be disrespectful and how "mouthing back" was nothing new. Both Grace and William had students become physical with them and hit them. For William, he ended up going to court over the incident:

> I remember clear as day [it was] the first day of LEAP testing. In the hallway during duty, I was trying to get a group of students to move to where they needed to go to breakfast because they're not supposed to stand in the hallways and a little girl got mad and hit me.

This example shows that this student did not respect authority and was not concerned about the potential consequences when she hit a teacher. The student behaviors in both Grace and Brooke's schools led them to encourage parents to get their child into magnet schools. Grace

talked about how she would "beg" parents to pull out high achieving kids because "the environment, it was unsafe." She explained that there were fights on a daily basis at her school, some that caused students to be arrested. Brooke spoke about how the learning environment "wasn't conducive" because she was "spending a portion of her day on discipline." She went on to say that she "actually helped one parent with the application; I was like get them [students] out because they could do so much better." It was apparent that the learning environment that she worked in was not ideal for student learning.

Both Grace and Brooke thought that the learning environment for the students was not ideal and even unsafe for their students. While William, Grace, Kennedy, and Brooke all noted specific examples of student behavior problems in the school, it does not mean that the other participants did not have any student discipline issues. Their issues with student discipline were minimal and did not seem to interfere with the learning environment. Moreover, Tyler and Mackenzie did not discuss student discipline specifically during the interview. It is important to remember that each teacher has their own classroom management style and may handle similar student behavior situations differently. A teacher's chosen management style may lead to a calmer learning environment with fewer discipline issues or a more turbulent environment with more discipline issues. However, student behavior is multidimensional and cannot be based solely on a teacher's classroom management style. A teacher's migration decision may be influenced by student behavior. If teachers' feel that they are working in unsafe environments where learning takes a back seat, this may lead them to seek out other schools where behavior is less of a focus and academics are more of a focus.

Student Readiness

It is not uncommon for teachers to have students on multiple levels when they enter a teacher's classroom. The lack of student readiness may be impacted by many things. For example, a student may not come to class on level because of a learning disability or school-based decisions (e.g. overcrowding in classrooms), among other things. Working with over 30 students in multiple sections and differentiating to meet all students where they are may lead to burnout and leave a teacher seeking to find a school that is "easier" to teach at. Kennedy, Grace, Brooke, and William discussed student performance or readiness in their interviews. Kennedy spoke about how her school had four interventionist on staff and would pull students during their PE classes. This was in an effort to improve their reading abilities and better prepare them for standardized tests and grade level material. Brooke noted that her students were "far behind" and William said his students were "low performing." Grace went on to talk about how her class exceeded the number of students allowed by state law. She said she had "full classes…like, over full classes…" and then when the kids came to her, about "95% of them were below level." With classes sizes so large and most students working below grade level, this made her job of teaching the current year's skills (and any unmastered prerequisite skills) nearly impossible. With regards to readiness and on-level students, Mackenzie noted that "most" of her students came to her on level and Charlotte said that she had "higher-level students." While Olivia never specifically mentioned whether or not her students were below, on or above level, she did give an example of an analogy she would use with her children when she was teaching. She said,

> …listen, I'm trying to go to Baton Rouge but sometimes you know, I got to go all the way back to New Orleans to pick you up but come on, we got to run; We've got to catch up…we've got to go! We've got to go!

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This showed that she acknowledged that she did have some students, including special education students, that were below level in her class and that she worked to get them on level. It is not uncommon for some students to enter a classroom below level. Teachers work to differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of their students. However, with low levels of student readiness in high number of students, this can take a toll on teachers and they may choose to look elsewhere to a school that may be higher performing than the one they are currently working at.

Parent Involvement

Two of the participants spoke about high levels of parent involvement at their school. LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling (2011) suggest that families are a pivotal component of their child's education. Moreover, parent involvement affects student's achievement (Epstein, 2011) and Reynolds & Clements (2005) note that is it a "fundamental contributor" for a child's success (p. 109). Similarly, teachers in schools with highly-involved parents are more likely to remain at their school (Allensworth et al., 2009). In addition to mentioning high levels of involvement, both Mackenzie and Charlotte noted few discipline problems at their former school. On the other hand, William, Grace, and Tyler spoke about how they never saw parents. Grace went on to say, "I probably taught about 150 kids a year…maybe four parents [would come] for parent teacher conference and it was probably four of my honors kids." Tyler commented that "involvement was the lowest I've ever seen in my teaching career." A career that spanned ten years at six different schools. William mentioned that many students came from "unsupportive homes" and that in some circumstances, the "grandparents raised the kids [students]" and "some of the students had kids themselves." With so much going on in some of these families, it is not hard to understand why school involvement might not be a priority. From a teacher's perspective, the lack of family support and engagement may be a contributing factor to

migration. If teachers felt they were fully supported by the families of the students they teach daily, then they may be more likely to establish strong, lasting relationships and be less likely to move to a different school.

Teacher and Student Transiency

High levels of teacher and administrator transiency can contribute to an imbalance in consistency and direction. Transient students may struggle too. When a student moves from one school to another multiple times within a school year, they may be missing specific units of learning because not all schools use the same pacing when teaching. High levels of transiency can be frustrating and result in teachers looking to work at schools with more stability. Brooke spoke about how the students at her school were transient. She said, "Students were transient. While Principal Jackson (pseudonym) was there the staff was pretty consistent. We had lots of TFAs, um, that took up a majority of our staff but just lots of transient children so it was hard…" The high student transiency level may have contributed to the kids being far behind. Scherrer (2013) supports this notion that student mobility is a catalyst for academic troubles for students. She did note that while the staff included many Teach for America (TFA) teachers, the teaching staff was consistent when that principal was there. Like Brooke, Tyler worked at a school where he described the student population to be "very transient." Considering a different type of transiency, Grace spoke about the inconsistencies at her school during the five years that she taught there. She said that the turnover was constant with regards to both the teachers and the administration noting, "…the turnover was constant. Like every year they had a whole new set of teachers. Now, there were some that were there forever that will never leave but they had a lot of turnover in administration too." Grace went on to talk about how during the five years she worked at her former school, there was a total of six different principals and we were on the

"…we don't stick with anything plan…" This contributed to inconsistencies in policies and initiatives at the school. The school was constantly in flux as the revolving door continued to turn out different principals. Inconsistencies in leadership and the constant changing of initiatives by new administrators could have teachers looking to transfer to a school that has a stable leader with a specific plan for school improvement where the teacher's focus can be on growing students and not constantly adjusting to the new principals and their new initiatives.

Summary

This section was included to help provide a context to the reader. School characteristics, specifically, student behavior, student readiness, parent involvement, and transiency, were discussed. High levels of student behavior problems and transiency, coupled with low levels parent involvement and readiness can contribute to teachers looking to migrate to a school that is more balanced.

School-Based Relationships

School based relationships can take many forms. This section focuses on relationships the participants had with both their colleagues and their principals. Relationships between principals and teachers impacts their satisfaction, cohesion, and levels of commitment (Price, 2012). Similarly, high instances of collegiality among teachers is a characteristic of successful schools (Shah, 2012). Almost all participants spoke fondly about their colleagues and the positive relationships they established at their former schools. In fact, most still keep in touch with former colleagues and, in some cases, participants' strong collegial relationships kept them at a school when they considered leaving previously. Participant relationships with their former principals were mixed. While all participants ultimately migrated to a different school, ones with strained principal relationships considered this their number one reason for migrating.

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Relationships with Colleagues

Most of the participants noted that they experienced positive relationships with their colleagues. Many noted they had very good relationships with their colleagues. Kennedy and Mackenzie described their relationships with their colleagues as family-like going on to call their colleagues a "big family" and noted that there was a family atmosphere at work. Olivia spoke about her immediate grade level team teachers and referred to them as "the dream team" and said, "The team was super tight-knit." However, she said she was not familiar with some of the other staff members that worked at the school. Her former campus is made up of five separate buildings, including the cafeteria. She joked, "And the people in the other buildings, the thing is, I didn't even know their names." While she and her immediate colleagues were close and had a great relationship with each other, the faculty as a whole was "not really tight-knit." Olivia's relationship with her "dream team" colleagues suggests that she was comfortable and happy to work with them. However, her strong relationship with them was not enough to keep her from migrating to a different school. Tyler spoke highly of his former colleagues and said they all "got along well" and that he learned a lot from two of his former colleagues. William spoke kindly about his colleagues at his former school too:

> I've had good colleagues and they were kind of, at Hawkins (pseudonym), what kept me
> sane and kept me going there because there were times because of discipline and issues
> that I was just done and ready to leave and without some of the colleagues there, I
> wouldn't have stayed.

