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# NEW TEXAS ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE OF NEEDED SUPPORTS FOR CAREER RETENTION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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**NEW TEXAS ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF NEEDED  
SUPPORT FOR CAREER RETENTION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

by

Patrick M. Guy, B.S.Ed., M.Ed.

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

Stephen F. Austin State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Doctor of Education

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY  
(August 2021)

**NEW TEXAS ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF NEEDED  
SUPPORT FOR CAREER RETENTION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

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Patrick M. Guy, B.S., M.Ed.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study specifically investigated new elementary teachers' perceptions of the support they need during the first five years of their teaching experiences to influence their decision to remain both at their current teaching assignment and in the profession. The literature detailed specific elements of leadership within the realm of support that lends to teacher retention. A qualitative methodology was employed for to collect in-depth interview data from three Texas elementary entry teachers. The original intent was for five participants, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only three participants took part in this study. The researcher identified themes that emerged from the data collected from interviews. Those themes were centered on the perceptions of elementary teachers concerning (1) the sufficiency of resources, (2) school culture and climate, (3) campus leadership, and (4) parental involvement and support. Participants cited that climate established by campus leadership and interpersonal relationships was central to their decisions to stay in the field. The literature, noted that campus leaders are responsible for retaining new teachers while shaping and maintaining cohesion within their organization's culture and climate.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As with anything meaningful, this study is certainly representative of this and I am eternally grateful for the many individuals that played a role in the development of this study. I would like to give thanks to God for giving me the strength, wisdom, courage and a supportive village to help me complete this task. Also, to my esteemed dissertation chair, Dr. Pauline Sampson, committee members and cohort instructors. Being able to tap into the immense knowledge base of the professors, coupled with their continued support and guidance allowed this study to come to fruition. To each of the participants in the study, I would like to say thank you for giving of your time, offering a very candid reflection of your experiences and being available for interviews, phone calls and follow up appointments during a worldwide pandemic. This is something I do not take lightly and your willingness to share made this research significant. To Dr. Irving Glenn II, thank you for spending countless hours helping, editing, lending your technical expertise and encouraging me on this journey. I would also like to thank Dr. Betty Grubbs who never gave up and always poured selflessly into me so that I could complete the work. Finally, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my family who has supported me in this endeavor and all of my life. To my parents Ulysses and Mary Guy, Cherlynn Kennedy, grandparents, all of my aunts and uncles, especially Aunt Eartha McCray and

cousin Rochelle McMillian. Your belief in me continues to mean more than you will ever know and all of you are truly the wind beneath my wings.

## **DEDICATION**

This entire work is dedicated to the memory of my late mother, Cherlynn Diana Kennedy. I am deeply appreciative for the numerous sacrifices she made so that I could experience success. My mothers' unconditional love enriched my life and I am grateful that I can still feel that love emanating from above. It is my endeavor to use the priceless truths she taught me to better serve others and make a positive impact in every space I privileged to influence.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction to the Study**

There are 3.6 million K-12 teachers employed in schools throughout the United States of America (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017). Of America's K-12 teacher workforce, on average, each year, at least 30 % leave their current teaching assignments. 46% to 50 % of all teachers leave the education profession within the first five years of their initial teaching assignments (NCES, 2017). The NCES (2015) results from the 2012-2013 Teacher Follow-up Survey are the latest federal data reported on teacher attrition. In the report, teachers were categorized as either stayers, movers, or leavers. Stayers are teachers who remain at the same school. Movers are teachers who move to a different school. Leavers are teachers who left the education profession altogether. According to the NCES, there were 3,377,900 public school teachers in 2013. Of the teachers, 84% were categorized as stayers. Another 8% were categorized as movers, and 8% were categorized as leavers. Of all of the public school teachers, 80% who had one to three years of teaching experience remained at their current teaching assignment. However, 13% moved to another school, and 7% left teaching for another profession in education. Additionally, about 10% left involuntarily. There were about 8% who left the field of education altogether. There were also about

8% who were on maternity, paternity, or disability leave or were on a sabbatical. About 44% were former teachers who retired.

According to the NCES (2017), approximately 322,000 or about 9 % of all K-12 teachers are new hires. New hires are first-year teachers with no previous years of teaching experience. The NCES (2017) projected that from the 2017-2018 school year to the 2018-2019 academic year, the number of new hires would increase by 8 % or by 25,000 and would grow to an estimated 347,000. Of the approximately 322,000 new hires who enter the classroom each year, more than 250,000 leave and do not ever return (NCES, 2017).

Craig (2014) and Hanushek et al, (2016) communicated concerns about turnover and attrition among new hires. For example, after their first year of teaching experience, a significant percentage of new hires leave their current teaching assignments and transfer to schools either within or outside of the same school district. Still, others transfer to schools located outside of the state where they were initially employed. Nevertheless, while many new hires transfer, others leave their teaching assignments prematurely and resign from their jobs before the end of the school year (Craig, 2014; Hanushek et al., 2016). In fact, 10% of all new hires resign from their teaching assignments before the school year ends (NCES, 2017).

Moreover, significant numbers leave teaching altogether and never return to the profession (Craig, 2014; Hanushek et al., 2016; Lambeth, 2012). Teacher turnover and attrition cost the United States \$2.2 billion each year for hiring and training new personnel (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2018). Statistics offered by the NCES

(2017) document showed significant percentages of teacher turnover and attrition among K-12 teachers NCES, 2014, (Reyes & Alexander, 2019; TEA, 2017).

Numerous research studies focused on teacher attrition. However, there is a gap in the recently published literature that exclusively focuses on new teachers' perceptions of the support needed that will allow them to remain at their current teaching assignments. Therefore, the current study will focus on teachers' perceptions of how they are best supported so that they will remain at their current teaching assignments and continue their career paths in education. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate elementary teachers' perceptions of the types of support they need to remain at their current teaching assignments and in the field of education. The study specifically investigated new elementary teachers' perceptions of the emotional, instructional, informational, and appraisal support they need during the first five years of their teaching experiences to influence their decision to remain both at their current teaching assignment and in the profession.

### **Topic of the Study**

Types of support needed by new elementary teachers to remain at their current teaching assignments were the topic of this study. Although there were various perceptions of what support is, the literature details specific elements of leadership within the realm of principals' support that lends to teacher retention. Kelly and Antonio (2016) conducted a study in which they identified four behavior domains of social support: emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal. Kelly and Antonio (2016) considered the emotional support domain with trust as an essential social support factor. These four

behavioral dimensions were later adapted and applied to principals' support by Cheng and Szeto (2016), who conducted a study involving 226 public school special education and general education teachers. Cheng and Szeto (2016) took the four behavior dimensions of support and applied them to education and principals' support. According to Voss and Kunter (2019), emotional support is characterized by actively listening, portraying trust, and displaying empathy to one's staff. Informational support means offering advice and suggestions and providing the information and the communication teachers need to do their jobs successfully. This may include assistance such as making available to the faculty and staff the plan of the week, bell schedules, master schedules, and daily events. Instrumental support is allotting time for teachers to collaborate, providing funding for resources and staff development. The last domain of support, appraisal support, provides data to the teacher regarding their performance for self-evaluation purposes.

DiPaola (2012) conducted a study with 34 elementary schools and 1,276 teachers. As a result of his study, DiPaola (2012) modified the four domains of support and argued that these domains could be reduced to two key categories: instrumental support and expressive support. According to DiPaola (2012), instrumental support is the degree to which teachers perceive their administrators as providing the vital support necessary to accomplish their everyday teaching tasks effectively. Instrumental support may include administrators providing adequate planning time and collaboration time, providing extra assistance in the classroom, sharing resources and equally distributing committee responsibilities, providing feedback, offering suggestions, and helping to evaluate the instructional needs of students.

Expressive support is the degree to which teachers perceive their administrators as providing emotional and professional support. Expressive support is when administrators

show teachers that they are essential, embrace their decisions, trust their judgment in dealing with classroom management, show confidence in their actions, actively listen when talking, provide staff development opportunities, encourage growth, and are honest. The two principals' support categories, instrumental and expressive (DiPaola, 2012), contain qualities associated with new elementary teachers' development of their social identity and increased self-efficacy, reduction of work-related stress, and their desire to remain in the profession (Prather-Jones, 2015).

Greenlee and Brown (2018) reported that leadership support, recognition, and instructional delivery were all factors that influenced teacher retention. The lack of communication between new teachers and employees can also be a determining factor as to why educators leave the current assignments. The influence of career satisfaction may also differ between the levels of experience among new elementary teachers.

Administrators may display behaviors that lack support towards new elementary teachers; this is perceived as dissatisfaction and creates an adverse school climate (Moore, 2016).

Certain conditions are needed for a new elementary teacher to build his or her capacity as an educator, such as professional development, collaboration, and leadership support (Stoll, 2018). This current study was concerned with the types of support new elementary teachers need to remain at their current teaching assignments.

### **Background of the Problem**

The problem that this qualitative study addressed was supports needed to reduce teacher turnover and attrition in Texas. According to the NCES (2014), in 2014, there were 262,435 K-12 public school teachers in Texas. Of those teachers, 64% remained at

the same school the following year. There were 28%, who were categorized as movers, and who transferred to a different school. There were 8% who were categorized as leavers, who left the teaching profession altogether. Also, 62.5% of those with one to three years of experience stayed at their teaching assignments. However, 29% moved to another school, and 9% left the teaching profession for other positions in education. About 7% left involuntarily. Another 15% left the field of education. Another 7% were either on maternity leave, disability leave, or sabbaticals from teaching. There were 31% who retired. In general, Texas teachers have lower rates of teacher retention and higher turnover rates and attrition compared to the averages in the United States.

Data from the TEA (2018) and Reyes and Alexander (2019) also indicated that significant numbers of teachers in Texas leave their current positions each year. Nearly one out of every three public school teachers in Texas resigned before reaching their sixth school year. The rate of teacher attrition held steady at around 10% for the past five years. For example, of the 362,192 K-12 teachers employed in both public and private schools in Texas, 37,443, or 10.44%, left their positions. The previous year, 358,513 K-12 teachers in the state, 36,300, or 10.29%, left their positions. Table 1 displays the number of K-12 public and private school teachers initially hired from 2013-2014 to the 2017-2018 academic year and the numbers and percentages of those who left their positions.

Table 1

*Numbers and Percentages of K-12 Teachers Who Left from the 2011-2012 to the 2017-2018 Academic Years-Texas*

Years	Number of Teachers Employed	Attrition Numbers	Attrition Percentages
2017-2018	362,192	37,443	10.44
2016-2017	358,513	36,300	10.29
2015-2016	352,631	35,931	10.34
2014-2015	347,469	34,807	10.25
2013-2014	339,651	34,759	10.45
2012-2013	332,587	34,424	10.45
2011-2012	329,352	35,800	10.52

Source: TEA (2019)

According to the TEA (2017), in school districts that serve 500 students or fewer, teachers left at a rate of 43.6% in 2012-2013, 37.6% in 2013-2014, and 34.2% in 2014-2015. In comparison, in school districts that serve more than 500 students, teachers left at a rate of 19.1% in 2012-2013, 18% in 2013-2014, and a rate of 17.7% in 2014-2015.

Table 2 displays the attrition percentages for districts with over 50,000 students and those with under 500 students for 2011-2012 through the 2014-2015 academic years.

Table 2

*Turnover By District Size-Texas*

District Size	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
50,000 and over	14.6	19.1	18.0	17.7
Under 500	27.0	43.6	37.6	34.2

Source: TEA (2017)

Reyes and Alexander (2019) also reported additional attrition data for teachers in Texas. According to the researchers, White teachers were more likely to leave their classroom assignments than Hispanic and African American teachers. A Hispanic teacher was almost 50% more likely to remain at their current assignment than a White teacher employed in a similar district and at a similar school. An African American teacher was 1.26 times more likely than a White teacher to remain at their current teaching assignment.

In Texas, teacher attrition rates were also relative to student demographics. Reyes and Alexander (2019) reported a 10 to 20% chance that a teacher will remain in the classroom when the student population is 76 to 100% White. However, when the populace of White students was between 0 to 25%, the teacher was more likely to leave. Moreover, there is a 20% chance that a teacher remained at his or her current teaching assignment when the student populace was made up of from 0 to 25% economically disadvantaged learners. In comparison, a teacher is more likely to leave when a class is made up of 76 to 100% economically disadvantaged learners. Hispanic and African American teachers tended to teach in higher minority schools and lower-income schools and have significantly higher retention rates.

Certification type was also relevant to teacher attrition in Texas. Most teachers hold a standard certification, while about 30% hold alternative certifications. Teachers in Texas who hold alternative certifications were 14 to 22% less likely to remain at a school than teachers with standard certifications. Additionally, post-baccalaureate, certification-by-exam, and out-of-state teachers, who comprise about 10% of the teacher population, have lower retention rates. Elementary teachers had the highest retention rates and were 4% to 10% more likely than middle or high school teachers to remain at their current assignments (Reyes & Alexander, 2019).

As it relates to teaching experience and attrition, teachers in Texas with six to ten years and 11 to 15 years of experience were more likely to be retained than first-year teachers. Teachers approaching retirement were also less likely to be retained than teachers with 6 to 15 years of experience. Due to retirement, teachers in both the 16 to 25 years of experience and greater than 25 years of experience had a lower retention rate than teachers with zero to five years of experience. School locales were also pertinent to teacher attrition. Teachers in rural districts were approximately 1.16 times more likely to continue teaching than a teacher with the same level of education and teaching experience from a similar district and similar school located in the suburbs (Reyes, & Alexander, 2019).

Additionally, teachers who are employed at charter schools in Texas had the lowest rates of retention. Teachers employed at charter schools were 50% less likely to return to their current posts than those who do not teach at charter schools. Specifically, retaining a teacher at a charter school was 41 to 46% lower than retaining a teacher at a

traditional suburban school. Urban schools also have higher rates of turnover. The odds of retaining a teacher at an urban school were 12.9 to 15.8% lower than retaining a teacher at a suburban school (Reyes & Alexander, 2019).

Harfitt (2015) suggested that several factors contribute to attrition among K-12 new elementary teachers. Such factors included challenges with student behavior and classroom discipline, the lack of family engagement, poor salaries, limited resources, and increasing demands for accountability based on high-stakes tests. Chambers (2015) conducted a quantitative study and found that teacher attrition was also related to higher stress levels which negatively impact teachers' health and job satisfaction. Other challenges included heavy workloads, balancing work and family, and the lack of administrative support.

While previous research studies typically focused on teacher attrition and mentoring, missing from the literature are readings that exclusively focus on teachers' perceptions of the types of support they need to remain at their current teaching assignments. Therefore, the current study focused on teachers' perceptions of how districts can best provide support to new teachers so that they remain at their current teaching assignments and continue their career paths in education. In order to decrease teacher turnover and attrition in Texas, this phenomenon should be investigated from new teachers' perspectives.

### **Problem Statement**

The current study addressed the high turnover and attrition rates among elementary teachers in a public-school district in Texas. Many elementary school teachers leave their

assignments because they felt that they do not have adequate support from their colleagues and school principals (Teague & Swan, 2013). New elementary teachers continued to exit the profession at a rate of about 30 to 50% per year (Boogren, 2015; Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzovsky, 2016; Teague & Swan, 2013; Torres, 2016). Factors that contributed to attrition among new elementary teachers included struggles with classroom discipline, salary concerns, and a lack of administrative support (Arnett, 2017; Boogren, 2015; Cancio et al., 2013; Dupriez et al., 2016; Harris, 2015; Howard, 2016; Howes & Goodman-Delahunty, 2015; Lynch, 2012; Torres, 2016).

Teacher turnover and attrition have dire consequences for students and taxpayers (Bennett et al., 2013; Harfitt, 2015; Maxwell, 2016; O'Connor, 2014). For instance, teacher attrition can negatively impact students' academic performance (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2012). Research by Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2012) suggested that teachers with less than three years of experience are much less effective than more experienced teachers. According to Ozoglu (2015), attrition also negatively influenced teachers' enthusiasm, motivation, dedication, and instructional preparation. Moreover, the cost to recruit and replace new teachers in the United States equates to about \$2.2 billion each year. Understanding the reasons that surround teacher retention, turnover, and attrition in public school settings will help educators and administrators better serve the needs of their communities in both present and future situations.

