TEACHER RETENTION IN ONE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT
WHY DO TEACHERS STAY:
A CASE STUDY

Sarah-Jane Henry
University of Bridgeport, 2017

Chair
Linda S. Paslov, Ed.D.

Reader
Thomas Christ, Ph.D.

Reader
Gail E. Prelli, Ed.D.

Dean, School of Education
Allen P. Cook, Ph.D.

DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION IN
THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BRIDGEPORT CONNECTICUT
2017
TEACHER RETENTION IN ONE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT:
WHY DO TEACHERS STAY?
A CASE STUDY

University of Bridgeport
Committee of Approval of a Dissertation
Submitted by:
Sarah-Jane Henry
I have read this dissertation and have found it to be satisfactory quality for a doctoral degree.

Nov. 9, 2017
Date

Linda S. Paslov, Ed.D.
Chair, Dissertation Committee
I have read this dissertation and have found it to be satisfactory quality for a doctoral degree.

Nov. 9, 2017
Date

Thomas Christ, Ph.D.
Member, Dissertation Committee
I have read this dissertation and have found it to be satisfactory quality for a doctoral degree.

Nov. 9, 2017
Date

Gail E. Prelli, Ed.D
Member, Dissertation Committee
I have read this dissertation and have found it to be of satisfactory quality for a doctoral degree.

Nov. 9, 2017
Date

Allen P. Cook, Ph.D.
Member, Dissertation Committee
ABSTRACT

Teacher attrition can have a profound effect on the educational experiences of students. Five schools in one New England school district that experienced the least amount of teacher turnover over a three year time period were purposefully selected for this research study which served to provide a clear understanding of why some teachers stay in urban schools, while so many others leave. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) was the theory that framed this study. The participants provided valuable insight into understanding their motivation to stay in the schools. The themes of altruism and generativity emerged in the survey and interview data, allowing the researcher to suggest hiring practices to the Board of Education be structured to include questions that focus on altruistic behaviors and generativity.

Keywords: teacher retention, teacher attrition, teacher turnover, qualitative case study, altruism, generativity.
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation, first and foremost, to my family; their patience, support and praise during this program have made this dissertation possible. Specifically, I would like to thank my husband, Dave; without you, none of this would have been possible. Your help with Charlie and Sophie-Jane has been a blessing. I would not be here without you. To my parents, Gus and Sue, and in-laws, Pat and Paula, thank you for all the babysitting, grammatical edits and all around support and backing during the course of this degree.

Next I need to acknowledge my cohort of Doctors! Dr. Monette Ferguson, Dr. Maria Stasaitis and Dr. Jenny Sinal, you set the bar high and helped me every step of the way! Thank you for the constant support, guidance and cheerleading; I never would have made it without you three.

Lastly, to my committee chair, Dr. Paslov, you took me on as a doctoral student and guided me down a path I did not realize I had could master. Thank you for your patience, leadership and support throughout this process.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the many people at the University of Bridgeport who helped me on this journey. Dr. Paslov, my committee chair, your guidance has been motivational; Dr. Christ, thank you for all those open-ended questions that developed my thinking; Dr. Prelli, thank you for your continuous support; Dr. Badara, thank you for showing me I could understand things I never thought imaginable; and finally, Dr. Margolis, thank you for sharing your wisdom, you are truly inspiring. Thank you all for your gracious support and encouragement.
# TEACHER RETENTION IN ONE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

## WHY DO TEACHERS STAY:

### A CASE STUDY

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Retention in Urban School Districts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Statement</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of the Study</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operationally Defined Terminology</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of Study</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons Teacher Leave</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors that lead to Teacher Turnover and Attrition</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Challenges of Poverty</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Challenges of Cognitive Stimulation in Urban Students</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Challenges of the Physical Environment in Impoverished Neighborhoods</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Challenges of Improper Development of Emotional Responses</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Challenges of Teacher Preparation</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Challenges of School Funding</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title 1 Funding for Schools</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Role Urban Living Plays on Students’ Development and Learning ......................... 37
Factors that Impact Learning ................................................................. 37
   The Role of Stress ................................................................. 37
   The Role of Cognitive Ability and Performance ......................... 38
   The Role of Sleep Deprivation ................................................. 39
Factors that Impact Teaching and Learning in Urban Schools ......................... 40
   The Impact of Teacher Turnover in Urban Schools ................. 40
   The Impact of Administrative Actions on Teacher Retention .......... 42
   The Impact of Teacher Shortages in Urban Schools ............. 43
Summation of Why Teachers Leave .................................................... 45
Reasons Teachers Stay ........................................................................ 47
   Characteristics of Effective Teachers ........................................ 47
   School Environment ............................................................... 48
School Culture and Teacher Turnover in Urban Schools ......................... 49
   Administrative Actions and Teacher Retention .................... 51
   Summation of Why Teachers Stay ............................................. 53
Worldview ......................................................................................... 54
Theories that Influence this Research .................................................. 55
   Motivation Theory .............................................................. 55
   Human Motivation Theory - Maslow’s Hierarchy of Need .......... 57
Summary and Conclusions.................................................................. 59