William's comment suggests that there were times prior to his departure that he considered leaving but, at that time, his decision to stay was positively influenced by colleagues. Similarly to William, Grace also relied heavily on her colleagues. Specifically, she spoke about the

department chair and how she relied on her and looked at her like a mother, even commenting that she would not have stayed at that school without this colleague's help and support. "Now the math department head over there was awesome. She kind of took me under her wing. If it weren't for her, I don't think I would have made it." She went on to talk about how she enjoys collaborating, especially because of the limited resources available at the school. She said, "…we did work together…but I like to work together to shoot off ideas. Um, like I said, we didn't have a lot of resources so you had to." Grace, like William, considered leaving her former school before her eventual migration because of her strong relationship with her colleague and department chair. Grace and Mackenzie both referenced that at their previous schools, they would frequently get together, sometimes on a Friday or the weekends, and hang out with their colleagues. Moreover, both Grace and Mackenzie stated that their most positive experience or memory at their former school were the relationships they built with their coworkers. And, Brooke even mentioned that since she left, she still keeps in touch with former colleagues. Charlotte, however, had a different experience than the other participants. Initially, she got along great with her colleagues noting that like the other participants, she would frequently hang out with her colleagues outside of work. However, as her relationship with her colleagues deteriorated, their relationships became more and more tense. Charlotte felt that she was doing more work than anyone and "…if you call attention to someone that maybe isn't pulling their weight, that can be problematic and then you're seen as the problem." Her calling attention to others doing less was one of two influences that led to her choosing to migrate to a different school. For all but one participant, strong collegial relationships made staying and working at former schools a doable, and in some situations, pleasant. Participants were able to trust and rely

on their former colleagues, however, this strong relationship was not enough to keep them from migrating to a different school.

Clashing with colleagues. Charlotte's reason for applying for voluntary transfer was because she was struggling to get along with her colleagues. She said she applied because, "ultimately, it was because I could not get along with my coworkers." She talked about how she felt like her colleagues were not pulling their weight in the grade band. This irritated her because she felt like in addition to doing her job, she was picking up the slack from some coworkers. She mentioned how one teacher in particular did nothing to support her students. Also, she felt like teachers in her grade band demeaned students. She disagreed with how they were treating students and not only did it make her uncomfortable but she felt like she could not sit around and continue to watch. She also talked about her frustration with the administration at the school saying that her coworkers' behavior was "blatantly obvious" yet she felt like administration turned a blind eye to it. Charlotte no longer wanted to be connected or associated with behavior that she felt was unprofessional by her colleagues so she decided to migrate to a different school.

Relationship with School Principal

Unlike the generally positive relationships with colleagues, participant's relationships with their principals were mixed. Some spoke very highly of their leader and others struggled to find nice things to say about their leader. Participants that struggled to find complimentary things to say about their principal discussed how, for them, their relationship with their principal had a strong impact on their decision to migrate. For the ones that had positive experiences and relationships with their principal, their relationship with their principal did not impact their decision to migrate to a new school. Kennedy, Brooke, and William, for example, had wonderful things to say about their principal. Kennedy spoke about how she had traveled many

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times with her principal to different trainings and that she would hold the teachers accountable but not in a "micromanaging kind of way." She expressed her comfort with her leader and mentioned several times that "she gets it." This was in reference to the amount of work it took to help the students to improve their academic abilities. Brooke shared that she and her former principal had a rough start. She landed at that school as a result of the school system redistricting the students. This meant that some schools had to cut teachers and other schools needed additional teachers. She told me, "We were not good off at all; at the end of the year, we ended extremely bad." However, the beginning of the next school year, she stood up to him and from then on, they were on the same page. She noted, "he respected me" and even went on to say he was a "sweetheart." Likewise, William spoke highly about his relationship with his principal. William noted that he was "very supportive, very personable, [and] would stop and have a conversation with you about outside life; it wasn't always about school." He continued on telling me that before this former principal, he worked with a principal that came across as "brash and even rude." She, on the other hand, was not personable and his relationship with her was nonexistent. Additionally, he said the school always had openings and that they were "several teachers that would come in and last only a week, two weeks and leave." William mentioned that he thought this "turned off some people" making it difficult to establish a relationship with her. This principal had high amounts of turnover and constantly had job positions available at her school. Her inability or lack of effort to establish relationships with her teachers potentially contributed to the high amounts of turnover at her school.

Olivia's experience with her principal was somewhat mixed. She noted that there were inconsistencies in their relationship which made it difficult to work with her leader sometimes. She described their relationship as "hot and cold," going on to say that "every year and every day

was different" but overall Olivia was "thankful" for her principal. She shared how her former principal "saw leadership in me and she actually took me out of the classroom." The principal put her in an instructional coaching role to help support teachers. Olivia said that before her principal did that, she did not see herself as a leader; however, that opened her eyes to the possibilities and since then, she is even completed a master's degree.

Tyler's situation was different. He noted that his initial relationship with his former principal was "fine and then it went off the cliff…rather quickly." Tyler and his former principal got along well initially and then a particular circumstance created friction between them and caused their relationship to be strained so much to the point where his former principal did not want to talk to him anymore. While Tyler wanted to stay at his former school and continue working with his students that he had established relationships with; however, his tumultuous relationship with his principal and her efforts to retaliate against him put him in a position where he thought it would be best to migrate to a different school.

Conversely, Charlotte, Grace, and Mackenzie struggled with their relationships with their former principal. Mackenzie and Grace both noted the lack of support they got from their former principals. Mackenzie even commented in the interview, "…she sent me to a training and that was the only positive thing I can say about her." It was evident that she and her principal struggled to work together adding that she "used to walk on egg shells" out of fear of getting fussed at or written up. Grace said that she "didn't really have a relationship" with her former principal when she was there. She shared how she "left you alone" and that no one ever came into her classroom. She pointed out that the faculty was divided. "They had a very large racial divide there too, between the faculty [members], very large." The racial divide was cultivated by her former principal and fostered by like-minded colleagues. This divide was exacerbated when

she and several other colleagues were accused of cheating by the principal. Charlotte also struggled with her relationship with her principal. She described their relationship as standoffish:

> …[I] never felt like I could approach her with any real problems and I always had the expectation that my issues would be minimized, um, and not taken seriously and there was actually a level of, not fear, but apprehension all the time.

Charlotte went on to say that while she did not feel appreciated by her leader, she did feel "somewhat respected." Charlotte worked at her former school for several years. She felt respected in that she knew her content area and worked hard to prepare her students. However, her apprehension came into play when she wanted to discuss issues she had within her grade band with her principal.

In the interviews, when I asked about their most negative experience at their former school, Charlotte, Grace, Olivia, Tyler and Mackenzie all linked this experience to their former principal. Charlotte mentioned that the expectations for all teachers was not the same stating, "…we were expected to do a lot more where other people were allowed not to have responsibilities." Grace called her worst experience a "witch hunt" when she and colleagues were accused of cheating during testing going on to say, "come to find out, they [principal and testing leaders] did it and they were blaming it on us." She noted that the investigation showed that she and her colleagues did nothing wrong. Olivia spoke about how she did not know what she was going to get from day to day with her principal. She went on to say, "…me and my principal had a big blow out and they had people there from the district." She felt like her principal's unprofessionalism and the way she spoke to people was unacceptable and was such a negative experience for her. In the same vein, Mackenzie said that her principal was "large and

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in charge and you couldn't tell her anything." Mackenzie went on to explain that she felt like her former principal "was looking for you to do something wrong." She explained how the littlest thing would cause you to be written up and when a teacher tried to explain and share their side of the story, it did not matter, she just wanted the teacher to sign the write up. Similarly, Tyler's negative relationship with his principal after an incident caused multiple write ups. This contributed to negatives experiences until he transferred to a different school. According to Allensworth et al., (2009) teachers were less likely to leave schools when they have teacher-principal relationships with high levels of trust. The lack of trust among these participants and their former principals seemed to damage or stifle their relationship and contributed to their decision to migrate elsewhere.