### **Purpose Statement**

Attrition rates continue to adversely affect the students' academic performance and the financial status of school districts across the United States (Harfitt, 2015; Howard,

2016; Teague & Swan, 2013). Ultimately, school principals are responsible for retaining their new hires while shaping and maintaining cohesion within their organization's culture and climate (McCarley, Peters, & Decman, 2014; Urick & Bowers, 2014). Various research asserted a direct relationship between school principals who are accessible, collaborative, committed, supportive and lower rates of teacher attrition (Gallant & Riley, 2014; Harris, 2015; Howard, 2016; Rinke, 2014). The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate elementary teachers' perceptions of the types of support they need in order to remain at their current teaching assignments and in the field of education. The study specifically investigated new elementary teachers' perceptions of the emotional, instructional, informational, and appraisal support they need during the first five years of their teaching experiences to influence their decision to remain both at their current teaching assignment and in the education profession.

### **Research Question**

The following question guided the study: What are new elementary teachers' perceptions of the types of support they need to remain at their current teaching assignments and in the field of education?

### **Significance of the Research**

Supporting new elementary school teachers is vital to their tenure in the education profession (Bettini, Cheyney, Wang, & Leko, 2015). A lack of support often leads to frustration (Lloyd, 2012). However, when teachers feel valued and receive direction and support, they are less likely to leave, and consequently, schools have lower turnover and attrition rates (Ingersoll, 2015; Certo & Fox, 2012). Wong (2014) added that school

principals are effective when they: (1) provide support to new teachers by trusting and consistently motivating them to become effective educators; (2) collaborate with teachers regularly; (3) provide positive feedback and constructive criticism; and (4) demonstrate effectiveness as instructional leaders. Nonetheless, they must be continuously cognizant of teachers' perceptions of meaningful support if they intend to positively impact educator attrition trends (Djonko-Moore, 2016; McKinney, Labat, & Labat, 2015; Sinnema, Robinson, Ludlow, & Pope; 2015).

This study was essential for several reasons. First, the study was significant because it develops a body of knowledge that teachers and school administrators may use in order to: (a) address voluntary factors that lead to teacher attrition; (b) foster team building, (c) consistently create opportunities for collaboration among teachers and their peers, and (d) engage in activities that boost morale. Findings from the study may be used to inform and assist college professors with proactively addressing the teacher turnover and attrition phenomenon before top pre-service teachers entered into the teaching profession. Results from the study may also be used to assist district administrators and principals with providing professional development offerings to teachers. Additionally, findings from the study may provide teachers with insight into the type of support needed from their colleagues and principals to decrease attrition among elementary teachers in Texas.

### **Conceptual Definitions**

This section provides conceptual definitions of keywords that are used throughout the study. *Appraisal support* entails immediate feedback. Informational support references

providing professional development opportunities, Instrumental support is comprised of an administrative open-door policy (Cancio et al., 2013). *Attrition* refers to teachers leaving their current teaching assignment to seek employment at another school either within the same district or another school district (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). *Emotional support* refers to school principals' efforts to build trusting relationships and demonstrate empathy through open dialogues and appreciation efforts in the workplace (Cancio et al., 2013). *Instructional support* is related to the assistance that school principals provide to establish common goals and objectives to successfully acclimate new teachers (Cancio et al., 2013). *Retention* refers to maintaining educators with more than three years of experience in the profession (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). *Support* refers to help, guidance, praise, assistance, or recognition that teachers receive from principals (Cancio et al., 2013).

**Assumptions** are accepted as accurate and somewhat out of the researcher's control, but if they disappear, the study becomes irrelevant (Creswell, 2014). One assumption was that each participant involved in this study held an elementary teacher's license issued by the Texas Education Agency. A second assumption was that each participant had between one and five years of teaching experience. Another assumption was that the participants provided honest answers that reflect their authentic experiences during the semi-structured interviews. Finally, it was assumed that each participant would understand the factors of perception and experience with support or lack thereof during their time in the field.

**Limitations**

According to Creswell (2014), limitations of a study are potential weaknesses of a study, which are out of the researcher's control. One limitation of this study was that the participants provided information based on their personal experiences and cannot be proved or disproved by the researcher. Second, the researcher had no control over the participants' degree of support during the first five years of their teaching assignments. Another limitation for this study was the potential bias by the researcher, who is a campus principal. This study was limited to teachers in the state of Texas. This study included teachers' perceptions in one district in Texas that have from one to five years of experience.

**Delimitations**

Creswell (2014) defines delimitations are those factors of a study that limit the scope and can be controlled by the researcher. One delimitation of this study was that the researcher utilized qualitative data only to determine new elementary school teachers' perceptions of the types of support that were needed in order for them to remain at their teaching assignments, not those of other veteran educators. The study was restricted to one school district in Texas. Since, the study was delimited to one school district, the findings may not be generalized to all other school districts in Texas.

**Organization of the Study**

Chapter I, the introductory chapter, included information that provided the reader the purpose of the research, a statement of the problem, a justification for conducting the research, and why the research was significant to current educational practices. The

research also included a definition of terms, research questions to guide the direction of the study, limitations, and delimitations of the research. Chapter II is comprised of an extensive review of the literature that focuses on teacher turnover and attrition. Chapter III includes a comprehensive description of the participants, sample, data collection methods, and strategies for analyzing the data. Chapter IV includes an analysis of the data and findings, while Chapter V includes recommendations and conclusions based on the findings.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Review of Literature**

#### **Introduction**

Each year in America, approximately 320,000 teachers who have no prior years of experience were hired to teach students in K-12 public school classrooms (NCES, 2017). Approximately 10% do not return to the classroom in the following year. Another 8% will leave the teaching profession altogether (NCES, 2017). More than 50% leave the profession within five years (Bennett et al., 2013; Glazer, 2018). Further, teachers who have between 16 or more years of experience have a lower retention rate than teachers with zero to five years of experience. Teacher attrition is also a concern in Texas.

Each year, 10% of all K-12 teachers employed in Texas leave their current teaching assignments (NCES, 2017). Also, in Texas, teachers were more likely to leave if they teach in a district with 500 or fewer students. White teachers were more likely to leave their classroom assignments than Hispanic and African American teachers and were more likely to leave when the populace of White students was between 0 to 25% (NCES, 2017). Teachers with alternative certifications in elementary content are more likely to leave (NCES, 2017). Teachers in urban locales were more likely to leave than those who teach in suburban locales (Reyes & Alexander, 2019). Teachers employed at

charter schools were 50% more likely to leave than those who teach in non-charter public schools.

The problem that the current study addressed was the high turnover and attrition rates among elementary teachers in a public-school district in Texas. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate elementary teachers' perceptions of the types of support they need in order to remain at their current teaching assignments and in the field of education. Moreover, the research provided information relative to the types of supports needed to new elementary teachers to remain in their current teaching assignments and the profession. This chapter presents the literature relative to the phenomenon studied.

### **Conceptual Framework**

#### **Bandura's (1977) Social Cognitive Theory**

This study was grounded on the theoretical frameworks offered by Bandura's (1977) Social Cognitive Theory and by Vygotsky's (1978) Social Development Theory. According to Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory, as referenced in Figure 1, individuals learn to observe others perform certain tasks. The premise of the theory is that humans use tools to understand and manage their environments. External influences affect their behavior through cognitive processes. Cognitive factors determine which environmental events will be observed, what meaning will be conferred on them, whether they leave any lasting effects, what emotional impact and motivating power they will have, and how the information they convey will be organized for future use. The theory's foundation also encompasses the notion that individuals process and transform

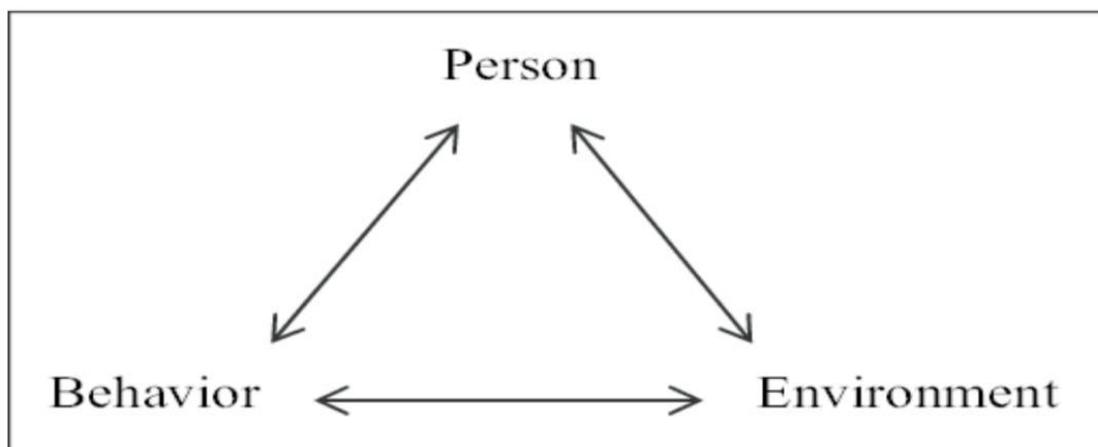
experiences employing verbal, imaginal, and other symbols into cognitive models of reality that guide judgment and action. Through symbols, people give meaning, form, and continuity to the experiences they've had. Symbols serve as the vehicle of thought. Cognitive representations of experiences in knowledge structures provide the substance for thinking. By manipulating the information derived from personal and vicarious experiences, people understand causal relationships and expand their knowledge. Knowledge and thinking skills provide the substance and tools for cognitive problem-solving. Bandura (1977) wrote that rather than solve problems solely by performing actions and suffering the consequences of mistakes, individuals usually test possible solutions in thought and discard or retain them based on estimated consequences before taking them. Symbolization also allows people to produce novel and imaginary ideas that surpass their sensual experiences. Bandura (1977) put forth that individuals are not passive learners but rather learn by actively seeking and interpreting information.

Drawing from Bandura's (1977) theory to teacher retention, new teachers perceive that they can successfully execute the behavior required to produce outcomes when they have opportunities to observe demonstrations through modeling. In addition, new elementary teachers' performance can be enhanced through reflections on successes and failures. Bandura's theory (1977) can be used in relation to teacher retention because it can be asserted that teachers' expectations of success, the effort they put into teaching, and the extent to which they persist in activities impact their students' performance and ultimately whether or not they will stay at their current teaching assignments. Bandura's social cognitive theory is appropriate for this study because it helps to explain that as

mentors, school principals can help new elementary teachers to perform tasks that present challenges during the survival years of their teaching careers. Mentor-mentee relationships between the school principal and beginning elementary teachers can provide support to new educators so that they are able to meet the needs of their students.

Figure 1

*Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory*



Social cognitive theory. Source: Bandura (1977).

**Vygotsky's Social Development Theory**

Vygotsky's (1978, 1980) socio-cultural theory is also appropriate for the current study. Vygotsky's Social Development Theory (SDT) consists of three major concepts: (1) the role of social interaction in cognitive development; (2) the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO); and (3) the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978, 1980). Vygotsky (1978) wrote that human cognitive development results from dynamic interaction between individuals and society and that social learning precedes cognitive development and that learning takes place through connections between people. The

MKO refers to one individual having a better understanding or a higher ability level than another concerning a particular task, process, or concept. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning first occurs between individuals (inter-psychologically), and inside individuals, (intra-psychologically). Inter-psychological functions occur when an individual interacts, connects, and reach out to another individual. Intra-psychological occurs where learning is acquired, which leads to a higher cognitive development. This concept is reflected in relationships between a mentor and mentee. While learning and discovery that are self-initiated are effective, learning becomes more productive and contributory to cognitive development when acquired from an MKO.

The concept of the MKO goes together with Vygotsky's (1978) other concepts, such as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD between an individual's ability to perform a task under adult guidance and peer collaboration (1978) occurs in this zone. The ZPD refers to the difference between what a learner can do with or without help. In an educational context, ZPD is a teacher's ability to perform with adult guidance or with peer collaboration and then move to a state where he or she can solve problems independently. The teaching and learning educational experiences which are in ZPD encourage and advance individual learning.

### **Teacher Attrition**

Fifty percent of K-12 new teachers leave the education profession during the first five years of their initial teaching assignments (Gourneau, 2014; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2012). Another 30% of new teachers leave at the end of their first year (Gourneau, 2014; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2012). According to Gourneau (2014), teacher turnover and attrition

has been on the rise since 1994 and continues to pose a serious problem for school districts across America, including those in the state of Texas (Craig, 2014; Hanushek et al., 2016; Lambeth, 2012; Mason & Matas, 2015). High turnover and attrition could indicate that school districts must spend money to recruit and replace teachers (Moore, 2016).

Further, when teachers do not remain at a school over a long period, they fail to develop relationships with students' parents and influential community leaders (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Moreover, high turnover and attrition are linked to a school culture that is less conducive to positive learning experiences and lower student academic outcomes (Gagnon, & Mattingly, 2015). Research studies that focus on teacher turnover and attrition have indicated that the major reasons for this phenomenon among new teachers are burnout, stress, workload, isolation, classroom management, acts of intimidation by parents, and low levels of support from principals (Gagnon, & Mattingly, 2015).

### **Poverty**

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) defines high poverty schools as public schools where more than 75% of the student population meets the requirements for free or reduced lunch. High poverty schools typically have inexperienced teachers, limited course offerings, minimal technology, and low-performance in reading, math, and science (Eckert, 2013). Data from the Children's Defense Fund (2018) indicated that 74 million children are living in America, which is 23 percent of the nation's entire population. Of the 74 million children who live in America, about one out of every five or more than 13 million live in poverty. Of those children who live in poverty, 70 % are

from racially diverse backgrounds. When children live in poverty, they often do not receive adequate nutrition and medical care. These factors negatively impact their cognition, brain development, memorization, and motivation (Eckert. 2013).

Baggiano-Wilson (2017) stated that students who live in poverty were more likely to be suspended or drop out of school and be arrested for drug or violence offenses. In addition, students who live in poverty were more likely to lack structure, frequently experience frequent hunger, have irregular routines, lack motivation, have increased absences, and suffer problems associated with transportation. And, also according to Baggiano-Wilson (2017), students who live in poverty often have difficulty developing language, memorization, conceptualizing thoughts, critical thinking, and formulating ideas. Thus, stakeholders, including new teachers, cannot overlook the academic, developmental, emotional, and social challenges accompanying students who live in poverty.

Most children who live in poverty attend schools in underserved or poor communities. Underserved communities are often plagued by poverty, high crime, and a lack of resources (Marinell & Coca, 2013; Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Simon & Johnson, 2013). Attrition is most pronounced in school districts that provide instruction to students who live in underserved communities (Marinell & Coca, 2013; Simon & Johnson, 2013). Schools located in such communities are often referred to as either "hard-to-staff or high-poverty schools" (Simon & Johnson, 2015, p. 4). Simon and Johnson (2015) asserted that maintaining effective teachers in high-poverty schools was especially important because students from poverty need the school structure. Turnover

in high-poverty schools also decreases the quality of education students receive because principals must often hire uncertified teachers and long-term substitutes to replace certified personnel.

According to Black (2017), teachers who have fewer years of experience are more likely to be hired in low income schools than they are to be hired in schools located in more affluent areas. When new teachers are hired in high-poverty schools, they are twice as likely to leave their position within five years compared to their peers who teach in higher-income schools (NCES, 2015). When new teachers leave their assignments, they are more likely to either exit the teaching profession altogether or transfer to schools that serve either students from more affluent backgrounds or serve greater percentages of White students (Simon & Johnson, 2013). The high turnover and attrition of new teachers most negatively impact students who live in poverty.

Most new teachers whose assignments are in schools located in impoverished or underserved communities constantly transfer (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). When new teachers leave their teaching assignments, they do not make progress by building and refining their current skills (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). As a result, students continue to be taught by teachers who have less experience, impacting students' academic performance and behavior (Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Sass et al., 2012). Suppose stakeholders expect to change the trends in turnover and attrition among new teachers, especially those who teach at high-poverty schools. In that case, they must provide them with ongoing opportunities to receive support from their more experienced colleagues and their principals (Ronfeldt et al., 2013).

## **Burnout**

Burnout is a condition associated with emotional exhaustion, withdrawal, and a sense of failure (Farber, 1991). Burnout is defined as "a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion induced by a depletion of the ability to cope with the work environment, resultant from the ongoing demands of our daily lives, (Maslach, 1982 p.2)". Burnout is a chronic problem that causes high percentages of attrition among new teachers. Burnout is also the factor that most contributed to job-related stress (Cross & Thomas, 2017; Rumschlag, 2017). Teachers who experience burnout may exhibit negative behaviors such as cynicism, a lack of personalization, a sense of inadequacy, and a decrease in self-confidence and belief that they can make a difference in the lives of their students. Burnout may also cause increased absenteeism and counterproductive instruction (Rumschlag, 2017). Ultimately, new teachers who experience burnout may leave the profession.