More than half of the participants labeled their relationship with their former principal as negative or mixed which, for some, was their primary reason for migrating and for others, was a part of their reason for leaving. Others who had positive relationships with their former principals choose to leave regardless of their relationship. This speaks to the point that migration decisions are not always based on a single event or experience, but instead, migration can be viewed as multifaceted concept with multiple experiences contributing to decisions. Teachers' experiences do not occur in a vacuum and neither does their decisions to migrate.

Disagreements with the principal. Olivia also spoke about how her leader's actions influenced her decision to apply for a transfer to a different school. She spoke about two connected events that happened within a day of each other and that is why she knew she needed to apply for transfer. She shared, "…the way she spoke to her office staff, she did it to me one time and it was in front of the office staff and a few of my colleagues and I was like you know what, no way…" Olivia had been witness to how the principal spoke condescendingly to her

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office staff and while she did not think it was appropriate, it had never been directed at her before. Not only was Olivia frustrated by the lack of professionalism and respect displayed by her principal, this all occurred in front of her colleagues and other staff members. She went on to describe how the next day, her principal went back to her and brought up what happened the day before and this led to a dispute in front of district personnel. She said, "we kind of like had a fuss" and that sealed the deal and Olivia submitted her application for transfer. Olivia's perceived lack of professionalism and disrespect for her as a teacher by her principal led her to migrate to a different school.

Like Olivia, Tyler also had an issue with his former principal that led him to migrate. As previously mentioned, Tyler spoke to the school board publically regarding the excessive amounts of student testing throughout the district. His public comments at meeting led high level administrators to check in at his school damaging the relationship he had with his former principal. Tyler went from being "the department chair to being on an assistance plan." He felt like he was being unfairly targeted and retaliated against by his former principal because his public comments put his former school under a microscope. While he did not want to leave his former school, he felt like his former principal would continue to give him low evaluation scores and write him up so he chose to migrate to a different school.

Summary

Relationships, like most things in a school setting, require work and effort to cultivate them and help them grow. Most of the participants spoke highly about their colleagues noting that they continue to stay in touch with them even though they are at a different school. Principals, too, should work to establish positive relationships with their teachers. More than half of the teachers felt like they did not have a positive relationship with their leader and

expressed frustration with their leader and how they handled situations at school. This can be taxing on the school's culture as relationships that impact culture and climate are influenced by the principal (MacNeil, Prater, Busch, 2009).

Professional Atmosphere

Professional atmosphere in this study focuses on principal's leadership style and on recognizing teachers' efforts in their daily work. Some participants were complimentary of their former leader's style while others described their principals as "dictators" and disagreed with their former principal's style. Goleman (1990) suggests that effective leaders should not confirm to a single style but should move to different styles based on different situations. Further, half the participants spoke about how their efforts to help their students were recognized while others said their efforts were never recognized. This lack of recognition impacted teachers' motivation at their former schools. MacNeil, Prater, & Busch (2009) suggest that stronger school cultures support teacher motivation and those motivated teachers positively contribute to better student outcomes. For one participant, the lack of motivation, in addition to other factors contributed to her feeling burned out.

Leadership Style

Every leader has his or her own style when it comes to running a school. Goleman (1990) suggests that there are six different leadership styles (1) coercive, 2) authoritative, 3) affiliative, 4) democratic, 5) pacesetting, and 6) coaching) and that the best leaders do not conform to a single style, but, instead, are skilled at many different styles and can switch between them as different circumstances necessitate. Less than half of the participants had positive things to say about their leader's style. Olivia and Mackenzie both called their principals dictators. Olivia went on to say that while there was "autonomy in how you taught

kids", you had better be right and it better work (improve student achievement). If not, the administration would come in and tell you how to teach. She went on to describe her leader's style as "not reflective at all" and whenever things went wrong at school, "it was never her fault." Yet, she took full credit for the improved school performance score that the teachers and students worked hard to achieve. She said, "…but that B, the B school, that was all her. The work *she* put in." This principal's style is reflective of an authoritative leader. Mackenzie suggested that her leader was not open to new ideas, even from the leadership team which is reflective of a coercive leader's style. She shared an example from one of her leadership team meetings:

> …we had leadership team meetings once a week…like we would offer suggestions and
> strategies um things we saw in the data and she just…if it wasn't her idea or an extension
> of her idea, she would toss it…but I mean we're the ones working with the kids.

Mackenzie's frustration stemmed from the fact that the leadership team members were in the classrooms working directly with the students and knew exactly what students needed. The principal, it seemed, wanted to be able to take credit for any and all ideas that led to student improvement. Charlotte did not quite use the same wording to describe her principal's leadership style but she suggested the principal "led by fear and intimidation." This principal could be viewed as a coercive leader when she uses fear to lead. Grace's description of her former leader's style was that she "was not a leader…[she] didn't give a care, she was just there." She shared that the principal was never seen in the school and that "she was not active in the school." Grace, again, spoke about the department chair that she relied on heavily saying, "she was very much in charge." Grace relied on the department head and she often filled the void of the principal. Grace mentioned that Janet (pseudonym) would come in her room

sometimes and observe her and give her feedback on her instruction. Grace's department chair used a coaching leadership style when working with Grace which seems like a natural fit for someone with a department head role that seeks to improve on people's development.

Kennedy, Brooke, and William all had very positive descriptions of their leader's leadership style. Kennedy went on to describe her former principal's style as "very fair." Noting that the principal would "call you in and call you out when she needs to…" Kennedy's former principal seems to align with a pacesetting leadership style. She sets high standards and expects people to rise to them. William spoke about how his principal took input from everyone. Seeking input from everyone would be connected to an affiliative leader. He wanted to know "what was working for you, what wasn't working for you, what can we fix, what can we change…" Brooke's former leader displayed a pacesetting leadership style. She, too, had great things to say about her leader's style and how it focused on the students. She said, "…he would do anything for the kids..." and that he expected that you were doing everything you could to help the children in your classroom. If you did not, "he would call you out." In addition to being "pro kid," Brooke told me about how the principal's pay went back to those kids. She talked about how he lived in a rundown apartment and drove a dilapidated car even though he was making good money. She noted that he was rough on the teachers because he wanted everyone to give the kids 100%. She said, "I think that's why he was rough on us a lot because if we didn't hold the same opinion he did as far as the children, he was like, ok, good, you're gone." Brooke spoke about her former principal's commitment to doing anything he could to help these students and see them grow. Tyler struggled to define or describe his principal's leadership style. However, through the interview process, he was able to pin down a better explanation of what he perceived to be her leadership style:

…and now that I think about it maybe somedays it seemed democratic and some days it felt autocratic [coercive] and some days it was she was soft spoken and some days she was yelling at everybody so I don't know…

Tyler compared the principal's leadership to how teachers sometimes feel. Sometimes teachers feel frustrated and other times things are going great. Depending on the circumstances, that dictated her mood or approach.

For some, their principal's leadership style did not have an impact one way or another with regard to migration. However, for others, their former principal's style compounded with their negative relationships was enough to seek migration to a different school. Based on interview discussions, some leaders tended to stick with a single leadership style as opposed to switching between different ones as Goleman (2000) suggested.

Recognizing Teacher's Efforts

Some administrators are more apt to recognize teachers' efforts than others and some teachers need more recognition to motivate them than others. Tyler, Kennedy, Brooke, and William spoke about how their former principals recognized their efforts as a teachers. Tyler spoke about how his former principal made him department chair after his first year working at that school. William mentioned that his principal knew they were working in a "rough school" with some of the "lowest [test] scores" but he would recognize that everyone was doing their best. He talked about how he would "buy little gifts…goofy stuff, but that little stuff goes a long way." William appreciated the principal's efforts to recognize that his job was tough and that he was trying to do his best. Similarly, both Kennedy and Brooke spoke about how they always felt appreciated by their former principal. Kennedy shared how her principal (and teachers) would "write little thank you notes or little notes of encouragement." While this was a practice that was

started by the principal before, Kennedy's former principal continued the tradition and it resonated with her. In a similar example, Brooke's principal would write thank you letters too.

> He would always have someone come around and sneak and have people take pictures of us in our room and then he would write or type but we could tell it was from him individualized [notes] and send it someone in our family saying how much he appreciated us and everything…

She continued on saying, "I mean you knew you were appreciated." She also mentioned that she would pilot different programs for her principal and would then have to turn around and reteach it to the faculty. Brooke was clearly proud of this. When she spoke about it in the interview, she had a huge smile on her face and spoke confidently. Brooke's principal obviously trusted and believed in her teaching abilities or he would not have asked her to constantly pilot new programs and then train the faculty.

Olivia's experience was rather different. Olivia spoke about how she was only recognized once by her principal and it was in reference to her great test scores. As far as recognizing her efforts in any other way, that did not happen. Similarly, Mackenzie struggled to think of a time when her principal recognized her. She did mention that there was one time where her principal gave her a shout out on the intercom and recognized her for being "very engaging and hands on with my kids." The principal suggested that people go into her classroom and watch her morning routine. However, the principal did not put any additional supports in place to allow teachers to visit Mackenzie's room. Grace, on the other hand, said there was absolutely no recognition of her efforts. Grace also mentioned that she thinks this lack of recognition, mixed with lack of support led to burnout and possibly the high teacher turnover rate. Charlotte, like Grace, did not feel that her efforts were recognized at all. She felt like there

was always "some sort of doubt in her mind." Charlotte spoke about a time when her test scores were commended at a school board meeting and that was never acknowledged by the administration at the school. However, a coworker of hers was recognized many times for her test scores and it was suggested that "I should collaborate more with her even though I collaborated with her quite a bit and gave her so much of *my* materials and the children that are already prepared." She went on to say that she does not need accolades because that is not what motivates her but an occasional good job goes a long way for her.

Summary

A leader's style has major influence on the school's culture (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, Pickeral, 2009; Pepper & Thomas, 2002). Leaders that were viewed as fair are also ones that recognized their teacher's efforts. Conversely, teachers who suggested that their principal's styles were negative were also ones that said their efforts were not recognized. Moreover, ones that suggested their efforts were not recognized did not want constant recognition, just occasional acknowledgement of the work they were doing to help their students. While none of the participants said that they specifically migrated elsewhere due to their leader's style or lack of recognition, for some it was clearly a source of frustration and, when compounded with other issues like negative relationships it elicited enough dissatisfaction that the teacher migrated to a different school.

Leader Support

Leaders are tasked with wearing many hats when running a school. Among them includes extending continued support and opportunities for teacher growth. For participants in this study, leader support took many forms from adjusting a teacher's schedule to help him get field hours to using teacher feedback to better develop professional development sessions to

better meet the needs of the teachers. Conversely, some participants discussed how they did not receive support from their former leaders. Hughes, Matt, & O'Reilly (2015) suggest that positive amounts of teacher support are needed in a positive work environment. This suggests that all principals should be showering their teachers with high amounts of support. With regards to the extra responsibilities participants took on at their former schools, participants spoke about how they did not mind taking on the extra work.

Career Advancement

Most of the participants said that their principals worked to advance their careers as teachers and while that may look different for each participant, they all acknowledged they felt positively about this. Kennedy said she felt like her principal helped to advance her career. She noted that when she applied to transfer to a different school, her former principal "supported me…she wasn't bitter; she was like if that's what you need to do, go for it." Kennedy's move to a different school allowed her to teach a different grade level and expose her to new math curriculum. Similarly, William was allowed to move to a special education position once one became available. William said his principal knew that if he continued in education, he wanted to teach special education students. Once he took that special education position, he was still in school working on an additional degree. This degree required William to complete field hours. He spoke about how his principal supported his efforts to complete this certification:

> …he even gave me time that he would let me um get a sub for my room to do my shadow hours…he let me schedule days when he knew the diagnostician was going to be back at Hawkins...also he would let me go to other schools…like he didn't force me to take off even though I said I would. He made it work.

William's praise of his former principal's support was clearly appreciated and helped him to get the necessary hours to finish his degree.

Brooke spoke about how her principal always pushed for her to go back to get her master's degree. Brooke pushed back citing that she had no ambition to go into administration and she did not want to deal with parents more than she already did. He also suggested that she get her National Board certification. Whenever he would observe her, his comments would be, "please place this on [the] teachers pay teachers" website. Olivia's leader also saw leadership potential in her and pulled her from the classroom:

> She took me out of the classroom so I became more like an instructional leader…she did give me that confidence because I never saw myself as a leader…I didn't have a problem with teaching but now I do see myself as a leader and I didn't see that before.

Without such an opportunity, Olivia likely would not have seen her dynamic abilities and gifts for supporting students and teachers.

Mackenzie spoke about how her principal acknowledged her engaging practices in the classroom and sent her to trainings to become an engagement specialist with the intention of her being the expert on campus and training the faculty. Charlotte, Tyler and Grace had different experiences when asked about if and how their leaders helped to advance their career. Charlotte suggested that her former principal could have changed the workload "allowing me to be able to do what I needed to do instead of …doing other people's jobs." Charlotte was creating multiple differentiated lesson plans for her students, in addition to scripted lesson plans for all of her intervention groups for the interventionists that pushed in, and specific lesson plans for the special education students even though they had a teacher in her classroom with them. Towards the end, Charlotte was writing "18 lesson plans" a week. She went on to explain that it was

overwhelming and that she just could not keep up. Grace adamantly said that her principal did

not work to advance her career. She went on to explain that administration had "no idea what I

was doing in my room." She said she could have been back there doing nothing and "no one

would know the difference." With the exception of brief, planned observations, she did not see

her principal. She spoke about how there were teachers at that school that were doing nothing

with no consequence. While frustrating, Grace continued to teach her students regardless of the

unsupportive administration. Tyler suggested that making him department head was a "step in

the right direction" for advancing his career but in the end, due to what Tyler described as

retaliation, he was put on plan to increase his classroom and instructional competencies. This

plan is typically a tool used in this district to support low performing teachers and help to

increase their capacity as a teacher. This odd predicament occurred because Tyler spoke

publically at a school board meeting regarding extremely high amounts of testing throughout

schools in his district. Unintentionally, this led high level administrators to check in at Tyler's

school causing major problems between him and his former principal.

Some teachers experienced opportunities for support and career advancement. For

example, William's principal made schedule modifications so that he could gain field hours for

his master's degree. Similarly, Brooke's former principal constantly suggested that she go back

and get her master's degree because it could open new doors for her. Mackenzie's former

principal sent her to trainings with the intent of her becoming the school's engagement specialist.

These principals made efforts to advance these teachers' career path. Though these teachers

ultimately chose to migrate, perhaps this sustained them at their previous school longer.

Conversely, others were not offered opportunities to expand on their current teaching position.

Leaders can influence their teachers' career trajectories. For many participants, their leaders did

nothing to help advance their career and, for them, this could be a contributing reason as to why they migrated.

Teacher Professional Growth

Teacher growth is different from career advancement in that teacher growth focuses on improving teachers' instructional capacity. For example, principals may increase teacher capacity or grow teachers by providing professional development opportunities for them or sending them to trainings to increase their capacity in the specific subject that they teach or providing constructive feedback during classroom observations.