Farber (1991) wrote about three stages of burnout that new teachers experience. The first stage, Stage A, is called the Slump. This phase occurs within the first few weeks of school. During the Slump, new teachers are shocked by the realities of the classroom but try to adapt to their new jobs, but experience dissatisfaction and despair. Stage B, Fatigue and Exhaustion, is the phase when new teachers feel frustrated and burnout because of six factors: (1) difficulties with students; (2) overload; (3) criticism; (4) lack of recognition and reward; (5) isolation; and (6) blaming initial training. Farber (1991) further stated difficulty with students is related to new teachers' inability to manage students, especially those with behavioral problems, learning disabilities, and

special needs. As a result, new teachers felt helpless and incapable of being effective.

Farber (1991) stated overload refers to the demanding hours' new teachers spend preparing for class, attending faculty meetings, completing paperwork, and answering concerns of parents and their supervisors. New teachers are also subjected to criticism, especially from aggressive parents and from their more experienced colleagues.

According to Farber (1991), new teachers tend not to be recognized for their successes but instead rely on internal validation for their accomplishments.

The final factor of burnout involves new teachers' blame of their teacher education programs for not providing adequate practice, tools, or solutions to succeed in classrooms. During Stage C adjustment, new teachers attempted to adapt and adjust in order to survive. Adjustment involved compromising the quality of teaching they learned about in school with what is dictated by reality.

### **Stress**

The adoption of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), signed into law by former President Obama on December 10, 2015, increased school districts' accountability for increasing student outcomes on state standardized tests. In turn, district-level administrators began to measure teacher quality based on their students' performance on standardized assessment instruments. Some districts also used students' performance as the basis for merit pay and teachers' evaluations. 65% of teachers from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development reported that test scores are a major component of their annual evaluations (von der Embse, Kilgus, Solomon, Bowler, & Curtis 2015).

Although some goals for student outcomes may be unrealistic, teachers that do not meet district goals may ultimately be terminated (Cucchiara et al., 2015). Consequently, data from assessments have been linked to increased stress among teachers. Also, less experienced teachers may be more vulnerable to administrative pressure regarding increasing student test scores (Von der Embse et al., 2015). There was also a correlation between teacher stress and attrition (Von der Embse et al., 2015). Changes in educational accountability policies at both the federal and state levels trickle down to increase stress and adverse outcomes for teachers. Additionally, within the first five years, teachers experience the stressful challenge of balancing their job with personal matters such as marriage and raising children (Von der Embse et al., 2015).

Among new teachers, stress was also related to the transition from intensive educational theory and training received during their respective teacher education programs to the actual experiences they encounter in the classroom (Von der Embse et al., 2015). As college students, future educators receive a plethora of knowledge that encompasses various educational theories and strategies that they expect to incorporate into their practices once they enter the classroom. However, new teachers soon encounter the realities of teaching once they enter the classroom. Thus, new teachers' perceptions of what is expected and their actual teaching experiences shatter the anticipation of a long-term professional career in education (Cucchiara et al., 2015).

New teachers' day-to-day experiences during this transitional period have been coined as the reality-shock phenomenon. The reality-shock phenomenon occurs because of what new teachers anticipated during their teacher education programs and what

occurs, especially during the first three to five years, which are the most challenging, even with new teachers' support from mentors and their principals (Von der Embse et al., 2015). As a result of the reality-shock phenomenon, new teachers experienced stress accompanied by complaints that their teacher education programs did not prepare them for the realities of teaching, especially as their teaching training related to student discipline problems. The stress associated with the transition from student to professional was a reason why 30% of new teachers either transferred or left the profession just one year after their first teaching assignment (Cucchiara et al., 2015).

### **Workload**

The literature by Bubb and Early (2014) suggests that there is mounting concern over teacher workload. Further, teacher workload is associated with health problems, teacher turnover, and attrition. Bubb and Early (2014) reported on the average number of working hours for teachers in general. According to the researchers, on average, about 25% of teachers' workload occurs outside of school hours. While the average number of working hours for K-8 teachers is 53, secondary teachers work on average for 51 hours per week. However, the hours as mentioned earlier reflect the time that teachers spend inside the school building. Teachers also spend time outside of school. Bubb and Early (2014) wrote that during the weekdays after 6:00 PM, on average teachers K-8 teachers spend about 17 percent of their time completing work-related tasks. Secondary teachers spend about 18 percent of their time completing work-related tasks. For example, K-8 teachers spend about nine percent of their weekends working on school matters. In comparison, secondary teachers spend about 11 percent of their weekends completing

work-related tasks. The majority of teachers' workload (63%) outside of the classroom is spent writing lesson plans and grading papers (Bubb and Early, 2014).

When Bubb and Early (2014) surveyed 300 teachers, they found that 85% perceived their workloads to be excessive, which they believed to be detrimental to their home life. For example, 60% of the teachers surveyed reported that they worked for more than 50 hours a week. There was also 35% who reported having an excessive workload, which led to feelings of stress and exhaustion daily. Another 30% reported having no time to socialize outside of school, and 64% indicated that they were often required to carry out tasks outside of the scope of their responsibilities as a teacher. Meeting the expectations of policymakers, supervisors, and parents also increased teachers' workloads. Teachers who are put under enormous stress due to excessive workloads may become discouraged and decrease their efforts. Teachers may also take absences to relieve pressure or stress, or they may take absences when their classes are going well (Bubb & Early, 2014).

### **Isolation**

Nehmeh and Kelly (2018) defined isolation as an emotion among new teachers when they feel segregated from their peers. New teachers often feel isolated and intimidated when faculty members who have developed relationships do not make an effort to make them feel welcome or provide them with assistance, especially when they feel overwhelmed. New teachers may also feel isolated with they do not experience companionship or support. Feelings of isolation may cause feelings of loneliness and

anxiety. Several strategies can be used in order to curtail feelings of isolation among new teachers (Nehmeh and Kelly, 2018).

Cheruvu et al. (2015) wrote that many approaches could be used to reduce new teachers' feelings of isolation. One strategy is to involve new teachers in mentoring programs. Mentor programs can serve as a means whereby new teachers are paired with more experienced teachers to build relationships both on a personal and a professional level. More experienced teachers can also provide guidance and support to new teachers by giving them advice concerning finding resources, planning, student discipline, engaging parents, and getting to know other teachers in the school (Cheruvu et al., 2015). Furthermore, Professional Learning Communities (PLC) provides new teachers with opportunities for collaboration. By participating in PLCs, new teachers can join forces with other teachers to receive advice and share ideas while simultaneously developing a sense of community. Social media forums may support new teachers' perceptions concerning internet forums: The internet is a vast resource that provides support for teachers with subject-related materials, teaching strategies, and assessment ideas. Finally, new teachers' participation in professional development may also provide them with a greater chance to interact and build relationships with other teachers to not feel alone (Cheruvu et al., 2015).

Because feelings of isolation are common among new teachers, Ostovar-Nameghi and Sheikahmadi (2016) informed that as mentors, principals should encourage mentees to seek help and demonstrate openness by sharing brief biographical information about themselves. Mentors should also gather personal information from their mentees,

including information about their family members, hobbies, and personal interests. Additionally, principals should model desired professional traits such as honoring appointments, responding to e-mails promptly, demonstrating professionalism, as well as a sense of humor and humility. Because the mentor-mentee relationship should be built on trust, principals should promise and demonstrate confidentiality (Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikahmadi, 2016). They should also communicate their desire to improve learning outcomes, model good communication techniques by maintaining eye contact and being active listeners. As principals incorporate these strategies, they help new teachers to survive the first years of their careers (Lindley, 2009).

### **Classroom Management**

According to Black (2017), classroom management is one of the most prevalent struggles that new teachers face during their first years of teaching. Ingersoll (2012) wrote that new teachers often leave the classroom due to their inability to manage student behavior. Classroom Management plays a significant role in student achievement. However, new teachers frequently have difficulty maintaining a classroom environment conducive to learning and focus on negative behavior rather than affirm positive conduct. When Mee and Haverback (2014) interviewed ten first-year teachers, they found that although most reported being truly committed to their students, they were inadequately prepared to handle poor classroom behavior, which they stated should have been covered more during their teacher education programs. Black (2017) asserted that effective classroom management is particularly challenging in high-poverty schools due to large class sizes and higher percentages of students with learning challenges and mental health

needs. Aloe, Amo, and Shanahan (2014) found a correlation between emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low self-efficacy with poor classroom management. Principals may provide new teachers with classroom management by providing specific strategies that work best for their personalities and students' academic, social, and cultural needs.

Black (2017) suggested many strategies that new teachers should consider in order to manage student behavior. For example, new teachers should be consistent with daily routines such as gathering materials, taking restroom breaks, and sharpening pencils, especially among students who live in poverty because they tend to experience turmoil more often. Consequently, in general, students from low socioeconomic households benefit from having routines and structures in their lives. In addition, their time in school may be the most secure and anticipated part of their day (Black, 2017).

Building consistency for students in classroom management and organization are imperative in such areas as scheduling, using and acquiring materials, getting the teachers' attention, and knowing when and how to request a bathroom break or obtain a pencil. Black (2017) suggested that new teachers find a way to incorporate physical activities into their instructional day, especially because many schools have eliminated physical education and recess from their schedules. Other strategies offered by Black (2017) which help new teachers to foster classroom environments that are more conducive to learning include building positive relationships with their students and their parents so that they feel valued and supported, appoint students who have demonstrated positive behavior

as classroom leaders, and incorporate students' views and opinions about topics covered in class.

### **Financial Implications of Teacher Attrition**

The cost of attrition is not a new challenge. In 2013, Darling-Hammond reported that Texas's attrition rate was nearly 40% of teachers with three years of experience or less, resulting in a per teacher expenditure of \$8,000 and a total national cost of \$329 million a year. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 2013) analyzed teacher attrition cost for rural versus non-rural school districts. It estimated that individual rural schools spend \$70,000 per year, while non-rural schools spend \$33,000 a year on teacher transfers (NCTAF, 2013). Thus, a rural school district paid \$8,750 for every teacher who left the district altogether, while a non-rural school district spent less per teacher, \$6,250 to be exact (NCTAF, 2013). Nationally, the United States spends as much as \$2.2 billion annually on the attrition of approximately half a million teachers each school year. Urban school districts tend to be the most affected because of higher turnover rates (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014). Teacher attrition was 50% higher in rural school districts than non-rural districts (Ingersoll, 2013; NCES, 2014). The loss of human capital in these hard-to-staff schools, which disproportionately serve low-income students, resulted in inconsistent learning environments, lower achievement rates, and higher teacher attrition (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014).

Teacher quality is vital to student academic achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Wilson, 2015). Placing a qualified teacher in a classroom can be the most

important decision for improving any student's academic growth (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Aaronson, Barrow, and Sander (2017) studied Chicago public high schools. Their study reported an increase in the test scores of African-American ninth graders when a higher qualified teacher instructs in the classroom. This data verifies the notion of a qualified teacher's direct impact on student achievement (Aaronson et al., 2017). According to Aaronson et al. (2017), in order for the United States education system to close the achievement gap, school leaders need to improve efforts to recruit, nurture, and retain quality teachers in every classroom.

### **The Impact of Teacher Attrition on Student Achievement**

Researchers contend that there is a correlation between teacher quality and student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Haycock & Hanushek, 2017). The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 instituted an accountability system to ensure student achievement by mandating highly qualified teachers in American classrooms (Fennell, 2016). However, the minimum standards to be considered "highly qualified" in many states required teachers to receive an undergraduate degree from an approved program at an officially credited university and pass the required licensure exams in a particular academic area of knowledge (Green & Munoz, 2016). Haycock and Hanushek (2017) noted that research repeatedly demonstrated that state certification, more than three years of experience, or even a master's degree did not correlate to effective teaching.

Haycock and Hanushek (2017) also referenced a study completed by the University of Virginia to examine teaching practices and climate in over 800 first-grade classrooms. Lower-income and nonwhite students were found to be more likely than

higher-income white students to be placed in "lower overall quality classrooms" (Haycock & Hanushek, 2017, p. 48). Covay et al. (2015) conducted a study that confirmed that high-minority, high-poverty schools that were staffed by teachers with less experience had lower standardized student test scores. More concerning is that the quality of instruction provided to these students was lower (Covay Minor et al., 2015). Research showed that students learned more in math when teachers spent more time on advanced topics (Desimone, 2013). However, Hill (2017) reported that high-minority, high-poverty middle school teachers spent more time on basic questions than more difficult ones. In addition, Covay Minor et al. (2015) asserted that high-poverty school students are given longer instruction time and homework in math. Yet, students from high poverty schools had scores significantly lower than their counterparts. This could be because the instructional time, though longer, was less productive because of lower levels of pedagogical and content knowledge by the teacher in the high-poverty and high-minority classrooms (Hill, 2017).

According to Wilson (2015), the inequalities and the achievement gap between hard-to-staff rural school districts and non-rural districts decreased when new elementary school teachers remained in their current teaching assignments. Wilson (2015) stated that when high-poverty elementary school students are placed in effective teachers' classrooms for three straight years, their test scores mimic middle-class schools. Wilson's study revealed the impact of the quality of the teacher on student achievement (Haycock & Hanushek, 2017). In addition, a study of Los Angeles schools found if a school replaced the bottom quartile of teachers with the top quartile for four consecutive years,

the achievement gap completely closed (Haycock & Hanushek, 2017).

### **Working and Organizational Conditions**

The quality of a teacher not only depends on his or her content and pedagogical knowledge but is also related to the type of school, available resources, and working conditions where they teach (Cucchiara et al., 2015; Wilson, 2015). Numerous studies found working and organizational conditions were reported most as reasons for teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2017; NCES, 2014; Wilson, 2015). First, one of the most complex careers in the world belongs to teachers, yet it can also be the most satisfying and rewarding job. Second, to family, teachers have the most direct influence on children's life choices and, ultimately, their future (Markow et al., 2013). Third, the educational environment is unique because effective teachers stay in challenging schools when perceived to be publicly respected, provided robust and supportive leadership, allowed professional autonomy, and given time to collaborate with colleagues (Cucchiara et al., 2015; Haycock & Hanushek, 2017).

According to Ingersoll (2017), teacher instructional autonomy and opportunities to make decisions toward school-wide planning are critical. Ingersoll's (2017) *Short on Power, Long on Responsibility* illustrated the importance of teacher autonomy. Ingersoll stated many principals and school boards make major decisions and teachers are not requested to give their input. Usually, teachers have little ownership over instructional decisions, such as curriculum development, resources, program initiatives, or textbooks (Ingersoll, 2017). It is not odd for teachers to have little to no input in their schedule, class size, or discretionary funds for supplies. More to the issue, Ingersoll

asserted teachers, on average, have little input into behavioral and disciplinary policies and procedures, such as having a disruptive student removed temporarily from their classroom. Despite being professionals, it is not standard practice to ask teachers for their input on recruitment, hiring personnel, budgetary needs assessment, job development, or in-service training opportunities (Ingersoll, 2017).

Ingersoll (2017) stated one of the most important distinguishing characteristics of the professional level and status is the degree of power and control held by the participants to make workplace decisions. When teachers are compared to "traditional professions," they have limited power and control over choices that directly influence their work (Ingersoll, 2017). Ingersoll's major point is that teachers are entrusted to instruct and prepare the next generation of leaders and innovators. Despite the necessity of the education profession and the job's difficulty, the workforce of educators is not entrusted with power and control over the process of this essential work.

Ingersoll (2017) indicated the positive effect of increased teacher control when the educators were included in the decision-making process. Schools with a higher teacher involvement concerning school-wide and classroom decisions had fewer student disciplinary issues. In addition, Ingersoll (2017) suggested that more staff and administration collegiality lends toward a more committed workforce, and most importantly, better teacher retention. Almost one in five teachers in schools with a low level of teacher control over student discipline issues were expected to depart. In contrast, only one in 20 were expected to depart from schools with a high level of teacher control over such issues (Ingersoll, 2017). Limiting the teacher's control over student discipline

problems in the classroom undermines their ability to efficiently run the class and thus increased teacher attrition (Ingersoll, 2017). Overall, teacher autonomy affects teachers' sense of job satisfaction and can cause them to doubt the value of the profession's work, causing increased turnover (Ingersoll, 2017).

Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2013) reported large class size, lack of resources, lack of participation in decision making, limited principals' support, and high stakes accountability were factors related to attrition. The teacher respondents to the *Schools and Staffing Survey* (2012) and *Teacher Follow-Up Survey* (2014) reported close to the same: lack of principals' support, minimal job growth opportunities, few professional development opportunities, limited influence with policy and procedures, and low resources to perform the job caused teachers to leave the field. Knowing the major working conditions have not changed in over a decade should hold strong implications for policy reform at the building level and closer examination of effective principals' leadership to drive teacher satisfaction and growth and, in turn, increased learning outcomes (TFS, 2014).

In contrast to conventional wisdom, salary is not a major contributor to teacher attrition (Ingersoll & Smith, 2013). The average teacher was a White female (NCES, 2012) who entered the profession to balance work and family (Marks & Houston, 2014). The benefits of reasonable hours, summers off, and family health insurance offset the lower than average salary compared to other professional fields such as law or nursing (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012). However, teachers need to feel respected and supported in order to make this trade-off worthwhile (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012). Further, when

teachers feel a sense of belonging to the school environment, their level of commitment to the school community and their need to see the vision and mission come to fruition is a stronger indicator of job satisfaction (Matinez, 2017).

### **Administrative Support**

Cancio et al. (2013) proposed four primary types of support that school principals should provide to new elementary school teachers. These included emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support. Emotional support refers to the empathy that school principals demonstrate and their efforts to build trust and collaboration with new teachers. Emotional support also refers to acknowledging the importance of who new elementary school teachers are as individuals and how well they complete tasks (Cancio et al., 2013). Instrumental support is provided when administrators assist new elementary school teachers with their immediate needs, including an open-door policy whereby beginning elementary school educators feel comfortable addressing their frustrations and acquiring assistance with challenging tasks. Informational support requires school principals to create opportunities to spend one-on-one time with beginning teachers to collaborate with them personally and with other teachers within their departments. Finally, appraisal support entails consistently providing new elementary school teachers with meaningful feedback and constructive criticism based upon daily and weekly classroom observations (Cancio et al., 2013).

Similarly, Pogodzinski (2014) posited that new elementary school teachers seek four types of support from their school principals. These included emotional, instructional, informational, and appraisal support. Such administrative support is

demonstrated through open communication and mutual respect, providing resources that support the curriculum, providing opportunities for collaboration and decision-making, frequently providing beginning teachers with authentic feedback about their performance, and explicitly communicating job expectations and responsibilities (Pogodzinski 2014). Boogren (2015) added that new elementary school teachers need physical, emotional, instructional, and instrumental support. Physical support refers to school principals assisting beginning elementary school educators by providing explanations and demonstrations when needed. Emotional support refers to school principals' engagement as active listeners who communicate with new elementary school teachers by encouraging messages and celebrating successes. Instructional support refers to motivating new elementary school teachers to promote a common vision to meet teaching and learning goals. Instructional support also refers to analyzing data to drive instruction and take time to reflect on and celebrate achieved outcomes. Finally, instrumental support entails taking the time to cultivate a positive school climate and a culture of collaboration by fostering a support network for new teachers (Boogren, 2015).

A study conducted by Hughes et al. (2014) revealed how new elementary school teachers rank the types of support they desire from their school principals. Using a non-experimental correlational design, Hughes et al. (2014) surveyed 80 teachers from 20 school districts to determine ways new elementary school teachers prioritized the importance of the various types of support needed from their school administrator. According to Hughes et al. (2014), the types of support prioritized by the participants were emotional, environmental, instructional, and technical. Participants rated emotional

and environmental support the highest, followed by instructional and technical support. In addition, participants communicated the need for school principals' support in receiving positive feedback, availability, emotional support, especially in front of parents or colleagues, and providing resources to support classroom activities. The study results indicated that new elementary school teachers most often felt supported by their school principals when they were recognized for their efforts and that beginning elementary school educators were more likely to leave when there were fewer instances of individual recognition. The study also indicated that school principals and new elementary school teachers have different perceptions of administrative support. While the school principals who participated in the study perceived that the level of support they provided was sufficient, the beginning elementary school teacher participants perceived school principals' support as insufficient. As a result of the study, Hughes et al. (2014) suggested that school principals' and new elementary school teachers' perceived differences in administrative support may be a reason for high attrition rates among teachers in general. Further, Hughes et al. (2014) surmised that school principals must understand how new elementary school teachers perceive the support they provide. Hence, school principals should seek ways to increase support to beginning elementary school teachers, especially during their first five years of employment. The need for school principals, as leaders, to increase various types of support to new elementary school teachers has led to the emergence of research that focuses on school administrators as mentors.

Green and Munoz, 2016 stated the school-based principal is the key component in

creating positive working conditions by developing a collegial and supportive workplace (Green & Munoz, 2016). Leaders seeking a highly functioning and consistent workforce need to reduce teacher turnover a priority, particularly in hard-to-staff schools, because of the effects teacher turnover can have on educational reform (Ingersoll, 2013). The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Challenges for School Leadership in 2013 (Markow et al., 2013) confirmed the struggles of school leadership to maintain an adequate supply of effective teachers and provide direction and opportunities for teachers to build their capacity and skills. One key factor identified by the survey was school administrations' ability to share leadership roles with teachers (Markow et al., 2013).

Management behavior and the perception of instructional leadership is a key contributor to increasing teacher retention. Seventy-three percent of teachers reported the most important skill and experience for a principal to possess is the ability to develop strong teaching capacity across the school (Markow et al., 2013). Engaging teachers in school-wide decision-making opportunities regarding school organization and curriculum is also necessary. Even in 1986, The MetLife Survey (Markow et al., 2013) stated that all principals agreed upon the essential practice of involving teachers in school-wide decisions about school organization and curriculum. In contrast, only seven out of 10 teachers today reported school leaders employing the method (Markow et al., 2013).

Another way for school principals to strengthen the profession, teacher satisfaction, and retention of effective instructors is to envision and provide opportunities for teacher job growth. Only 6 % of teachers report a high desire to exit the classroom to become a school principal (Markow et al., 2013). Most teachers are committed to the

classroom but possess aspirations to grow and contribute to the profession in ways the classroom cannot offer. However, principals in high-needs schools distributed lower ratings to their teachers. Principals with a majority of low-income and high-minority populations were less likely to rate their teachers as excellent compared to principals with higher-income and lower minority schools (Markow et al., 2013). Principals in lower-income and large minority populations were also more likely to report challenges with engaging the parents and community to help improve the students' education, creating and maintaining rigorous learning environments, maintaining an adequate supply of effective teachers, and possessing less control in school-wide decision making (Markow et al., 2013). With that in mind, perhaps principals in high-need schools do not trust their staff to undertake essential school responsibilities and do not possess the power to allow such hybrid roles. School administrations need to see how teacher leadership roles can translate into a potential resource for transforming challenges into opportunities and, in turn, increasing teacher professional growth, satisfaction, and staff morale (Markow et al., 2013).

Higher workforce morale translates to higher levels of student achievement. Further, teachers and principals that reported higher job satisfaction and less job-related stress were more likely to state students are at or above grade level (Markow et al., 2013). This could be a major explanation for the achievement gap between low-income, high minority schools, and higher income, lower minority schools. According to Markow et al. (2013), low-income, high-minority school teachers and principals were more likely to report greater job dissatisfaction, lower morale, higher job-related stress, and fewer

decision-making opportunities. Thirty-seven percent of principals and 27% of teachers in schools where at least two-thirds of students are low-income reported that the student body was at or above grade level. In comparison, 91% of principals and 83% of teachers in schools where fewer than one-third of students were low-income reported the student body was at or above grade level (Markow et al., 2013).

Over the past 20 years, the principal's role evolved from the teacher's boss to the boss of personnel, student learning outcomes, high stakes testing, community relations, budgetary concerns, and school-wide planning (Cruzeiro & Morgan, 2016; Leithwood Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2014; Portin, 2014). School leaders feel the pressure to compete at a global level in an accountability era by learning to be capacity builders (Stoll, 2018; Stoll et al., 2016) and focusing on instructional leadership responsibilities (Klar, 2013). Stoll et al. (2016) described how capacity building is a complex blend of motivation, skill, and positive learning within ideal organizational conditions and culture. To see the full return on capacity building, Stoll et al. (2016) suggested developing a set process, such as creating an ideal climate and culture of growth, creating and implementing opportunities to encourage new content learning and pedagogical learning, and ensuring all processes align with the objective of building capacity. Their extensive literature review concluded that building capacity is necessary for maintaining positive growth in student learning (Stoll et al., 2016). In addition, instructional leaders must engage in professional dialogue in formal and informal manners. This kind of rich discussion can only occur if one has curriculum knowledge and strong pedagogical content knowledge. That sort of strength cannot grow from one workshop but rather

requires continual professional development for school leadership (Hassenpflug, 2013).

School leadership needs professional development just as much as the staff they lead. Training must be offered for the administration to become instructional leaders and personnel mentors. Leaders should be provided opportunities to observe what "good leadership" looks like. However, the job demands are so overwhelming that 50% of principals leave their profession after the third year (Trach, 2016). Many principals report little, if any, time left to pursue professional learning opportunities, which are necessary to fulfill their new roles (Trach, 2016). New principals need support from an experienced administrator to understand policy and procedures, maneuver through difficult issues, and model effective instructional strategies. School principals receiving this type of mentoring can occur through formal assigned principal coaches or informal virtual networking and peer-to-peer supports between principals (Trach, 2016).

Vroom and Jago (2017) defined leadership as "a process of motivating people to work together collaboratively to accomplish great things" p. 18), and they elaborated on their idea of leadership by stating their theory of what leadership is and is not and stated the following:

1. Leadership is a process, not a property of a person.
2. The process involves influencing others through motivation.
3. The nature of incentives, whether they be extrinsic or intrinsic, is not part of the definition.
4. The consequence of the influence is collaboration in pursuit of a common goal.

5. The "great things" are in both the minds of the leaders and the followers and are not necessarily viewed as desirable by all other parties (Vroom & Jago, 2017, p. 18).
6. Vroom and Jago (2017) argued that relationships between leaders and subordinates are "not only at the core of attempts to understand what people do but are also the basis for attempts to understand what leaders should do (Vroom & Jago, 2017, p. 23). As leaders of organizations, administrators are not only responsible for daily routine tasks (Kim & Roth, 2015), but also "are charged with creating an organizational climate that promotes individual commitment and organizational effectiveness such as providing adequate resources and professional development, giving meaningful feedback and encouragement, and including teachers in decision making" (Pogodzinski, et al., 2012, p. 270).

Principals' support for teachers have evolved over the years. Although there are various perceptions of what principals' support is, the literature detailed specific elements of leadership within the realm of principals' support. House (1981) conducted a study in which he identified four behavior domains of social support: emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal. House considered the emotional support domain with trust as the most important factor of social support (Boogren, 2015; House, 1981). These four behavioral dimensions were later adapted and applied to principals' support by Boogren (2015) and later by Littrell et al. (1994), who conducted a study involving 1226 public school teachers in which the researchers took the four behavior dimensions of Boogren

and applied them to education and principals' support. According to Boogren (2015), emotional support is characterized by actively listening, portraying trust, and displaying empathy to one's staff. Further, Boogren (2015) stated informational support means offering advice and suggestions and providing the information and the communication teachers need to do their jobs successfully. This may include assistance such as making available to the faculty and staff the plan of the week, bell schedules, master schedules, daily events, and many other types of communication. Instrumental support is allotting time for teachers to collaborate, providing funding for resources and staff development. The last domain of support, appraisal support, provides data to the teacher regarding their performance for self-evaluation purposes.

Branch et al. (2013) conducted research measuring the impact of effective principals and concluded that schools whose principals are effective have a massive exit of less effective teachers. According to Sedivy-Benton and Bolden-McGill (2012), administrators have a high influential status in school climate and culture, and their support directly impacts the teacher turnover rate. Studies by Sedivy-Benton and Bolden-McGill (2012) were conducted to gain insight into the perceptions of teachers and the role administrators' play when deciding if they will remain in the profession. Sedivy-Benton and Bolden-McGill (2012) found that higher rates of teacher turnover impacted by leadership are a clear indication that there is a problem in the education community. Schools with effective leadership and a lower turnover rate indicated that the principal listened to all stakeholders (Mancuso, Roberts, & White, 2017). New elementary school teachers will remain present in their current teaching assignments with supportive and

effective administrators. When new elementary school teachers see no opportunities for growth in the profession and have lack of administrative support, they begin to determine if they will stay or leave (Sedivy-Benton & Bolden-McGill, 2012). Effective principals are more successful at retaining new elementary school teachers committed to the profession while pushing those who are less effective out of the profession (Branchet al., 2013). The lack of communication between new elementary school teachers and employees can also be a determining factor as to why instructors leave. The influence of career satisfaction may also differ between the levels of experience among new elementary school teachers (Branch et al., 2013). Administrators may display behaviors that lack support towards new elementary school teachers and this is perceived as dissatisfaction which creates a negative school climate (Mancuso et al., 2017). Certain conditions are needed for a new elementary school teacher to build his or her capacity as an educator, such as professional development, collaboration, and leadership support (Whipp, & Geronime, 2015).

According to Whipp and Geronime (2015), various factors influence teacher turnovers, such as school leadership and school culture. A survey conducted in North Carolina by Ladd (2015) included findings that could be used to indicate that the quality of the administration was the highest determining factor in which made a teacher leave the profession. Also, in New York City in 2005, first-year teachers revealed through a survey that their unhappiness with school leadership had the greatest impact on why they quit teaching. New elementary school teachers look to administrators for support. Administrators who are aware of these burnout factors could potentially reduce the

turnover rate (Schaefer et al. 2012). Schaefer et al. (2012) also argued that burnout occurs with new elementary school teachers because of working in isolation, excessive paperwork, and the lack of administrative support. Mancuso, et al. (2017) argued that new elementary school teachers expect administrators to foster collaboration amongst educators, solve problems, and demonstrate respect in the workplace. New elementary school teachers want to be treated as professionals.

For this reason, when these actions were not provided or demonstrated among new elementary school teachers, new teachers were more prone to depart the profession. Zhu, et al. (2014) examined the culture of schools in China for connecting leaders and teachers to provide another perspective of leadership cultural differences. Kilinic (2014) examined school leadership as it related to retention and natural attrition. Further, Kilinic (2014) stated teachers would be replaced continually, so it was important to ensure that data connected preconceived ideas. McCarley, Peters and Decman (2014) also gave a second perspective on leadership, as needing more research.

Brown (2018) stated administrators need to model expected behaviors, be visible throughout the school, and guide all staff members to provide constructive feedback and make recommendations for professional development. School leadership can develop learning communities to help strengthen collegiality among all teachers in order to decrease turnover rates (Brown, 2018). Principals can improve the education quality by ensuring they hire effective teachers in the classrooms and transition less effective ones out (Branch et al., 2013). The role of an administrator is essential to teacher retention. Offering respect, allowing teacher input in school decisions, and solving school issues

helps to build trust and these behaviors are seen as supportive actions (Mancuso et al., 2017). Positive working conditions that include teacher support from administrators directly correlated to how new elementary school teachers perceived their profession and their decision to continue teaching. Torres (2014) reported that the perception of support from an administrator played a significant role when a new elementary school teacher determines to leave. A study was conducted in Canada among new elementary school teachers. The researchers concluded that having an administrator who promoted a positive school culture and support from experienced teachers minimized the difficulties they would experience (Schaefer et al., 2012). While some new elementary school teachers expressed that having administrative support and support from their experienced colleagues is good, they would prefer to have more support in implementing the curriculum and more mentor experiences (Schaefer et al., 2012).

Kilinc (2014) noted that a principal-centered leadership style could create a climate in which there is a lack of improvement in building new elementary school teacher capacity and student achievement. He further stated that best practices for leadership should focus more on teacher collaboration and stronger relationships, eliminating or decreasing the amount of teacher turnover. For example, schools have administrators who support their new elementary school teachers, share the decision-making process with others, and allow educators to share in the school's vision. As a result, a relationship of trust is developed among the learning community and its stakeholders (Kilinc, 2014).

Khawary and Ali (2015) posited the increasing rate of teacher turnover when the

school's leadership does not pay attention to what motivates its educators and focuses more on instruction. Brunsting et al. (2014) asserted that many teachers do not feel supported by their principals and feel overwhelmed because of the lack of support and resources needed to educate students. Heidmets and Liik (2014) explained that it is important for administrators to influence their new elementary school teachers in their recommendations for practice. Sparks et al. (2017) recommended that future studies focus on mentor-mentee relations in secondary schools.