Three of the teachers spoke about how their former leaders worked diligently to support their growth as a teacher. William discussed how his principal would frequently send him and his colleagues to professional development sessions to help improve their practices. He went on to give an example of a time when they had a district-mandated professional development day. He said, "It was the same thing for like our professional developments, he did all the needed stuff (district-mandated) but for the little breakout sessions or whatever, he got feedback from us beforehand to know what we want." His principal would find out areas where teachers were struggling or something they wanted to know more about and he would try to find professional development that fit their need. Brooke's principal would also send teachers to different professional development workshops. He gave teachers things to use in class and would go in and watch teachers and make suggestions. She said, "He would look and see and say ok, that's not working, try this." Kennedy commented about how her principal provided a lot of constructive feedback in evaluations that helped her grow. "She would not only tell you what to improve but how, like let me give you some suggestions…" She went on to say that her principal was giving you real stuff, not fluff to help you improve. Contrary to Kennedy, Olivia's

principal gave a lot of fluff in her evaluation reports. Olivia commented how she wanted real, honest feedback. She said, "You can't see yourself so what you're doing you think might work" suggesting that her principal should not "…just give some generic feedback that you felt like giving." Olivia wanted to know where she went wrong in her lesson so she could become a better teacher. Grace and Tyler said their principals never supported their growth. Grace said the only person supporting her was the department chair. Tyler shared an example of how he went to his principal with a project for the students and she shot down the project. He went on to point out that, at that time, he did not think that her focus was a student project, but more about minimizing fights and working to ensure that staff members did not walk out. Charlotte thought her principal was indifferent to her growth unless it benefitted her in some way. She found it "very hard to take off to pursue growth opportunities." She also shared how, in her opinion, her principal created a very competitive environment among teachers making it difficult to "work collaboratively and share ideas so everyone was on the same track towards improvement." Mackenzie did not think that her principal helped her growth as a teacher. She spoke about how during things like walk-throughs, "it was always what she didn't see." Mackenzie commented how her former principal did not offer many compliments and always focused on the negative. For example, she said her principal walked into her room and said she noticed that two students were off task. Mackenzie said, "I'm like ok well I've got 25 what about the other 23?" There were limited opportunities for growth because there was such a focus on the negative.

Childress (2014) suggests that principals are a critical component for teacher growth. If principals are not working to intentionally grow their teachers and build their capacity, then some teachers may view that is frustrating and choose to find a leader that can help them to become better at their craft and, therefore, choose to migrate to a different school. None of the

participants said they chose to migrate because of lack of teacher growth but this, compounded with other things discussed, could have been part of their migration decision.

Extra Responsibilities

Everyone with the exception of Grace spoke about their involvement with some type of extra responsibility. Grace mentioned in her interview that because the kids did not attend a neighborhood school, there were not many opportunities for extra responsibilities or extra-curriculars. Charlotte felt like the extra responsibilities were beginning to take over her personal life. "It became a lot of responsibility and that's ultimately what led to me having to depart…it was very intrusive to my personal life." These responsibilities included running the student newspaper and creating common assessments, to name a few. She explained that she went to an administrator in an attempt to minimize responsibility and her administrator was not helpful in alleviating some of the responsibilities. Mackenzie did not mind her extra responsibility of supporting teachers in her grade cluster. However, she became frustrated because she could not complete her responsibilities with fidelity because of lack of support from her principal. She explained, "…most times, I would have to do it [teacher observations] during my planning time or I would have to find my own person to cover my class." There was not any time built into her schedule to support her cluster teachers and her principal said if the teachers needed support, they could speak with the interventionists on campus. Mackenzie felt that this leader did not create a conducive environment that allowed her to support her peers. This, among other things, frustrated Mackenzie. Her former principal clearly viewed her as leader on campus but this, in addition to her negative relationship with her principal and lack of support, made it an easy decision for her to migrate to a different school.

Kennedy, Tyler, William, and Brooke talked about their extra responsibilities and how they did not mind having the extra responsibilities. Kennedy went on to say that she could take care of her extra responsibilities during her planning time and her principal made it easy to meet with parents, when necessary. Similarly, William was helping to implement a new testing initiative at his school. He spoke about helping to distribute materials and print out answer sheets then help disaggregate the data with the new data person. He said he did not mind helping because he knew his principal was appreciative. "I didn't mind doing it for him because he appreciated it; he was grateful." Brooke, like William, did not mind helping and felt that she was appreciated when she took on the additional responsibility of running the after school program. Olivia, talked about a few different extra responsibilities but spoke fondly about the Happy Kids group that she facilitated that allowed students leadership opportunities which improved their self-esteem. She said, "Happy Kids, I enjoyed it…I loved it!" In speaking about his extra responsibility of department head, Tyler said that he "was fine with it" and noted that this was not his first time being a department chair at one of the schools he had taught at. These teacher took on additional responsibilities and seemed to enjoy them. However, this did not stop them from deciding to migrate to a different school.

Summary

With a leader's support and knowledge, they can provide opportunities for career advancement and growth of teachers. Additionally their teachers may be more willing to accept additional responsibilities on campus. Participants who found their leaders to be supportive noted that they also helped to advance their career and offered growth opportunities. Almost all of the participants spoke about the many extra responsibilities that took on at their previous school. Many did not mind the extra work and it these responsibilities required. For the

participants that spoke about the lack of support they received from their former principal this may have played a role in their decision to move to a different school as they sought to find a supportive teaching environment.

Conclusion

This study examined the experiences of eight school teachers that have recently voluntarily applied for and transferred to a different school within their district. The following major themes arose from the data analysis: 1) school characteristics, 2) school-based relationships, 3) professional atmosphere, and 4) leader support. Though each school is different and has its own set of dynamics and culture suggesting that all teachers' experiences are not the same, all participants were happy with their decision to voluntarily transfer to their current school.

Chapter Five

Discussion

This phenomenological study considered the experiences of public school teachers that led them to migrate to a different school within their school district. This chapter discusses the findings from chapter four and also makes connections to the literature as well as Motivation-Hygiene Theory (1959). Additionally, this chapter will include policy recommendations and implications for future research.

Discussion of Findings

While literature specific to migration is limited, qualitative research on intra-district migration is even more limited (Feng, 2009). Research on migration frequently uses qualitative methods and surveys to gain a better understanding of why teachers choose to migrate voluntarily to a different school (Allensworth et al., 2009; Clotfelter et al, 2011; Elfers, Plecki, & Knapp, 2006). This study was conducted to have a better understanding of the experiences that led teachers to voluntarily migrate to a different school within their current district and answer the research question: *What experiences contributed to teachers' decisions to migrate to a different school in the same district voluntarily?* Based on the responses of the participants, four major themes emerged: 1) school characteristics, 2) school-based relationships, 3) professional atmosphere, and 4) leader support. This section will summarize comments by theme and draw connections to experiences that led teachers to migrate to different schools.

School Characteristics

There can be many components of school characteristics. For this study, the focus was on student behavior, readiness, parent involvement, and teacher and student transiency. With regard to student behavior, some participants noted that student behavior was not an issue in their

schools and others shared experiences of dealing with violent students in their former schools. In this study, it was clear that student behavior ran from one end of the spectrum to the other. When students are disrespectful or violent, these learning environments becomes more focused on addressing student behavior and less focused on student learning. LaCoe (2016) suggests that when students feel unsafe in the classroom, it can negatively impact their academic performance. Moreover, teachers are likely to remain in schools where they feel their students are safe (Allensworth et al, 2009). Cornell & Mayer (2010) suggest that the order and safety of schools is important in studies about teacher attrition, among other things. Therefore, when learning environments are regularly unsafe for students, teachers may look elsewhere to find a school site that they deem safe for the students they service.

Similar to student behavior, student readiness was a mixed bag for the teachers studied here. Teachers spoke about high performing or exceptionally low performing students, yet all of them migrated to different schools. Low levels of student readiness in high number of students may have teachers seeking to work in higher performing schools. It is the case in this study that all but one teacher chose to migrate to a school that was higher performing than their former school. This is based on the former school's and the current school's School Performance Score (SPS) at the time of migration. Clotfleter, Ladd, Vigdor, & Wheeler (2007) suggest that when it comes to students' achievement, teachers are a critical component. That being said, teachers in high-poverty schools may choose to transfer to a more desirable school (Feng, 2009). Furthermore, Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner (2007) suggest that teachers who start their careers in lower performing schools with lower performing students are likely to change schools. Low performing schools compounded with the current accountability reforms systems may push migrating teachers to seek a school that is higher performing. Feng, Figlio, & Sass (2010)

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propose that it is more common for teachers in schools with increased accountability pressures or failing schools than for teachers to leave schools that are higher performing and are facing less accountability pressure. This suggests that teachers working in low performing school are likely to seek a change and move to a school that is higher performing. Connected to student readiness is the idea of student transiency which can contribute to students' academic difficulties (Scherrer, 2013).