### **Mentor and Induction Programs**

Researchers reported a connection between mentoring programs and teacher practice, retention, and student achievement (Ingersoll & Strong, 2015). Because of this association, policymakers have identified induction programs as an area of education in need of reform. A teacher's job is complicated. A preparatory program is unlikely to provide all the necessary knowledge a new elementary school teacher needs and most of the vital learning will occur on the job. Ingersoll (2012) stated, "This view holds that schools must provide an environment where new teachers can learn how to teach, survive, and succeed as teachers." (p. 47).

There is a need for induction programs that can assist new elementary school teachers to help alleviate isolation and help them acclimate more quickly, thus increasing the likelihood of increasing teacher longevity. The number of induction programs has doubled since 1991 (Goldrick et al., 2012). Therefore, it is important to determine what kinds of supports are necessary to increase the effectiveness of teacher induction programs. Ingersoll (2012) stated that the most basic support reported by 87% of new

elementary school teachers was consistent, supportive communications with a principal, another administrator, or department chair. Eighty percent of beginning elementary school teachers received strong feedback from a mentor, and half reported having common planning and collaboration time with colleagues. However, less than 20% received a reduced workload or aid in the room (Ingersoll, 2012).

Beginning elementary school teachers are more likely to succeed if they ease into their transition into the profession. As the data indicates, not all induction programs are created equal (Ingersoll, 2012). Studies showed the number and types of supports provided will indicate the effectiveness of the induction program. The two components with the most effect on reducing attrition in new teachers were a mentor in the same subject area and common planning time with colleagues in the same content area (Ingersoll & Smith, 2014). Overall, the number of components offered does matter. Receiving multiple types of support increased the likelihood of teacher retention (Ingersoll & Smith, 2014; Smith & Ingersoll, 2014). The most basic and standard support package was a mentor and regular communications with a principal or administrator. Unfortunately, beginning elementary school teachers who received this type of package were only slightly more likely to stay compared to teachers who received no induction program at all (Ingersoll, 2012).

Burkman (2012) noted that mentoring is only as reliable a support as the mentor. Moreover, Hobson et al. (2018) found that it was most beneficial when the mentor and mentee shared the same subject, grade level, and school community. Having all three experiences provided a common ground and allowed the mentor to address the mentee's

needs more efficiently. Support should be provided for more active learning on content knowledge, lesson plan development, and analyzing student work, rather than mere superficial issues (Desimone et al., 2014). Further, mentoring can be formal and informal. A formal mentor is assigned to a mentee by the proper administration, while an informal mentor is a colleague the mentee gravitates to on their own for guidance (Hochberg et al., 2015). Hochberg et al. (2015) further elaborated that the positive effect of having both types of mentors present is that they tend to complement each other rather than compensate for the other. The point of mentoring, whether it is formal or informal, was to improve instruction. The majority of the time spent between a mentor and mentee focused on instructional content and activities. New elementary school teachers noted that the largest issues of concern are analyzing student work, planning, and pacing instruction, followed by student behavior, parent communication, administration, and provisions for emotional support (Hochberg et al., 2015).

Hochberg et al. (2015) stated that in order to ensure the success of the new elementary school teacher's experiences, time was a major factor. Integrating structures to allow for social interactions, collaboration with colleagues, and administration impacted the effectiveness of the mentor program in place. Time should be embedded into the mentor and mentee's schedule to witness each others instruction with post observations and engagement in professional dialogue to discuss emotional adjustments (Hochberg et al., 2015).

Hochberg et al. (2015) noted that induction programs positively affected beginning elementary school teachers' satisfaction, commitment, and retention. In

addition, the supports improved new elementary school teachers' ability to command a room, keep students on task, differentiate instruction, employ critical thinking questioning techniques, and demonstrate relevant student lesson plans. Most importantly, students taught by teachers who participate in an induction program had higher scores or gains on achievement tests (Ingersoll, 2012). These types of programs matter toward retaining beginning elementary school teachers and improving instruction, yet they vary in content, intensity, and duration from school to school. Therefore, induction programs need to be comprehensive to impact teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2012).

Improved working conditions and quality professional development impact new elementary school teachers' retention more than a mentor program alone (Brill & McCartney, 2018). Ingersoll (2014) stated that beginning elementary school teachers who received a more "comprehensive package," which included a mentor, regular communications with an administrator, plus a new teacher seminar, common planning time, reduced workload, and teacher's assistant were drastically more likely to be retained. The effectiveness of this type of mentoring is unquestioned, yet only 5% of teachers received such a package (Ingersoll & Smith, 2014).

### **Professional Development**

The overarching goal of professional development in education is to improve teacher learning, which then changes practices and ultimately improves student achievement and the quality of schools in the United States (Desimone, 2015; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). This goal comes at the cost of approximately one billion to four billion dollars (Wilson, 2013). Mentoring, conferences ranging from local to the federal level,

summer seminars, school-based professional development provided by the school district or building administration, research experience, and coaching all belong to professional development (Wilson, 2013). Because of the cost and number of resources poured into professional development, it is vital to understand which components will increase beginning elementary school teachers' confidence and retention and, ultimately, student achievement (Desimone, 2015; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015).

Desimone (2015) identified five components of effective professional development. It is necessary to have all five elements present for the professional development program to drive an increase in new elementary school teachers' knowledge, change in practice, and student achievement. The first component is a focus on content knowledge. Content knowledge is more important for teacher practice, confidence, and student learning outcomes. Therefore, there should be a focus on subject matter content and how students learn the material (Desimone, 2015).

The second component identified by Desimone (2015) was engaged learning. Engagement encompasses observing and feedback, analyzing student work, and presenting among peers (Desimone, 2015). The third component of professional development must be aligned to standards, current school policy and reforms, and prior knowledge (Desimone, 2015). The fourth component is time. Findings from the literature indicated that the duration of the professional development should be spread over weeks, if not months, and include a minimum of 20 hours of contact time (Desimone, 2015). The fifth and final component is collective participation. It is best practice to send a group of new elementary school teachers to professional development

to build an interactive learning community (Desimone, 2015).

This fifth and final component presented by (Desimone) 2015 makes learning more meaningful if an entire department or grade level members attend professional development together to increase the likeliness of rich discussion, rather than one representative returning with key information to turn-key (Desimone, 2015). A professional dialogue will continue among colleagues after the workshop, and the group can aid with implementing new ideas into teacher practice and, in due course, student outcomes.

Furthermore, Desimone (2015) developed a conceptual framework for any professional development program. "This model represents interactive relationships among the core features of professional development, teacher knowledge and beliefs, classroom practice, and student outcomes" (Desimone, 2015, p. 70). In order to be successful, professional development should follow certain steps. First, teachers should experience professional development by attending it on their own, within their workday, or through other school principals or district platforms. Second, after attending professional development, teachers should experience increased knowledge and skills and a change in perception and belief. Third, new elementary school teachers should utilize their new knowledge, skills, and confidence to improve instruction and pedagogy (Desimone, 2015). The final and most important step is that student learning be measurable through teacher change, and that growth can be documented (Desimone, 2015). Desimone (2015) suggested that the three measurable questions that must be asked about professional development are:

1. Did the teachers learn?
2. Did teacher practice change after the professional development?
3. Did student achievement improve as a result?

The past practice involved administering a post-workshop survey. However, the post-workshop alone is not a strong enough tool or methodology to provide substantial evidence of the professional development program's effectiveness—the validity and reliability of an assessment increase with the use of multiple methods. In order to provide rigorous evidence, school districts first need to identify the core inquiry and align it with the appropriate methodologies (surveys, observations, interviews). With strong, capable, and ongoing evaluation, professional development can be refined to ensure its rigor and relevance (Desimone, 2015).

Professional development programs should increase the concept of self-directed learning, so new elementary school teachers take responsibility for their learning and become learners for life who partake in continued formal and informal professional development (Franco et al., 2012). Further, effective professional development needs to be aligned with school reform and vision. Professional development aims to build life-long learners, increase formal and informal professional dialogue, and provide valuable opportunities for teacher self-reflection. Moreover, professional development will provide new elementary school teachers' practice change, which will increase student achievement and narrow the achievement gap development (Franco et al., 2012). Lee et al. (2018) investigated a three-year-long professional development program in a culturally and linguistically diverse student population and discovered that student

achievement improved with every year the program existed. Further, this study suggests that consistent professional development can increase student learning in a high-poverty, high-minority school (Lee et al., 2018).

Diamond et al. (2014) stated the first step is for the school principals to define the purpose and goal of high-quality professional development that will be used to support new elementary school teachers. The second step should be building teacher content knowledge and instructional skills. Studies prove a strong correlation between new elementary school teachers' knowledge, instructional ability, and student learning outcomes (Diamond et al., 2014). In essence, the more sound the new elementary school teacher's content knowledge, the better the chance to foster skills and knowledge and elicit a higher level of student learning. The extent to which high-quality professional development can impact student learning varies considerably based on which new elementary school teachers increase their content knowledge, implement these new practices with deep understanding, and produce an increase in student achievement (Covay et al., 2016).

Covay Minor et al.'s (2016) study examined the variation between the impact of content knowledge and professional developments on new elementary school teachers' practice. The results were positive in that all levels of content knowledge noted perceived value and "take away" from the high-quality professional development—teachers who already possessed high content knowledge focused on the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). PCK refers to "the specialized knowledge necessary to convey content effectively to students" (Covay Minor et al., 2016, p .4). Teachers with

weaker content knowledge used the opportunity to boost this knowledge. Considering new elementary school teachers' prior knowledge and experience allow for differentiated professional development to increase teacher quality for the majority of the population, rather than just a particular subgroup.

### **Summary**

A summary of the most recent literature provided several factors that influenced teacher attrition. Most researchers cited in this literature review believed that working conditions and administration support were the main criteria new elementary school teachers considered when deciding whether or not to remain in the profession.

Additionally, there was a high turnover rate of new elementary school teachers, and the cost to recruit, train and retain them is expensive. Teacher turnover has been classified as a significant problem in the education field, and working conditions and support must be present in order for a teacher to want to remain in the profession. Low salaries, lack of leadership support, and personal reasons drive high turnover among new elementary school teachers.

Furthermore, in order for teachers to make decisions and remain in the profession, they often consider resources needed for teaching, school climate, class sizes, and support.

The literature review supported the problem and purpose of this study on teacher turnover to expand the literature and understanding on the perceptions of new elementary school teachers about factors contributing to teacher turnover and the supports needed to remain a teacher. This will provide information that could potentially decrease turnover and attrition rates and retain more teachers. Chapter II presented the literature pertinent to the

study. Chapter III presents the methodology that will be used to carry out the study.

Chapter IV presents findings from the research and the analysis of that data collected.

Chapter V presents recommendations and conclusions based on the analysis and findings.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

Teacher attrition in the United States is a significant concern. High rates of attrition have tremendous financial costs, which can exceed \$20,000 per teacher for replacing one teacher who leaves (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014). Attrition also carries costs for student learning, as high turnover rates reduce achievement for students (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014). For this study, the researcher interviewed new elementary teachers who had less than five years of teaching experience.

#### **Overview**

There are numerous research studies that focused on teacher attrition. However, there is a gap in the recently published literature that exclusively focused on new teachers' perceptions of the support needed that would allow them to remain at their current teaching assignments. The current study focused on teachers' perceptions on what resources were necessary to support them so that they would remain at their current teaching assignments and continue their career paths in the field of education. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate elementary teachers' perceptions of the types of support they need in order to remain at their current teaching assignments

and in the field of education. The study specifically investigated new elementary teachers' perceptions of the emotional, instructional, informational, and appraisal support they need during the first five years of their teaching experiences in order to influence their decision to remain both at their current teaching assignment and in the profession.

### **Research Design**

According to Donitsa-Schmidt and Zuzovsky (2016), many efforts to mitigate the new elementary school teacher attrition challenge, strategies designed to address the issue have failed to alleviate this ongoing problem. A qualitative methodology was employed for this research. A qualitative method was chosen to collect in-depth data. According to both Yin (2015) and Creswell (2015), qualitative research is beneficial for investigating problems in real-life, contemporary settings and to collect rich data through interviews.

A qualitative research design was used to carry out the purpose of this study. Qualitative studies allow researchers to have a deeper understanding of situations such as supports needed by new teachers. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) also suggested that awareness gathered from interviews could have a direct influence on policy, procedures, and research. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), interviews provide an extensive account and examination of a bounded set of principles. In a qualitative study, data are usually derived from interviews and field observations, and documents. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) further indicated that making sense of these data could be challenging for the qualitative researcher. Attention to data management is particularly important under interview circumstances (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Merriam (1998) reported that educational research utilizes interviews so that particular matters and problems of practice can be recognized and clarified. This is why qualitative study was the most appropriate design for this study. Merriam (2009) also explained that the more intensive phase of qualitative study begins with bringing all the data concerning the case together: interviews, records or transcripts, field notes, reports, records, the researcher's individual documents, physical traces, and insightful notes. All these materials need to be organized in a way that make data easily retrievable. Yin (2018) called this organized material the study database.

### **Research Question**

The following question guided the study: What are new elementary teachers' perceptions of the types of support they need to remain at their current teaching assignments and in the field of education?

### **Population and Sample**

Three participants were interviewed for this study. All of the participants were elementary teachers in public schools in Texas. Two of the participants were males while one was female. All identified as African-American. All of the participants worked for a large school district within the state of Texas, Texasville Independent School District (Pseudonym) with more than 50,000 students. Each year, the district has approximately 12.5% of the total staff leave the district. That number is inclusive of retirements, resignations and non-renewed staff and is lower than the state of Texas average of 16.4%. For the purposes of this research, the participants are referred to using the pseudonyms Mr. Sigma, Mr. Alpha and Ms. Delta. One participant, Mr. Alpha possessed a master's

degree, while the other two participants Mr. Sigma and Ms. Delta have earned bachelor's degrees. One of the teacher participants with a bachelor's degree is currently working toward earning his master's degree while another currently holds a master's degree. Two of the participants, Mr. Sigma and Ms. Delta were designated by their district as alternative certification teachers. The Texas Education Agency allows individuals who have bachelor's degrees in fields other than education to enter teaching uncertified but with support from their school district.

Table 3.

*Participants' Education and Experience*

Participant	Education	Teaching Experience
Mr. Sigma	Bachelor's Degree, currently enrolled in a master's degree program	2 years
Ms. Delta	Bachelor's Degree	2 years
Mr. Alpha	Master's Degree	1 year

All of the participants teach at Research Elementary (Pseudonym) in the Texasville Independent School District located in an urban area of Texas. Research Elementary is a campus of approximately 750 students and is currently rated as *improvement required* by the Texas Education agency because of the F rating earned in the state accountability system. The campus has a lower retention rate of staff than that of Texasville Independent school District. The campus is identified as a Title-I campus because 80% of students are identified as economically disadvantaged. As a Title I campus, Research Elementary is required to have as part of the campus improvement

plan, an addendum to address the recruitment and retention of staff. The current campus improvement plans list strategies such as implementing a mentoring and targeted induction program for new teachers, monthly coaching meetings and a system of regularly scheduled feedback given to new teachers. However, with these plans in place, the campus has not met annual staff retention targets for the past three years consecutively. Additionally, Research Elementary has more new beginning teachers with 32% of teachers having one-five years total experience. The district average is 23%. As it relates to campus administration, principals remain in place at the campus for an average of 3 years. The district average for principal tenure at one campus is 7.4 years. As it relates to assistant principals, the average tenure on the campus is slightly over two years while the district average close to 7 years. The ethnic distribution of the student body includes 24.4% identifying as African-American and 59.7% Hispanic. Approximately 50% of the student body participates in Bilingual/ESL education. The district average is close to 20% of total students enrolled. Approximately 12% of students are identified as special education students. This is consistent with the district average of 12% of total students but slightly higher than the state average of 9.6% of students.

Purposive sampling was used to select the district and the participants of the study. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017) purposeful sampling is when researchers intentionally select individual and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) and Yazan (2015) added that purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned.

Researchers must determine specific selection criteria to assemble a sample of participants (Hancock & Algozzine, 2016). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), a list of certain attributes is necessary to accomplish a purposeful sampling procedure. Researchers must consider not only the criteria by which they select a certain sample but also the reasons why certain attributes are required in the sample (Lewis, 2015). Hancock and Algozzine (2016) added that purposeful sampling entails criterion-based selection and a list of characteristics important to the study before the researcher chooses participants.