Similar to the previous discussion, parent involvement at different schools was perceived as both high and low. Participants spoke about their experiences of low levels of parent involvement at their former schools. One could offer that if a teacher felt more supported by a parent then they may be likely to establish stronger relationships and remain connected to the school. However, teachers working in schools with high levels of parent involvement were not deterred from migrating to a different school. While Shah (2009) suggests that strong parent relationships are connected to increased student achievement, these relationships, or lack thereof, did not seem to have an impact one way or another with regards to teachers' migration decisions.

School-based Relationships

Teachers' relationships with their colleagues were mostly positive in this research. Almost all participants had positive comments regarding their colleagues. Strong collegial relationships are important in schools as they are helpful in establishing high trust environments where communication is open and information exchange is high (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). However, regardless of the collegial relationships discussed among most participants, these strong, positive relationships were not enough to keep teachers from migrating to a different school. Perhaps this is because once these relationships were established, teachers felt that even if they moved on to a different school, they would still be able to maintain relationships with

former colleagues. It could also be because teachers may feel their somewhat isolated view of their relationships with colleagues as just a small piece of their connection to a school.

With regard to the findings about participants' relationships with former principals, it was found that the principal has a large impact on a teacher's decision to voluntarily migrate. Specifically, when interactions or relationships between the participant and the former principal were negative or when the participant did not feel they were getting the necessary support from their leader, this was mentioned as a reason for migration (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Elfers et al., 2006). It is important to also note that in the cases where participants had positive relationships with their former principal, similar to collegial relationships with their teaching peers, this was still not enough to keep the participant from migrating to a different school. This seems to show that having positive relationships with former colleagues and/or former principals is not enough of a reason to keep a teacher from choosing to migrate. However, when those relationships are negative, it seems to be a major reason teachers choose to leave. Herzberg et al., (1959) discusses relationships with both colleagues and leaders as a hygiene factor. These relationships must be cultivated and doing so could be a factor that pushes employees to have no dissatisfaction. However, ignoring relationships and not working to build them could, in turn, lead to increased job dissatisfaction.

Professional Atmosphere

The participants spoke about their former principal's actions and provided examples of their perceived leadership style. Participants that spoke highly about their former principals and their leadership styles were labeled as having pacesetting or affiliative styles. However, participants that had leaders with a coercive or authoritative style had negative comments about their former principals' style. Goleman (1990) suggests that strong leaders do not have a

singular leadership style, but, instead, one that transitions based on situations. In essence, strong leaders are ones that can fluidly change their style as needed. Similar to the previous school-based relationship discussion, even when participants were complimentary of their former principal's leadership styles, they too still chose to migrate to a different school. The recognition of teachers' efforts was very mixed among participants. Whether or not a teachers' efforts were recognized at their former school was not a reason that participants used as a determinant to solidify their decision to migrate to a different school. Teacher praise, however, can have an impact on teacher's morale and, furthermore, low levels of morale in schools have been linked to lack of recognition (Willis & Varner, 2010). The school climate is influenced by the school principal (MacNeil et al., 2009) which can have a positive or negative impact on teachers' morale in a school. Recognition or lack of it seems to be more connected to a school's climate as opposed to a component of a teacher's migration decision.

Leader Support

Participants spoke about their former leaders' levels of support through actions associated with career advancement, growth, and extra responsibilities. About half of the participants noted that their former principals worked to advance their career and helped them to grow as a teacher through things like evaluation feedback or additional professional development. With regard to teachers' professional growth, Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009) believe that not only are leaders responsible for creating conditions that support teachers to be effective instructors, but those supports help to build teachers' capacity, thus improving student achievement. This suggests that leaders are responsible for supporting teachers' growth to become better teachers. Of course, participants that spoke highly of their former leader's support still chose to migrate to a different school. Similarly, those that spoke negatively also

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chose to migrate to a new school. This shows that even when participants felt highly supported by their former principals, they still chose to leave. The teachers in this study that chose to leave their supportive former principals left because they either needed a change of environment or the commute was becoming too much. Ingersoll (2004) suggests that unsupportive leaders can increase turnover in schools. Moreover, retaining employees can be driven by an environment that is supportive (Perryer, Jordan, Firns, & Travaglione, 2010). While research may suggest that leader support is an important consideration with regard to decreasing turnover, the participants in this study that worked under supportive former principals still chose to leave. Perhaps former principal's support may have resulted in them staying at their former school longer, however, their eventual decision was to migrate nonetheless.

Relation to Research Question

This study sought to better understand intra-district voluntary teacher migration. Much of the research on this topic uses surveys as a means to retrieve data (Allensworth et al., 2009; Boe, Cook, Sunderland, 2008; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2011; Elfers, Plecki, & Knapp, 2006; Feng, 2009; Hancock, 2009; Ingersoll, 2000; Ingersoll, 2001a; Ingersoll, 2001b; Ingersoll, 2003a; Ingersoll, 2003b; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; Lee, Gerhart, Weller, & Trevor, 2008; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005; National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). This research suggests that turnover is highest in the early years of a teacher's career and again around retirement (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). Teacher turnover rates are lower in school where leaders are supportive (Allensworth et al., 2009; Ingersoll, 2000). Not all turnover is bad and it can bring innovation and phase out ineffective teachers (Alliance of Excellent Education, 2008).   For this qualitative study, a single research question was posed in

an effort to better understand the experiences that influenced and led to teachers applying for and securing a voluntary transfer within a school district:

What experiences contributed to teachers' decisions to migrate to a different school in the same district voluntarily?

This sole question was the basis for the study. Because this research focused on the beginning phases of the teacher migration process, this question sought to understand how school-related experiences contributed to participants' decisions to voluntarily transfer. Teachers shared that they were pleased with their decision to migrate to a different school voluntarily and do not currently have plans to migrate to a different school. In their former schools, however, some participants' struggled to establish positive relationship with their principal while one participant struggled to find her love of teaching. While every participant came from a different school and had a different experience, ultimately their decision to transfer was not very different. Johnson & Simon (2015) suggest that school's leadership, relationships between colleagues, and a school's culture are predictors of teachers' job satisfaction and, in turn, their intention to stay at a school. Ladd (2011) echoed that teacher's perceptions of school leadership also determined turnover. The participants overall remarks regarding their decision to migrate support Ladd's findings. Charlotte chose to move to a new school because she could not get along with her colleagues anymore. This frustration spilled over into administration as she disagreed with how certain situations were handled and she felt like the best thing for her to do was relocate to a different school. In reference to school leader relationships, both Tyler and Olivia initially had positive relationships with their former principals. Then, however, after a disagreements with their former principals (Tyler felt like he was being unfairly targeted by his principal and Olivia did not like the way her principal spoke to her and felt she did not exhibit

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professional behavior), their relationships were fractured and never recovered so they felt it was best to leave. If any single factor can be identified in the data collected here, it is that extremely negative relationships with either teaching colleagues or the school principal are important factors in a teacher's migration decision. While much of the interview data focused on aspects of participants' former schools that were equally positive and negative-few were directly connected to teachers' migration decisions as these negative relationships. Participants said things like "I could not get along with my coworkers" and "[I] needed a big change of environment [where I could] be supported."

Other than toxic relationships with former colleagues or principals, there were a host of very particular situations which gave rise to participants' transfer decision. William and Kennedy both applied to transfer because they could not be guaranteed the same teaching position they held the previous school year. Grace, like Brooke and Mackenzie, all needed a change of environment. Grace described her workplace as hell and Brooke was burned out. According to the Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter (1996), burnout can be defined as "a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment…" (p. 192). Moreover, as it relates to educators, burnout effects teachers and can be seen through attrition data (Chang, 2009). Brooke's migration helped her to minimize the burnout felt from her former school. Mackenzie was frustrated with the lack of principal support and thought a different school might offer her a better environment to teach her students.

Because each participant worked at a different school formerly, they all had different experiences that contributed to their decision to migrate to a different school. Based on participants' responses, there was not a universal reason or focus that all or almost all participants touted as an experience that contributed to their decision to migrate. Essentially,

because there was not a pattern of responses that could point to one or two experiences that caused them to migrate, there is no essence to this phenomenon. Similar to Lindqvist, Nordanger, & Carlsson's (2014) suggestion that teacher attrition is not only a complex phenomenon but also non-linear, data in this study shows that intra-district teacher migration is a multi-faceted and layered phenomena. The differences in school characteristics, relationships, atmosphere, and support varied from school to school and person to person and, thus, participants' reasons for choosing to migrate did not have a single focus.

Connection to Theory

The Motivation-Hygiene Theory (1959) suggests that the continuum for factors associated with job satisfaction are separate from ones associated with job dissatisfaction. Leaders should strive to eliminate job dissatisfaction creating a feeling of no dissatisfaction and increase motivators that lead to job satisfaction. Higher levels of job satisfaction would seem to be supported by lower levels of teacher migration.

High levels of hygiene mixed with high levels of motivation, in theory, would create a situation where teachers were highly motivated and a likelihood of low turnover. However, this study did not support this theory fully. According to Motivation-Hygiene Theory, motivators should be increased to improve job satisfaction. Specifically, with regard to recognition, extra responsibility and advancement, participants were apt to stay at a school just because these things occurred. While the participants seemed to appreciate the recognition and opportunities for advancement, these were not motivators that kept teachers from migrating elsewhere. In all circumstances, whether high or low amounts of motivating factors, all participants migrated, by the design of this study. This contradicts a study from Perrachione et al., (2008) whereby their survey findings strongly aligned with Motivation-Hygiene Theory. Specifically, motivation and

hygiene factors have a positive influence on satisfaction and their intent to remain in the profession; thus, there may be evidence to suggest Herzberg et al., (1959) may be somewhat predictive in cases of professional departure, but less predictive in cases of migration. Similarly, a study of college students also suggests that teachers should provide students with motivators and meet their students' hygiene needs suggesting that doing so could increase students' motivation (Katt & Condly, 2009). The hygiene factors discussed in this research are connected to school-based relationships and possibility of growth. Again, while nearly all participants had strong collegial relationships, this was not influential in their decision to migrate. Moreover, while about half of the participants had strong relationships with their former principals and the others did not, all study participants chose to migrate so those positive relationships did not stop teachers from migrating. Teacher growth and building capacity can come from opportunities afforded by the principal. However, again while participants wanted supportive leaders, teacher professional growth or the lack of it was not specifically an area that kept teachers from transferring to a different school.

In relation to the education field, this theory may be more fitting to teacher attrition studies as opposed to teacher migration. When teachers migrate, they may move to a school that has opportunities for additional responsibility or high levels of recognition from the principal. However, those ideas are very different from those who seek to climb the "corporate ladder." For example, in education, one cannot advance their career to be an administrator without either a certification or extensive additional shadowing/leadership hours (Educational Leader Certification Packet, 2015). Career advancement in education can take years. In the corporate world however, there can be multiple levels between an entry level position and a manager. These levels can each come with new titles and additional pay and benefits. In teaching, the

steps to climbing the career ladder are far and few between (teacher, department chair, and

administrator). In this study, teachers' migration decisions were not influenced by recognition,

achievement, and additional responsibilities as those things do not necessarily lead to career

advancement like it could in the corporate world.

Based on data from this study, burnout could be added to the hygiene factors list.

Teacher burnout is frequently associated with teacher turnover and burnout can lead to job

dissatisfaction (Carson, Baumgartner, Matthews, & Tsouloupas, 2010). When teachers burnout,

they are more likely to experience job dissatisfaction. Teacher burnout does not occur in one day

but over a stretch of time and, while it is not a permanent condition, it cannot be erased overnight

(Blazer, 2010). Blazer suggests that burnout is impacted by lack of support from leaders, among

other things. Clearly burnout negatively impacts teachers, and therefore, negatively impacts the

students. Increased supports can minimize teacher burnout and help to create no dissatisfaction

in the hygiene category of the Motivation-Hygiene Theory.

Migration as Professional Growth

As previously mentioned, attrition and migration data are typically viewed under a single

teacher turnover statistic. Much of this research paints teacher movement in a negative light.

For example, research suggests that teacher movement impacts instructional coherence (Johnson

et al., 2005), student achievement (Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Watlington et al., 2010) and district and

school funds (The Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). These findings are accepted and

challenging them would be beyond the scope of the study reported here. Similarly, research also

suggests that teacher movement is typically caused because teachers are unhappy in their current

position or at their current school for whatever reason (Headden, 2014; Ingersoll, 2001b;

Ingersoll, 2004; Loeb et al., 2005; Simon & Johnson, 2015). However, interview data from this study may provide another perspective, that of *teacher migration as professional growth*.

Given the bias in the existing research base that teachers leave schools due to negative conditions, I anticipated that in participants' interviews, they would have mostly negative comments about their former schools. To my surprise, I found that many of the participants were generally happy at their former schools and some were even very complimentary of their former situation at their previous school. For example, Kennedy noted that she got along with her colleagues, liked and respected her boss, loved to watch her students grow, and noted that her former principal not only promoted her professional growth but also recognized her efforts in the classroom. Similarly, William discussed positive collegial and principal relationships, support for his professional growth and recognition for his efforts. Other participants shared similar sentiments as both Tara and William. However, even though some participants were generally happy at their former schools, they still chose to migrate to a different school. I would argue that school districts that are tracking any type of movement would not anticipate that these teachers, who were so complimentary of their former schools, would be the ones choosing to apply for and receive a voluntary transfer. This notion seems to put a wrinkle in the current teacher turnover literature.

Data from this research seems to suggest that things beyond the typical unsupportive leaders or student behavior (Ingersoll, 2004; Loeb et al., 2005) may not always be predictive of teacher movement and this may need further consideration. Some participants in this study described their leaders as supportive and did not reference major discipline problems in their classroom but migrated to a different school. While there was not explicit data to indicate such, the lack of negative comments about participants' previous schools may indicate they chose to

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migrate to different schools in an effort to enhance their own professional growth. Moving to a different school can offer new opportunities for professional learning and meeting new colleagues. Similarly, this may offer moving teachers the chance to share their knowledge with their new peers or become members of the school's leadership team. These opportunities may not have been readily available at their former school or teachers may find that a change of environment can offer opportunities to grow. Perhaps these generally happy teachers who chose to migrate anyway are seeking to find ways to personally increase their professional growth as a teacher. So frequently, people think of professional growth as a responsibility of a school or district. However, the lack of negative comments about former schools made by many participants in this study may suggest that sometimes teachers migrate to different schools in an effort to increase their own professional growth.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The recommendations from this study are based on the findings and data implications. While the findings show that there are not patterned responses from participants to suggest that one or two experiences led teachers in this study to migrate, teachers did offer specific reasons why they chose to migrate to a different school. These recommendations highlight suggestions that might work to reduce the number of teachers applying for voluntary, lateral transfers within a district. While these transfers do not result in attrition from the profession, they are a component of teacher turnover (Boe et al., 2008; Ingersoll, 2001) which leaves the previous school site less stable and searching to fill a position.

Recommendations for District Leaders

Because mobility can be so costly to all stakeholders (Adnot et al., 2017; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Ronfeldt et al., 2013), districts should monitor and track teacher

mobility. Minimizing teacher mobility could have positive effects for all stakeholders. Some of the participants discussed that their negative relationship with former their principal contributed to their decision to apply for voluntary transfer. One participant spoke about the high principal turnover rate at her former school. Districts may want to consider the vetting processes they have in place before someone becomes a principal at a school within that district. Is there a leadership pipeline that may offer future principals necessary exposure to different school situations that may be helpful to know in their future endeavor to be a school leader? Dai, Tang, and DeMeuse (2010) suggest that the development of leaders should follow a roadmap and districts should be creative and thoughtful when creating these maps. These roadmaps will guide future leaders to have a better understanding of supported policies and practices to engage in at the school level.

Because districts are only as successful as the schools in their district, it is important for district leaders to ensure that school principals are receiving continuous professional development to help them develop skills that support their growth in becoming a well-rounded school leader. Cook (2014) suggests that a teacher's performance is directly impacted by the school's leadership. Exposing principals to different leadership structures can also help to improve relationships within a school. For example, servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) suggests that great leaders are servants first; principals are servants to their teachers, faculty, students, and stakeholders. Spears (2010) suggests that the characteristics of servant leaders include, but is not limited to, listening, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. Training school leaders how to embody these characteristics can support efforts to establish positive climates and culture which may minimize the number of teacher transfer requests. District and school leaders should participate in trainings together and then discuss

plans on how to implement trainings into the school setting. When the superintendent, district leaders, and school leaders are on the same page, it is beneficial to all stakeholders. Waters & Marzano (2007) suggest that there is a relationship between student achievement and district leadership. Moreover, effective superintendents make goal-oriented growth a priority and should support district and school leaders to provide stability (Waters & Marzano, 2007). Decreasing in-district mobility may offer more stability, especially in high poverty schools (Grissom, 2011). Perhaps districts should look to see what they are doing to stabilize schools.