### **Data Collection**

An application to Stephen F. Austin State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) was completed and submitted for approval (See Appendix A). The purpose of the IRB is three-fold: respect for persons' consent, right to privacy, and anonymity (Creswell, 2014). Once approval was obtained from Stephen F. Austin State University's Institutional Review Board to conduct the study, an application and a letter requesting permission were submitted to the superintendent of the school district that served as the research site (See Appendix B). After receiving permission to conduct the study from the superintendent, the Director of Research and Accountability sent an email to participants who met the criteria of five years or less teaching experience to the targeted campus. (See Appendix C). The researcher emailed a letter of invitation to the potential participants. An informed consent letter was crafted, approved by the Stephen F. Austin University's Institutional Review Board, and provided to participants with the importance of the research and the guarantee of their rights.

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews (See Appendix D). The general interview guide approach is more structured than the unceremonious conversational interview although there is still flexibility in its structure (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). The vigor of the general interview guide technique is the capability of the researcher “to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee; this provides more focus than the conversational approach, but still allows a degree of freedom and adaptability in getting information from the interviewee” (McNamara, 2009). The researcher was able to interact with teacher participants in a more informal way. As a result, the researcher was able to learn more about the experiences of the participants from the structured interviews. The researcher asked follow-up questions and probed participants based on their initial responses to the pre-composed questions.

Prior to each interview, the researcher called each teacher to set up a time for the interviews. All interviews were conducted via zoom and also digitally recorded. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was digitally recorded (audio). The recordings were saved to the researcher’s password-protected computer and will be kept for at least five years.

After all, interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed each interview and then emailed each participant a copy of the respective transcript of his or her interview for review. If needed, changes were made to the transcriptions. All participants’ information was kept confidential in a locked file cabinet at the researcher’s home office. All data associated with the study will be shredded five years after the completion of the

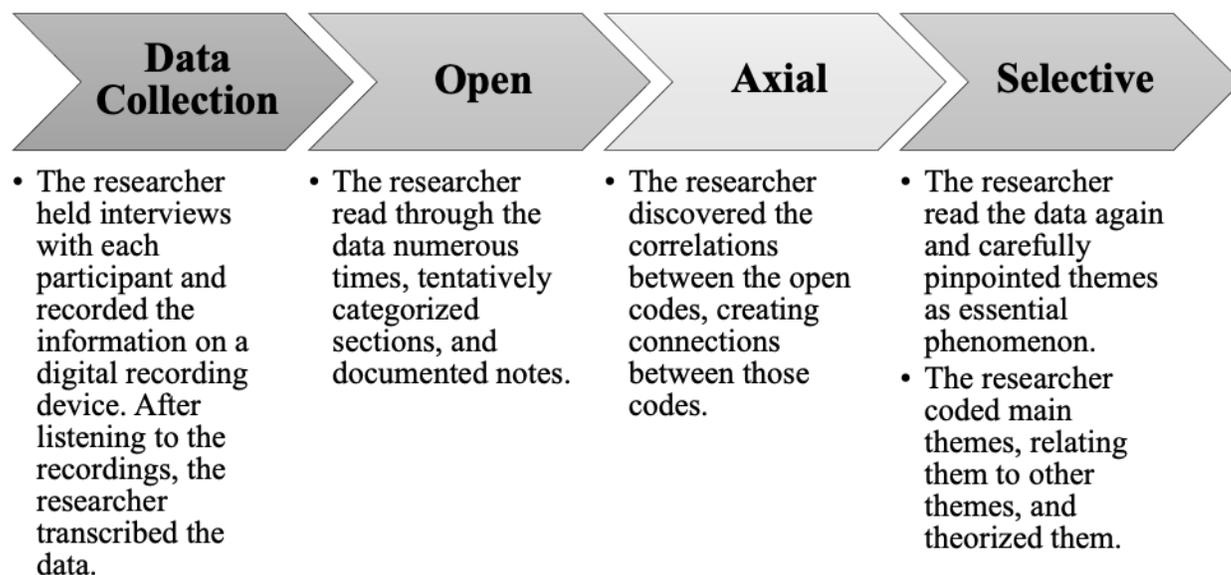
study. All participants' information was kept private, and pseudonyms have been assigned to ensure confidentiality.

### **Data Analysis**

The qualitative data were analyzed using inductive coding where the series of interviews recorded with teachers was condensed, and its raw text data formatted into a summary. In an effort to establish clear links between the research objectives, the researcher identified themes that emerged from the raw data through repeated examination and comparison. Yin's (2015) five-phase process for qualitative coding data was used to carry out the analysis of the data collected by the researcher. The five-phase of Yin's (2015) qualitative data analysis was compiling, open coding, axial coding, interpreting, and concluding. Phase One entails collecting data collected for the study through either structured or semi-structured interviews, emails, presentations, and field notes. During open coding, the researcher sorted the data by grouping words, phrases, and concepts. During the axial coding stage, data were taken apart and synthesized. After the data were analyzed and synthesized, the researcher interpreted the data into emerging themes. During the final phase of coding, the researcher made inferences from the whole body of research to answer the research question guiding the study.

Figure 2.

## Data Analysis Process



*Note.* From "A Phenomenological Inquiry Exploring Parental Involvement at Alternative Schools in Eastern North Carolina" by I. Glenn, II, 2021, *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 3853. Reprinted with permission.

To better understand new teachers' perceptions of the support during the first five years of their teaching experience, the participants participated in semi-structured interviews. After the participants completed the interviews, their responses were organized. Next, all of the responses were read thoroughly and analyzed through coding. The coding system consisted of highlighting similar and frequent words and phrases with a similar color. The color-coded words and phrases were categorized into emerging themes.

**Summary**

Chapter III presented a discussion of the research design, research questions and data collection, and data analysis methods. A qualitative interview methodology was used to carry out the purpose of this study. The participants for this study were current elementary teachers who: held a teaching certificate from the TEA, had zero to five years of teaching experience.

The participants for the study were chosen through purposeful sampling. The participants participated in semi-structured interviews that lasted approximately one hour for each interview session. Each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed. Each participant read and correct their respective transcripts for the purpose of member checking. After the participants reviewed the transcripts, the qualitative data were analyzed. Chapter IV presents an analysis of the data. Chapter V presents recommendations and conclusions based on that analysis.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Findings**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate elementary teachers' perceptions of the types of support they need to remain at their current teaching assignments and in the field of education. The study specifically investigated new elementary teachers' perceptions of the cultural and instructional support they needed during the first five years of their teaching experiences to influence their decision to remain both at their current teaching assignment and in the education profession.

Data from the TEA (2018) and Reyes and Alexander (2019) was utilized to show that significant numbers of teachers in Texas leave their current positions each year. Nearly one out of every three public school teachers in Texas resigns before reaching their sixth school year.

#### **Research Question**

This chapter contains the findings of this qualitative study. A qualitative interview guide was written and encompassed open-ended, structured questions with the following guiding question at the core: What are new elementary teachers' perceptions of the types of support they need to remain at their current teaching assignments and in the field of education?

### **Description of Participants**

Three participants were interviewed for this study. All of the participants were elementary teachers in a public schools in Texas. Two of the participants were males while one was female and all identified as African-American. All of the participants worked for a large school district within a metropolitan area, Texasville Independent School District (Pseudonym), has more than 50,000 students. The district has also earned and maintained a rating of B in the state of Texas accountability system for schools. Each year, the district has approximately 12.5% of the total staff to leave the district. For the purposes of this research, the participants are referred to using the pseudonyms Mr. Sigma, Mr. Alpha, and Ms. Delta. Mr. Alpha possessed a master's degree, while Mr. Sigma and Ms. Delta had earned bachelor's degrees. One of the teacher participants with a bachelor's degree is currently working toward earning his master's degree. Mr. Sigma and Ms. Delta were designated by their district as alternative certification teachers. The Texas Education Agency allows individuals who have bachelor's degrees in fields other than education to enter teaching uncertified but with support from their school district.

All of the participants teach at Research Elementary (Pseudonym) in the Texasville Independent School District. Research Elementary is a campus of approximately 750 students and is currently rated an improvement required campus by the Texas Education agency because of the F rating earned in the state accountability system. The campus has a lower retention rate of staff than that of the Texasville Independent School District. The campus is identified as a Title-I campus because over 80% of students are identified as economically disadvantaged. As a Title -I campus,

Research Elementary is required to have as part of the campus improvement plan an addendum to address the recruitment and retention of staff. The current campus improvement plans list strategies such as implementing a mentoring and targeted induction program for new teachers, monthly coaching meetings, and a system of regularly scheduled feedback given to new teachers. However, with these plans in place, the campus has not met annual staff retention targets for the past three years consecutively. Additionally, Research Elementary has more new beginning teachers, with 32% of teachers having a one-five years of total experience. The district average is 23%. As it relates to campus administration, principals remain in place at the campus for an average of 3 years. The district average for principal tenure at one campus is 7.4 years. As it relates to assistant principals, the average tenure on the campus is 2.3 years, while the district average is 6.9 years. The ethnic distribution of the student body includes 24.4% identifying as African-American, 59.7% Hispanic.

### **Interview Findings**

The researcher produced definitive statements that emerged from the themes. The statements by the participants were then compressed into more brief statements wherein the main idea was confined to ephemeral thematic accounts. The constant-comparative method was utilized to expand data analysis further. The researcher established ideas from the data by coding and analyzing concurrently (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Four key themes developed from the data regarding new elementary teachers' perceptions of the types of support they need to remain at their current teaching assignments and in the field of education. Those themes were:

1. Perceptions of elementary teachers concerning the sufficiency of resources
2. Perceptions of elementary teachers as it relates to school culture and climate
3. Perceptions of elementary teachers as it relates to campus leadership
4. Perceptions of elementary teachers as it relates to parental involvement

### **Reasons for Teaching**

It is noteworthy to mention that all participants were asked about their reasons for entering teaching as a career. This question served as a baseline for additional questions and data collection. All three participants had different reasons for entering education, but they all stated that they had been impacted, whether positively or negatively, by someone. Mr. Sigma stated that one of his high school teachers inspired him to enter teaching after working in other fields.

After, I guess, a 20-year detour... I originally went to school in 1994 for teaching. I didn't really like how the program was taught in the school that I was at, so I dropped the teaching major, and then life led me in different directions, but I think the thing that inspired me most was my freshman English teacher in high school, Mrs. Hawkins. She was really just exceptional. She was competent. She was intelligent. She was eloquent. She was challenging and demanding, but at the same time, considerate and fair. And she just made English teaching seem like one of the greatest things to do in the world. The relationship that I've built with her... We still have a relationship to this day. I inbox her from time to time, and she told me that one of her greatest joys is to know that one of her students became a teacher because of her, [and that] she is probably the driving force [as

to] why I went into education. Suppose I had never had Mrs. Hawkins, I probably wouldn't be a teacher.

Mr. Alpha stated that he had plans to enter the communications field only to be discouraged by a family member. After being discouraged, he stated that he entered teaching as an alternative to his first career choice, journalism.

Actually, I wasn't thinking about teaching at all. I thought that I was going to be a broadcast journalist and that I would be on at Live at Five. That was a goal for me until a family member of mine crushed my dreams and was like, "You're not going to make it, and you won't be able to do this until ..." I don't know, "past 30." I believe that's what he said, "Past 30 or 39," or whatever, and, "I don't think that would be a good career choice for you." So I just sat in that and started thinking where could I see myself, and if I didn't mind doing this, even beyond the pay, would I want to wake up and do this every day? So that's how I considered teaching, from that aspect. Not necessarily teaching because my end goal is to be a counselor, but you have to start off with teaching, especially in the state of Texas. So that's what led me to start on this quest to figure out, "All right, is teaching really for me, and can I really be good at it?"

Ms. Delta believed that teaching was instilled in her. She stated that she is a third-generation teacher, and she was inspired by her family to enter the field.

Well, I think it was being raised in a family of teachers and that kind of being something that I was exposed to for most of my life and always having somebody to remind me how important education was being; I guess you could say a third-

generation teacher. So I think that very early on, the notion of education was kind of something that was just instilled in me. But then actually being exposed to the profession, growing up, made it seem like it was always an option even if it wasn't necessarily the first choice. But it was definitely something that was very present throughout my childhood and even through my adolescence and adult life.

### **Sufficient Resources**

During interviews, the participants were asked about resources such as media, equipment, and other materials to deliver instruction effectively. Two participants stated that they believed they had adequate resources. Mr. Sigma stated:

I believe [so], after having gone through this COVID era and the online resources that we have, I believe we have a pretty good start, I would say. Some of the online resources that I've been using haven't been really good. Our admin reached out and got another set of books and resources; even though it was STARR [state assessment] centered, but still, it was some good resources. I do think there can always be improvements so far as even a better explanation of what the higher-ups if you will expect, with different content. Sometimes what they want isn't as clear as they think it is. And sometimes it's not until after they've done a walkthrough or visit, or God forbid, a state testing and the results come back, they realize, Okay, we really didn't, know what you want or really understood what you thought the focus should be. So sometimes I think they can spend more time really sharing what their purpose is and then sometimes give the reason behind it.

And as much as you are the admin or the ED [Executive Director] and what you say goes, it doesn't lessen your authority to give us the reasons why.

Mr. Alpha felt the district provided plentiful resources. He stated:

Yes, I believe that I have a plethora of instructional tools to teach with. I can say about my district that it is not deficient in terms of economic stability. So, our superintendent and board of trustees go to great lengths to ensure that teachers and school personnel have what they need to succeed in the classroom. We have plenty of technological tools at our disposal, from web-based programs to apps to communicate with parents. Some of the most excellent tools that I view as resources are not always materialistic, but there are so many support levels in [name of school district] when it comes to people. We have specialists in multiple departments from early learning, special education, English learner services, student discipline, alternative certification for people who, like myself, do not have a declared major in education; there are layers of human support that I consider to be resources for instructional purposes. My school is in a rich district but a poor neighborhood, so there are some things that we do not have that schools in upper [city name] may have. Even in that, I have every instructional tool that I need at my disposal to teach and assess my students.

Ms. Delta was more neutral in her response concerning whether the resources were sufficient to deliver quality education to her students. However, she acknowledged that she had resources to make-do but did not specifically state whether the resources were adequate or inadequate. She stated:

I think I've learned to make it work. There are definitely resources that I feel could make teaching a little bit easier in regard to just technology usage and things like that. But along the way, I've learned how to adjust. I think when you get past that first semester, you kind of have to re-plan and reevaluate, or if there wasn't a break, this didn't work, or how could I try to integrate what I have or even borrow. So I spent a lot of time borrowing things from other teachers and kids they learn to adjust. It definitely teaches them to be flexible. But I think that I have not always had everything I needed, but I've learned just to be flexible with what I'm planning to teach.

### **School Culture and Climate**

Participants in this study were asked to describe the climate and culture of their workplaces. Two of the teacher participants described their experiences with their school's climate and culture unfavorably, while the other participant remained somewhat neutral in his or her description. When asked, "how would you describe the climate and culture of your school?" Mr. Sigma responded:

Tense. My school had a new principal. I'm not sure if they were new to be an administrator, but they were new to the school. The previous administrator probably knew that they were leaving, but the faculty didn't. When the faculty found out that he was leaving, they thought another admin would get the position. And then the admin didn't. So you have a new principal who no one really wanted. And then they were making a lot of changes, which people didn't think should have been done because the previous principal had done a great job and

really improved the school. So it's like, why are you making all these changes when we were on a really good growing path? And they didn't, from what I was told, because I'm new. So I don't have an observation one way or the other. Well, they're not really listening to us and et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And so, all these little clusters of people that thought one way, and this one thought this way, and some in admin supported the new principal, some didn't. And the teachers did, some didn't, some of the office staff, some didn't. So it was a pretty fraught year. There are a couple of shining moments in there around black history when we had a great program and kids did a really good job. So that was really good. And the admin and colleagues, teachers had funds and some of the things that we did, but still pretty fraught.

Mr. Alpha spoke about challenges as his campus leadership endeavored to alter the culture which had been established in years past by the prior administration.

Okay, this one is something that's being worked on because I'm in a position where I'm new, and then the principal was new. So it was a lot of first-year trying to change, change the dynamics, because I believe the principal prior to him, the principal there, was there for a long period of time, so maybe over 20 plus years. So it can be a challenge for the new principal to try to cultivate a new culture and climate. I think, based on things that I received, I think it's standardly average because it's still a new field, and then people are still trying to figure out what works for the campus, but most importantly, what works best for the students. So we're getting ready to take some dynamic shiftings with the culture because we're

switching from an ACE campus to an IB campus, so we're getting ready to offer all these different things for students to be a part of, and academically that's great, but then it also makes me concerned about the physicality of students too, because they're so into eating takis and all that other stuff, so they might lose those physical aspects because we're more focused on the academic pieces of the school. So I don't know, it's interesting to see it unfold.

Ms. Delta stated believed that being a low performing school has helped shape the idea of impractical expectations in an effort by the administration to succeed. She stated:

I think that this year was a hard year, and morale may have been a little bit lower because there are so many things going on in the world. But prior to COVID-19 and being digital at the beginning of the school year, just listening to a lot of more veteran teachers who have been at the particular campus for a while, it was kind of clear that morale was low because of the expectations being a little bit unrealistic—having a leader that came from a lower-performing school.

Ms. Delta spoke about the relationships that have been established amongst teachers, and the culture and morale of the school as a whole. She stated:

It challenged a lot of people and still is challenging a lot of people. So I would say our climate –the teachers are close together, then the culture is very much so a team and family-style culture. But in regard to the overall climate, I think that there was just a hard learning curve for everybody this year that challenged the morale that caused a lot of people to feel very uncomfortable and unsupported. Because it just wasn't there for us. I depended more so on my mentor teacher and

other teachers in my department than I really was depending on my administration to come through because I kind of knew that they weren't.

Their support wasn't going to really be there. I was always told very early on that discipline was not an issue at my school because of campus size and things like that. But I soon learned that it kind of was and that there was no true discipline system. And so I was asked by an administrator to kind of be a support in that regard because I didn't know that they thought I had good classroom management for a new teacher. Which is something I guess most newer teachers struggle with.

Ms. Delta believed that the systems and procedures in her school were not favorable to new teachers nor supportive to them:

But as a school, we did not really have and still don't have a clearly defined system that is consistently enforced. It's almost as if each teacher has their own set of rules. And it's hard for kids because it's if something is acceptable in one class and they go to the next class and is not, kids will sometimes look at you like you're the bad guy, the bad teacher. And so I think that we don't, we didn't have any way to enforce any type of discipline.

All participants were asked a follow-up question with regard to the school's culture. All three teachers stated they would include some form of positivity for students and staff to ensure that their campus would be a place that stakeholders could have pride in. Mr. Sigma stated:

I would do my best to change this sometimes me against you type attitude. And I know, I haven't been a principal or administrator, but from what I can see,

everything always rolls downhill. No principal or assistant principal implements something just for the sheer pleasure of being mean or trying to make my job harder. It's because that executive director was told that that's what needed to be done and that executive director did that because that's what the superintendent said needed to be done. And that superintendent was like that because that's what the [TA commissioner] probably said needed to be done. It rolls down. I think where we mess up is that we have so many things to do, or the higher-ups have so many things to do that they don't feel like being bothered with taking the time to really explain it and to get buy-in. I think the buy-in is because they said it, and maybe in certain worlds, that should be it; but for some people, because some of us have bachelors and masters and PhDs too. We may not be the admin or may not be the executive director. We may be a teacher with a PhD. So for some of us, I'm not saying you've got to stroke my ego, but I'm just as learned, as my granny would say, "Well, as educated as you..." So humor me, and tell me a little something as to why we're making this change. You would get my buy-in because I feel that my opinion is just as valid as yours. Yes, you're in the supervisor position, but that doesn't mean that my opinion isn't valid. I think sometimes culture is fraught or tense because sometimes when we give, we're not arguing or being combative or trying to become a problem; we're just, we're assuming that we're all colleagues, yes, on different supervisory levels. And so we feel, I feel I shouldn't be upset. Well, this is what I think about this and why this may not be good. It's not me trying to be difficult. It's just me sharing with you

intellectually and professionally what my opinion is. So don't bite my head off or come at me condescending because all that does is make for me against you culture.

Mr. Alpha believed that the culture of the school should be so that students are happy to be there, motivated to learn, and foster a sense of pride and appreciation for their respected heritages and cultures.

It would be for them to actually have more pride in their culture. Because although I am not Hispanic, I don't know what it's like to have heavy pride in that because that's something I didn't personally experience. It's like, "Oh, it's homecoming week, all right." Whereas it's no real life to it or anything, and just in really enjoying that space, it seems more like, I don't want to say police, but it just doesn't seem like it's genuine care for it for the kids; it's just another thing. So I don't think it's anything they actually really look forward to, so I'm hoping that we can make it better for them and more something that they want to be a part to brag about. Because I know as a kid I used to love, "Oh homecoming," even though it was maybe eighth-grade prom, but it was something that you wanted to, you can't wait to do.

Ms. Delta would have liked to have seen a developed sense of a shared vision between administrators, teachers, and the students. In a culture that she envisioned, students would have input and be consistently rewarded and disciplined.

I would say I would make things a little bit more consistent. Not just in regard to discipline, but also rewarding students. That and giving students a true voice.

Because I think that a lot of times we have these systems that we put together to protect our kids, but we don't realize that their voice needs to be heard; if we are going to make them do something. And that was one thing that I constantly heard through some of the things that I was involved in, in my campuses. We don't feel we have a voice, but we're being asked to do things that aren't fair. Giving them all the work in the world, but if they decide to say, "Hey, we don't get this," they're hungry for that.

### **Campus Leadership**

Participants in this study were asked to describe their campus leadership. All of the teacher participants described their experiences with their school's leadership in a positive way, saying they felt supported, but Ms. Delta explained that he felt supported by the assistant principal, but not the principal. Ms. Delta stated:

Overall, I can say that there is support from one or two of our administrators if you group our counselor in a split picture. But from our main leader, no. Our assistant principal and our counselor, in a lot of ways, do a lot of the executing and making sure that the school runs.

Ms. Delta spoke about the frequency of the communication from her campus leadership, but also emphasized their failure to follow up on their communication. She stated:

Our principal kind of communicates things to us but will forget to follow through or will make a statement and then forget what she said or what they said. And so we struggle when we look up to our leaders because a lot of times, we're just given directions. And I mean 15 to 20 emails, all times of the night getting called

and expected to respond. But for the most part, we aren't in a... I feel our administration isn't the strongest.

With regard to her relationship with her campus leadership team, Ms. Delta stated:

We don't have the best rapport with our main leader, but from our secondary leaders, throughout the building, I feel there is support there, with open-door policies and people actually listening to your concerns. So, I think we have a mix, but for the most part, our main campus leadership, primary leadership is not. They're physically there, but they're not truly present. I would say new teachers really do need support. And they need that support, so they can be the best teachers for their students, especially in spaces where for me, my students have never had a teacher that looks like me. And so there is a lack of cultural responsiveness that I feel we could truly invest in to ensure that our students are aware of some of these things that we're seeing in the world now. But I also think there's a need for stronger professional support and mentorship, not somebody just trying to give you their work and say apply it.

Ms. Delta was vocal about burnout and things that she viewed as obstacles to developing a positive rapport with her campus leadership. She stated:

But somebody that actually wants to invest in you being the best teacher that you can be. And then I think that there needs to be a focus on true work-life balance because as a new teacher, everything seems important. And I know for myself, I've sacrificed lots of sleep and would go to work off of three hours of sleep and then try to teach through the whole day. And so burnout became a very real part

of my life for my first semester, through the second semester. And to the point where you start to think about, "Okay, where is the last day of school?" And so I think that those three or four areas, the true support, the cultural responsiveness, and inclusion, as well as the work-life balance. If those things could be in place, I think that a lot of teachers would be more invested. Because I've heard so many teachers say they get offered the job, they're told a school or a campus is one way, and then after being there for two months, they quit. I've had several friends that are also first-year teachers that completely walked away. And a lot of what we would discuss would be around the lack of support, the unrealistic expectations, and so those are the bigger things for me, at least.

Mr. Alpha shared that he felt supported and stated:

If you asked me this at the beginning, I would have said no. But yes, I do know that they do. My principal is very loving. We see that every day she has a big smile, and it's genuine on her face every single day. And it makes me feel good to work for her. The APs, for me, in my opinion, have all been very supportive and real in the information that they've given me. They don't stroke you when you don't if you haven't done anything to warrant being stroked. They're not going to say, "Oh, you do a good job." And then, "Oh, my God, he's not getting it." So they've all been supportive. They all have a strength in regards to me. But in speaking with other teachers, they don't have that same perception of them. And I don't know if it's their performance gets a different reaction from them. You know, I'm not saying I'm the best teacher in the whole world, but I think I put

forth a very good effort. So I think my view of them is different because their feedback with me, it's always constructive and done in a respectful manner.

Ms. Delta felt supported by administration and stated:

My campus administrators are very diligent, precise, on top of things. They definitely support me in every area and offer advice and stuff like that, and coach us through different scenarios and offer suggestions and things to try, so they're very supportive. They work together a lot, which is good for them to be on the same page, and stuff like that. I just wish that it would be, I guess, a better line of communication, though, because it does seem like the message gets delayed somewhere. But other than that, I love my administrators in how they handle things, but then I also feel like the communication can even go as far as that to the district. So that can be neither here nor there, but so far, they're very cooperative and supportive.

### **Parental Involvement and Support**

Participants in this study were asked about parent involvement at their school. All teacher participants stated that they felt supported by the parents of their students, but one participant stated that he believed parental support could be better at the school. Mr.

Sigma stated:

I tend to hear from parents regularly about grades and other concerns. Because of COVID, parents are not allowed in the building, so their physical appearance is hindered, but I do feel supported by the parents at [name of school]. This feels like a village, and in our environment where the stakes are high, it makes me feel

good to know that parents are actually in the fight with me, ensuring their kids do well academically.

Mr. Alpha believed that parental support is erratic or what he describes as "hit or miss."

He stated:

This is a hit or miss. I would say parental support; it's not that strong. I think there are so many factors that could go into that, working, them having to work and not being able to give as much time as they probably would like, them thinking the student is doing great when they're not, and they need help, and then maybe the parents could be scared of the help, or not liking how the kid is going to be labeled, is another factor. So it's a lot that goes into that, but I would say for those that do, they normally reach out and try to handle stuff on the spot, but then the kid just comes back and does the same exact thing. So it's like, where do we go from here?

Ms. Delta shared that most parents here supported when she stated:

Our parents do a wonderful job supporting us! There are some parents who do not support as well as others, but each case is different. I have high expectations of support from all of my parents, but I modify my support based on their situation. For example, if a parent is singlehandedly raising a child, then support may not be as prevalent from a two-parent household. So I believe that the parents are all doing well with supporting me, and that makes a difference for me.

**Summary**

Chapter IV presented findings on themes. Those themes were the perceptions of elementary teachers concerning the sufficiency of resources, perceptions of elementary teachers as it relates to school culture and climate, perceptions of elementary teachers as it relates to campus leadership, and perceptions of elementary teachers as it relates to parental involvement. These themes were identified as supports for new teachers remaining in their positions. Chapter V presents summary, conclusions, and recommendations based on the data.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Summary, conclusions, and recommendations**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate elementary teachers' perceptions of the types of support they needed to remain at their current teaching assignments and in the field of education. The study specifically investigated new elementary teachers' perceptions of the support they needed during the first five years of their teaching experiences to influence their decision to remain at their current teaching assignment and in the education profession.

This chapter includes a discussion of findings as it relates to the themes discovered through the coding of the qualitative data made available through interviews. The researcher outlines the implications for the data and shares how these can be implemented through practice. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study, recommendations to extend the research, and a summary. This chapter was guided by the research question: What are new elementary teachers' perceptions of the types of support they need to remain at their current teaching assignments and in the field of education?

The researcher produced definitive statements that emerged from the themes. There were three participants who were interviewed over the course of two months in 2020. The statements by the participants were then compressed into more brief

statements wherein the main idea was confined to ephemeral thematic accounts. The constant-comparative method was utilized to expand the data analysis . The researcher originated ideas from the data by coding and analyzing synchronously (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

### **Conclusions**

The literature review concentrated on teacher attrition, administrative support, and cultural and climate factors that go into decision-making for new elementary teachers when making career decisions. Several conclusions may be drawn from this study. However, four key themes emerged from the data regarding new elementary teachers' perceptions of the types of support they need to remain at their current teaching assignments and in the field of education. Those themes were perceptions of elementary teachers concerning the sufficiency of resources, school culture and climate, campus leadership, and parental involvement.

### **Adequate Resources**

Based on this study's findings, the researcher concluded that adequate resources are available for new elementary teachers interviewed in this study. All three participants indicated that they had what they needed in terms of resources to be successful in their jobs. One teacher stated, "I believe now, after having gone through this COVID era and the online resources that we have, I believe we have a pretty good start."

This is contrasted with literature researched and reviewed by the researcher. According to Marinell and Coca (2013), Ronfeldt et al. (2013), and Simon and Johnson (2013), most children who live in poverty attend schools in underserved or poor

communities. Underserved communities are those which are often plagued by poverty, high crime, and a lack of resources. The school where the participants who participated in the study enrolls children from an underserved community in an urban area of Texas. Brunsting et al. (2014) asserted that many teachers do not feel they are supported because of the lack of support and resources needed to educate students. However, the teachers who participated in this study expressed their satisfaction with the resources offered to them.

### **School Culture and Climate**

Based on this study's findings, the researcher concluded that school culture and climate are essential for new elementary teachers who participated in this study. When asked to describe their current school's culture and climate, the researcher received responses from the teachers like "tense" and "uncomfortable and unsupported." One teacher emphasized the need to "cultivate a new culture and climate" at the school he was employed.

Stoll et al. (2016) suggested developing a set process, such as creating an ideal climate and culture of growth, creating and implementing opportunities to encourage new content learning and pedagogical learning, and ensuring all processes align with the objective of building capacity. The participants in this study indicated that climate and culture were of utmost importance in their decision to remain in the field and in their assignment. Sedivy-Benton and Bolden-McGill (2012) stated that administrators have a high influential status in school climate and culture, and their support has a direct impact on the teacher turnover rate. Sedivy-Benton and Bolden-McGill (2012) and Stoll et al.

(2016) validated the conclusion that school culture and climate are essential for new elementary teachers, especially when considering their career outlook.

Additionally, campus leaders may display behaviors that lack support towards new elementary school teachers which is then perceived as dissatisfaction and this creates a negative school climate (Mancuso et al., 2017). The participants in this study spoke candidly about their belief that campus leadership fosters and facilitates culture for their school. It is imperative that administrators establish an environment that is conducive to building teacher capacity, in particular new elementary teachers who may need additional support in the primary years of their careers.

### **Campus Leadership**

Vroom and Jago (2017) defined leadership as "a process of motivating people to work together collaboratively to accomplish great things." The researcher determined that campus leadership is indispensable and foremost when it came to these new elementary teachers determining personnel plans such as remaining at their school, transferring to another school, or leaving the field of education altogether. According to Stoll (2018), leadership support is necessary for a new elementary teacher to build his or her capacity as an educator. A few conclusions that the researcher notes from the findings are the lack of inclusivity, the need for better communication, and balanced feedback. Concerning inclusivity, the researcher noted one participant's response about campus leadership as "we are just given directions." Concerning better communication, a participant stressed the need for a "better line of communication." The balanced feedback was emphasized as one participant stated, "They are not going to say, oh, you do a good job."

Unvaryingly, Kilinc (2004) stated that best practices for leadership should focus more on teacher collaboration and stronger relationships, which could eliminate or decrease the amount of teacher turnover. Khawary and Ali (2015) suggested the rate of teacher turnover increases when the school's leadership does not pay attention to what motivates its educators and focuses more just on instruction. One of the participants in this study voiced concerned with campus leadership motivating staff by praising them more often for their efforts. Obstructing the building cohesive partnerships and rewarding relationships on campuses can be laborious accountability measures placed on schools. School leaders feel the pressure to compete at a global level in an accountability era by learning to be capacity builders (Stoll, 2018), so they focus on instructional leadership responsibilities (Klar, 2013) as opposed to climate and cultural items such as interpersonal relationships.

The adoption of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), which was signed into law by former President Obama on December 10, 2015, increased school districts' accountability for increasing student outcomes on state standardized tests. In turn, district-level administrators began to measure teacher quality based on their students' performance on standardized assessment instruments. Additionally, some districts also used students' performance as the basis for merit pay and as part of teachers' evaluations. In particular, the district where the participants of this study are employed, students' performance was the basis for merit pay and part of teachers' evaluations.

Teachers from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reported that test scores are a major component of their annual evaluations

(Embse et al., 2015). Although some goals for student outcomes may be unrealistic, teachers that do not meet district goals may ultimately be terminated (Cucchiara et al., 2015). Such accountability maneuvers may create stress on-campus leaders, who, in turn, inadvertently pressure and stress new teachers. One participant in this study eluded to test scores being the only focus of his leadership team.