Though a school's culture is not built in a day, schools that are intentional in establishing a positive culture thrive and ones with a weak culture barely survive (Peterson & Deal, 2002). Some participants in this study did mention that they lacked support from their former principals. In addition to creating positive cultures that are supportive, Soehner & Ryan (2011) suggest that stability promotes positive relationships. Therefore, school culture, stability, and positive relationships are all interconnected concepts that can impact a school and its stakeholders. While this research showed that having a positive relationships with former principals did not stop some teachers from migrating, there were participants that chose to leave their former schools because of a surface level relationship with their former principal.

While it would seem to be beneficial to students and other stakeholders to minimize teacher migration (Guin, 2004; Neild, Useem, Travers, & Lesnick, 2003; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013; Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Felsher, 2010), it should also be noted that all of the participants in this study voiced that they were very happy at their current schools and, at this time, had no intention to migrate or leave the profession. That being said, it is important to remember that not all turnover, including migration, is bad (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). This brings attention to the importance of teachers working in schools that are

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a good fit for them. Participants mentioned that in their new schools, they experienced increased levels of comfort with the new principal, did not have to prove themselves to their new principal, and were able to focus efforts on teaching students, among other things. Had these teachers not been able to change schools though the intra-district migration process, they may have become part of the attrition statistic. Therefore, working to eliminate migration all together may not be the right solution. Instead decreasing migration and working on the front end to place teachers in schools that are a good fit for them may be an important consideration.

Lastly, a few teachers mentioned the commute to and from work was wearing on them and finding a school closer to their house was a perk of their recent transfer. In districts where Human Resource departments are assisting schools with securing teacher candidates to work at individual schools, it may be an important consideration to staff schools with teachers that live in close proximity to the school. Thomson & Kekily (2011) suggest that mothers' number one focus is their children and this sometimes prompts renegotiation of professional and personal boundaries. However, if schools were in close proximity to a teacher's residence, this may eliminate unnecessary drive time and even promote a better work-life balance. This could also decrease teacher burnout which has a negative impact on performance and could increase chances of retention (Brunsting, Sreckovic, & Lane 2014). When recruiting teachers to work at school, this may be a consideration for district level staffers and school principals. If teachers have the opportunity to work in close proximity to their homes and families, they may be less likely to transfer to a different school.

Recommendations for School Leaders

Tentama & Pranungsari (2016) suggest that "the presence of highly-committed employees will lead the organization to a beneficial condition since they will work more

effectively and will participate in any activities to maintain its survival" (p. 39). This statement argues that highly-committed employees are willing to go above and beyond for the sake of the organization and its core values, and if employees are highly committed, they are likely to remain at the school. Teachers that are unhappy at their school will likely not be compelled to put in as much effort and may seek to migrate to a different school. Therefore, leadership that fosters positive relationships and increased support would seem to benefit the school as a whole. Machuma & Kaitila (2014) suggest that a principal's leadership style can impact teachers' job satisfaction. For the leader of the school, this suggests that it would prove beneficial to create an environment that cultivated positive job experiences in which increased job satisfaction was a priority. For example, Collie, Shapka, & Perry (2012) suggest that a school's climate is directly linked to teachers' sense of job satisfaction. Moreover, not only are strong, positive adult relationships essential for a positive school culture but this type of positive climate promotes cohesiveness, respect, and trust (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, Higgins-D'Allesandro, 2013). As the leader of the school, it seems not only ideal but necessary for school leaders to establish a school culture that builds relationships, create opportunities to establish trust, and is inclusive of shared leadership opportunities. Furthermore, they have a responsibility to their teachers to create an atmosphere of support among and between the principals and staff. Some participants in this study were not experiencing high levels of job satisfaction at their former schools and chose to migrate to a different school. They shared experiences and gave examples of things that contributed to their dissatisfaction at their former school and contributed to their decision to migrate. While these recommendations for principals may not impact all potential migrators, it has the possibility to impact some and, in turn, decrease teacher mobility.

Implications for Future Research

This study sought to understand what experiences led teaches to apply for a lateral, intra-district transfer. It considered these experiences from the point of view of a public school teacher. While this research should be continued to better understand how to minimize teacher mobility across districts, there should also be additional considerations. For example, for principals at schools with high amounts of in-district mobility, perhaps their perspective should be considered. They can bring a new perspective to the conversation and offer an additional layer to the research. Moreover, there are other positions that are allowed to apply for transfer between schools. These positions (e.g. instructional assistants, deans, and assistant principals) may have different experiences that led them to choose to apply for transfer. Their voices can also add to the narrow literature on intra-district mobility (Feng, 2009). Similarly, parochial school teachers may have different experiences than public schools teachers and may choose to migrate between schools for different reasons. Additionally, with the recent boom of charter management organizations running schools (Farrell, Wohlstetter, & Smith, 2012; Lake, Dusseault, Bowen, Demeritt, & Hill, 2010), looking at teacher mobility within a charter network may be worthy. With the limited research focusing on teacher mobility (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008) these additional perspectives can add to the sparse literature. Teacher turnover is costly to students, teachers, and districts (Adnot et al., 2017; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Guin, 2004; Loeb et al., 2005), so any additional perspective that can be considered and analyzed in an attempt to minimize mobility would be a step in the right direction.

Summary and Conclusion

This study explored the experiences of eight Louisiana public school teachers who recently participated in the voluntary transfer process. A qualitative approach was taken to

collect the data. In-person interviews were conducted, transcribed, and analyzed. Motivation-Hygiene Theory (1959) was used as a guide for this study. Four major themes emerged from the data collected: 1) school characteristics; 2) school-based relationships, 3) professional atmosphere, and 4) leader support. The findings in this study were connected to Motivation-Hygiene Theory and relevant literature. This study gives a voice to the participants and allows them to share their experiences that led to voluntary intra-district migration. This information can help to guide school leaders and districts to create practices that seek to minimize teacher mobility.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Questions about previous school
1. Tell me a little bit about your last school.
2. Describe the student population at your last school.
3. What was your most positive experience at your previous school?
4. What was the most frustrating or negative experience or memory at your previous school?
5. Describe your relationships with your colleagues.
6. Describe your relationship with the principal.
7. Describe the principal's leadership style.
8. Did you feel like you worked with a leader or another faculty member that supported your growth as a teacher? If so, how?
9. Were there times when your principal recognized your efforts and/or accolades as a teacher?
10. Describe extra responsibilities you held at your previous school. How did you feel about the extra responsibilities?
11. Did your principal support or work to help advance your career? If so, explain. If not, what could the principal have done?
12. Describe your biggest achievement as a teacher at your previous school.

Questions about voluntary transfer process
13. Why did you apply for a voluntary transfer?
14. Describe your experience with the voluntary transfer process. Describe the process. Was it easy?
15. Talk about the process of arriving at your new school.

Questions about current school
16. Describe your relationship with your colleagues.
17. Describe your relationship with the principal.
18. Describe your principal's leadership style.

School comparison questions
19. When thinking about your last school and your current school, what is the biggest difference?
20. Is your new school a better fit for you than your previous? Why or why not?

Appendix B: Demographic Survey

1. How many years have you been teaching? _____

2. How many years have passed since you transferred? _____

3. How many schools have you taught at? _____

4. What is your highest degree of education? _____

5. What is the name of your current school? _____

6. What is the name of your previous school? _____

Vita

The author was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. She obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education in 2008. She immediately began her teaching career and concurrently enrolled in a master's degree program at the University of New Orleans. Upon completing her first master's degree in 2010, she again returned to the University of New Orleans to obtain a second master's degree focusing on educational administration. After teaching for six years, she enrolled in a doctoral program focusing on educational leadership at the University of New Orleans.