### **Parental Involvement**

Wanat and Zieglowsky (2010) proposed that a relationship of joint trust and respect nurtures parental involvement. Parents may be more convinced to share in school-related events grounded on their relationships with the child's teachers. Based on the findings, the researcher resolved that the participants were all satisfied with their support from parents, withstanding the COVID-19 restrictions in place by their respective state and school district. The participants praised parents for their communication and virtual presence amid the pandemic and its changes to schools.

According to Epstein (2009), there are six types of parental involvement in education: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaboration. The participants in this study indicated they were satisfied with the parents' level of communication and virtual presence amid the pandemic. This supports Epstein's (2009) idea of collaboration and learning at home as parental involvement. Glenn (2021) stated that parental involvement might create an essential link between teachers and the home. The researcher concludes that the teachers who participated in this study have a relationship with the parents of their students and the result is communal respect, shared interest in the child, and the link between the new elementary

teachers and the home. This is viewed by the researcher as a form of support for the new elementary teachers in this study.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The following recommendations to engage support and retain new elementary teachers in the beginning years of their careers are presented.

#### **Include Teachers in Decision-Making**

The researcher highly recommends that campus leaders include teachers in the decision-making process for the campus. Ingersoll et al. (2018) emphasized that the public prodigiously perceives schools as a place where students' conduct is molded, their character developed, and their ideals informed. In this view, the relationships that teachers positively form with students are central to bond students to school, foster a feeling of civility and community, and support their development and education.

Reward and climate brand a good school. Ingersoll et al. (2018), utilizing data from their study, suggested that it is essential that teachers have a say schoolwide decisions that are connected to creating the culture, climate, and character of their schools. Teachers should be able to professionally express themselves in a setting that allows them to contribute to the deliberative decision-making process in their schools.

#### **Opportunities and Activities to Build Comradery**

"Strong, effective working teams can greatly impact and increase staff productivity, employee morale, and overall staff retention rates" (Zweig White Consulting, 2005, p. 1). "The most important feature of a successful team is high morale" (Protheroe, 2006, p. 1). Campus leaders should allow teachers to collaborate with each

other during planning periods and incorporate team-building activities within their professional development. Team-building activities are designed to help groups develop effective communication and problem-solving skills.

Campus leaders should select activities based on the needs of the team and the school. Team-building activities are planned to expand communication, connect the teams, and team collaboration to manage and deal with change (Pell, 1999). The researcher believes that such activities will help new elementary teachers become acclimated to the field and assist them with feeling supported by their leaders and colleagues.

### **Set Attainable Goals for New K-6 Teachers**

It is highly recommended that elementary campus leaders set attainable goals for new or beginning teachers. Further, campus leaders should meet with teachers occasionally, beyond formal evaluations, to discuss goal progress and offer meaningful feedback and support. A study conducted by Camp (2017) included findings that indicated teachers' goals might influence their professional development and instructional efficiency. In addition, Butler (2007) maintained that a teacher's goal orientation determines their probability of seeking assistance when confronted with difficulties related to performance.

Shim et al. (2013) stated that a teacher's goal orientation is likely to impact their effort to foster safe, supportive, and rigorous learning environments that accentuate growth foremost. Butler (2012) asserted that a teacher's goal orientation impacts the teacher's ability to serve as socio-emotional support for students. Retelsdorf et al. (2011)

believe a teacher with attainable goals is likely to resist teacher burnout and apathy. In contrast, Cucchiara et al. (2015) stated that unrealistic goals might cause undue stress for some teachers due to the fear of being terminated.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Evaluations in the long term are predominantly inhabited by the accessibility and reliability of logged data in this study. The regularity, and often the methodology, in which polls and surveys are made may supplant this kind of research. Qualitative interviews are crucial and necessary, but they may become troubled by participants' limited recollections and potential bias within the data analysis. Quantitative data represents one of the most reliable sources if a researcher wants to observe the facts or practicalities of the phenomenon being studied. However, a careful and thorough process of polling or surveying can be overwhelming and time-consuming. For comparative research, interviews with campus leadership according to the selected criteria would allow the researcher to gain another perspective. Another option to further explore research in this topic would be to interview new teachers on secondary campus, that is, middle and high school.

### **Quantitative Research**

A deployed quantitative survey coupled with sequential statistical analysis may produce facts and numbers to substantiate the supports identified in this study. Perhaps, a quantitative study to survey a broader sample of teachers within the same school district could expand the data findings.

A Study With Participants from Secondary Schools

A study exploring the perceptions of the types of support new secondary teachers need to remain at their current teaching assignments and in education would further extend this research as it relates to new teachers. Education is rapidly evolving, and the standards of accountability as it relates to academics are too. The emphasis of this study should be to provide existing clarifications of why new (or new) secondary teachers decide to exit the field within the first five years of entering the profession.

#### A Study Exploring the Perceptions and Expectations of Campus Leadership

The researcher recommends additional research to be undertaken to explore the perceptions and expectations of campus leadership. The purpose of such a study would be to determine the perceptions of campus administration with regard to new elementary teacher attrition and their expectations of new elementary teachers. The study could be qualitative so that it is comparable to this study. The researcher also suggests that campus administrators be interviewed from elementary schools for their perceptions of why new teachers leave their positions.

#### **Limitations**

The nature and timing of this study presented significant limitations to the research. The data collection portion of this study began at a time when the entire world was just entering what was known as the COVID-19 pandemic. During the early onset of this pandemic, schools and teachers were greatly impacted. New teachers were not only dealing with the rigors associated with teaching, but new teachers also had to navigate widespread phenomenon such as virtual learning, using web-based instructional platforms, and working from home. This required new teachers to pivot to an entirely

new way of teaching while managing new norms in their personal life because of the pandemic. It became increasingly difficult to reach new teachers willing to participate, especially when it required more time on virtual platforms as they were not comfortable using the zoom platform. As a result of the pandemic, there were fewer participants than originally planned. If schools had been opened with normal operations, the researcher would have had greater access to more new teachers.

### **Final Conclusion**

The results of this study suggested that there are four themes related to motivating factors for new elementary teachers to remain at their current teaching assignments and in the field of education. Those themes were centered on the perceptions of elementary teachers concerning (1) the sufficiency of resources, (2) school culture and climate, (3) campus leadership, and (4) parental involvement and support.

Participants often cited the climate established by campus leadership and interpersonal relationships as central to their decisions to stay in the field. Having reviewed the literature, the researcher notes that campus leaders are responsible for retaining new teachers while shaping and maintaining cohesion within their organization's culture and climate (McCarley et al., 2014; Urick & Bowers, 2014). There is a relationship between school leaders who are accessible, collaborative, committed, supportive, and lower teacher attrition rates (Gallant & Riley, 2014; Harris, 2015; Howard, 2016; Rinke, 2014). Teacher attrition will remain a problem until campus and district leaders foster an environment where new teachers feel heard and supported.

**Summary**

Chapter V presented a discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendation for further researcher and practice. Those conclusions based on qualitative data included adequate resources for teachers, school climate and culture, campus leadership support, and parental support. For practice, the researcher recommended that campus leadership include teachers in the decision-making process, allow opportunities and activities that build comradery, and set attainable goals for new elementary teachers. For additional research, the researcher recommended a quantitative survey study or another qualitative study with the same research question, but new secondary teachers instead of new elementary teachers. Finally, the researcher recommended another qualitative study with campus leadership as participants to explore their perceptions and expectations of new teachers.

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## **APPENDIX A**



## STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research  
 P.O. Box 13019, SFA Station • Nacogdoches, Texas 75962-3046  
 Phone (936) 468-1153 • Fax (936) 468-1573

Principal Investigator: Pauline M. Sampson  
 ORGS  
 Box 13024  
 sampsonp@sfasu.edu

Co-investigators: Patrick Guy

RE: Project Title "An Investigation into the Types of Support Needed by Novice Teachers in Texas in Order to Decrease Turnover and Attrition Rates" Case # AY2020-1200

TYPE OF RESEARCH: Dissertation

FROM: Luis E. Aguerrevere, Chair, IRB-H

DATE: May 27, 2020

I would like to thank you for submitting your project entitled "An Investigation into the Types of Support Needed by Novice Teachers in Texas in Order to Decrease Turnover and Attrition Rates" to the IRB for review. It has been reviewed and has been **Approved** based on the following criteria:

*45 CFR 46.45 CFR 46.104 (d)(2): Research that only includes interaction involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following is met: (1) Information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of human subjects cannot be readily ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; or (2) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside of the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation or; (3) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can be readily ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by 45 CFR 46.111(a)(7). Children may only be included in research under this exemption when involving educational tests or observation of public behavior if the investigator(s) do not participate in the activities being observed and the information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the*

*identity of the human subjects cannot be readily ascertained directly, or through identifiers linked to the subjects.*

*104(d)(1): Research involving normal educational practices that are not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction such as: (1) Most research on regular and special education instructional strategies; or (2) Research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management.*

Your project has approval through **May 27, 2021** should you need additional time to complete the study you will need to apply for an extension prior to that date. The IRB should be notified of any planned changes in the procedures during the approval period, as additional review will be required by the IRB, prior to implementing any changes, except when changes are necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the research participants. The researcher is also responsible for promptly notifying the IRB of any unanticipated or adverse events involving risk or harm to participants or others as a result of the research.

All future correspondence regarding this project should include the case number **AY2020-1200**.

**APPENDIX B**



### **REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Please submit the completed request form along with IRB Application/ Approval letter\* or and data collection instrument (if applicable) to: [franzhughns@lisd.net](mailto:franzhughns@lisd.net)

Name of person making the request: \_\_\_\_\_ Patrick Guy \_\_\_\_\_

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ ISD employee:    yes:  no:

Contact information: \_\_\_\_\_ guyp@lisd.net \_\_\_\_\_

Name of University or organization sponsoring your research: \_\_\_\_\_ Stephen F Austin State University \_\_\_\_\_

**In order to consider your request, the following information is required:**

What is the purpose of your research proposal?

**The purpose of this qualitative research is to address the problem of the high turnover and attrition rates among elementary teachers in a public school district in Texas. The results of this study and their identification of needed supports will empower campus administrators and school districts for giving examples of policies, processes, or programs that have been proven to retain new teachers. By striving to understand the experiences and perceptions of new teachers, decision makers may be better prepared to lead their campuses to retention of teachers.**

What data do you propose to collect in \_\_\_\_\_?

**Up to 10 teachers from 2 Title I campus ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) to capture teacher perceptions of types of support needed that will increase teacher retention.**

How do you plan to collect this data?

**They will be one on one conferences via zoom or some other tele-communication mode.**

How do you plan to ensure confidentiality of the identity of participants?

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

Only pseudo names will be used and general characteristics such a length of time teaching, size of school, school and district demographics – no proper names of people, campuses or districts will be revealed in transcription or reporting findings.

Have you received IRB approval from your university? **Approval from the district is needed in order to submit my final IRB application.**

**Please provide the name, contact information, and signature of your university supervisor, below.**

Name of University Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Pauline Sampson \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information: \_\_\_\_\_ sampsonp@sfasu.edu \_\_\_\_\_

My signature below indicates that I am aware of and approve of this proposal and that I am available for questions should the need arise.

*Pauline Sampson*  
University Supervisor/ Supervisor of Organization

5/11/2020  
Date

If approved, ●●● request a copy of any report that utilizes the data from this agreement.

\*IRB approval form/letter must be submitted to ●●● prior to the start of your data collection process.

FOR LISD USE ONLY	
<input type="checkbox"/> I approve of the proposal without further revision(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> I conditionally approve of the proposal, with revisions (see attached)
_____ Assistant Superintendent, ●●●	_____ Date

\_\_\_\_\_

April 21, 2020

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
 XXXXX Street  
 XXXXXXXX, TX 75XXX

Dear Dr. XXXXX,

This letter serves to request permission to collect data for my doctoral dissertation study entitled, “New Teachers’ Perceptions of Needed Support for Career Retention”. I am currently a doctoral candidate at Stephen F. Austin State University. I plan to begin the data collection process starting late April 2020 and May 2020 and complete all of my data collection by June. The approximate timeframe established for campus interviews is six weeks, with a maximum of three interviews with each teacher.

The purpose of this qualitative research is to address the problem of the high turnover and attrition rates among elementary teachers in a public school district in Texas. Many elementary school teachers leave their assignments because they feel that they do not have adequate support from their colleagues and from their school principals (Teague & Swan, 2013). By interviewing new teachers (those with less than three years of teaching), dissecting the thought processes, and analyzing their perceptions, I want to be able to identify their perceptions of supports needed to help them stay in the career. In order to accomplish this task, I will interview up to 10 new teachers from elementary campuses in your district. The initial interview will last one hour per person, with any subsequent interviews no longer than one hour each. The interviews will take place in local coffee places. Consent forms will be obtained from all participants in this study. No names of individuals, the campuses, or school district will be used in the results, rather pseudonyms will be used. Interviews will be audio-taped for transcription. The follow up interview will serve to clarify points made during the initial interview. A third interview will be conducted if needed via Zoom.

The results of this study and their identification of needed supports will empower campus administrators and school districts for giving examples of policies, processes, or programs that have been proven to retain new teachers. By striving to understand the experiences and perceptions of new teachers, decision makers may be better prepared to lead their campuses to retention of teachers. If you consent to participate in the study, please complete and return the attached Participant Consent Form.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact me at 817-709-7279 (home) or you may contact my dissertation chairperson, Dr. Pauline M. Sampson at 936-468-2237. Your earnest consideration of this request is very much appreciated. I look forward to your positive response. If you have any concerns with this research you may also contact the Office of Research and Graduate Studies at 936-468-6606.

**District/Campus Participation Consent Form**

“I understand the purpose of this study, and I agree for this study to be conducted in XXXXX ISD. I also agree to the researcher conducting audio-taped interviews. I understand that the campus and district will not be identified in the final study. I also understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time that I so choose.”

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher (Date)

Patrick Guy  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
Fort Worth , Texas XXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXX

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Participant (Date)

Dr. Pauline M. Sampson, Dissertation Chair  
Stephen F. Austin State University  
P. O. Box 13024  
Nacogdoches, Texas 75962  
936-468-5496 (Work)

## APPENDIX C

Thursday, July 1, 2021 at 15:39:10 Central Daylight Time

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**Subject:** Re: District Approval

**Date:** Wednesday, May 20, 2020 at 10:22:49 AM Central Daylight Time

**From:** [REDACTED]

**To:** Guy, Patrick

Hi Patrick-

Your request has been approved. 😊

Can you send me an invite email that I can forward to the staffs at the campuses you indicated? I will ask staff to follow the directions in the email if they are interested in participating.

Thanks!

[REDACTED]

## **APPENDIX D**

### **First Round Interview Questions**

1. What made you decide to pursue a career in teaching?
2. What are the factors that led to you accepting employment in a high-poverty school?
3. What is your current teaching assignment?
4. How would you describe yourself as a teacher?
5. Describe your teacher preparation program?
6. Do you feel the program adequately prepared you to teach?
7. How would you describe your current school?
8. How important is being challenged professionally? Personally?
9. How important is salary in your decision to teach?
10. Have you ever considered leaving teaching?

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Second Round Interview Questions**

1. What excites you most about teaching?
2. Take me through a typical day in your classroom.
3. Explain the process you use to plan instruction.
4. What is your opinion of the curriculum you are required to teach?
5. Do you believe you have sufficient resources such as media, equipment and other materials to effectively deliver instruction?
6. Do you feel supported by the parents of your school? Why or why not?
7. How would you describe the climate and culture of your school?
8. If you could change any part of the culture of your school, what would it be?
9. Describe your campus administrators? Do you feel they support you?
10. How are decisions made on your campus?

## VITA

Patrick Marquette Guy graduated from Raleigh-Egypt High School in Memphis, Tennessee in 1991. He received his Bachelor of Science in Education from the University Of Memphis in 1999 and his Masters in Educational Administration from Texas Christian University in 2003. His teaching career begin in the Birdville Independent School District where he taught for six years, then served as an assistant principal for four years, and central office administrator for two years and campus principal for five years. He was accepted in the Doctoral Cohort at Stephen F. Austin State University in 2014 and later joined the Arlington Independent School District as principal at Ashworth Elementary. Currently, he is the principal of Rockbrook Elementary in the Lewisville Independent School District.

Permanent Address: 509 Foxhunter St. Fort Worth, Texas, 76131

Style manual designation: Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition

Typist: Patrick Guy