CHAPTER III: METHODS .................................................................. 60
Research Design ............................................................................. 60
   Research Questions ................................................................. 61
   Location of Study ................................................................. 61
The Seaside Board of Education ......................................................... 62
Participants ..................................................................................... 63
Procedures ...................................................................................... 64
   Role of the Researcher ............................................................. 64
Data Collection .................................................................................................................. 65
Identified Sampling Population .......................................................................................... 65
Data Collection Instrument ................................................................................................. 67
Data Analysis .......................................................................................................................... 69
Validity and Reliability ......................................................................................................... 71
Limitations ............................................................................................................................ 72

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS ........................................................................................................... 74
Data Collection Findings ........................................................................................................ 74
Survey Data ............................................................................................................................ 74
Factors which Negatively Impact on Teacher Retention ..................................................... 75
Factors which Positively Impact Urban Teacher Retention ................................................. 79
Interview Data ....................................................................................................................... 84
Code Development ................................................................................................................ 84
Interview Findings .................................................................................................................. 89
Summary ............................................................................................................................... 97

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS ..................................... 98
Discussion .............................................................................................................................. 98
Summary of Findings ............................................................................................................. 98
Interpretation of Findings ...................................................................................................... 99
Limitations of Study .............................................................................................................. 107
Recommendations ................................................................................................................ 107
Future Research ................................................................................................................... 107
Implications .......................................................................................................................... 109
Conclusion ............................................................................................................................. 110

REFERENCES ...................................................................................................................... 111
APPENDIX A - BOE Resignation Data ................................................................. 129
APPENDIX B - Permission to Conduct Research - Superintendent of Schools .................. 131
APPENDIX C - IRB Approval ........................................................................... 134
APPENDIX D - Job Satisfaction Survey & Permission from Publisher ........................... 135
APPENDIX E - Job Satisfaction Survey Results .................................................. 138
APPENDIX F - Interview Questions .................................................................... 150
APPENDIX G – Interview Transcripts ..................................................................... 151
APPENDIX H – Coded Themes ............................................................................. 168
APPENDIX I – Administrative Interview .................................................................. 169
LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER II

Table 2.1: Literature showing reasons teachers leave ......................................................... 46
Table 2.2: The Benefits of Academic Enrichment for Children Living in Poverty
Kindergarten to 21 Years Old .............................................................................................. 49
Table 2.3: Literature showing reasons teachers stay .............................................................. 54

CHAPTER IV

Table 4.1: Developed from Rhodes et al. (2004) Table 3 Rank order factors most likely to lead to
retention in the teaching profession in the next five years. (p.74) ........................................ 83
Table 4.2: Developed from Rhodes et al. (2004) Table 4 Rank order factors most likely to lead to
leaving the teaching profession in the next five years. (p.75) ........................................... 83
Table 4.3: Coded Themes from Interview Data ................................................................. 85
Table 4.4: Definition of Codes............................................................................................ 87

Table 4.5: Extract from Table 2: Developed from Rhodes et al. (2004) Table 3 Rank order
factors most likely to lead to retention in the teaching profession in the next five years. (p.74)
................................................................................................................................................ 92

Table 4.6: Extract from Table 2: Developed from Rhodes et al. (2004) Table 4 Rank order
factors most likely to lead to leaving the teaching profession in the next five years. (p.75)
................................................................................................................................................ 93

CHAPTER V

Table 5.1: Smarter Balanced Assessment 2015-2016 ELA and Math Results from the five
participating schools ............................................................................................................ 108
LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

Figure 1.1 Quality Teachers (Jensen, 2009) ................................................................. 5
Figure 1.2 Factors that Impact Student Achievement (Hattie, 2003) .......................... 6
Figure 1.3 National Center for Education Statistics Graduation Rates by Race and Ethnicity (2015) ................................................................................. 10

CHAPTER II

Figure 2.1: U.S. Census Bureau Poverty Rates (2012) .................................................. 16
Figure 2.2: Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines (2016) ........ 17
Figure 2.3 Connecticut State Department of Education District Profile and Performance Report for School Years 2014-2015 - Greenwich Public Schools ......................... 19
Figure 2.4 Connecticut State Department of Education District Profile and Performance Report for School Years 2014-2015 - Seaside Public Schools .......................... 20
Figure 2.5: U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey - Annual Social and Economic Supplement (2015) ........................................................................ 21
Figure 2.6: How Experience Affects Cognitive Development (Jensen, 2009) ................. 24
Figure 2.7: Connecticut State Department of Education Suspension and Expulsion Rates (K - 5th Grades) ......................................................................................... 26
Figure 2.8: Connecticut State Department of Education Suspension and Expulsion Rates (Middle School) ......................................................................................... 27
Figure 2.9: Connecticut State Department of Education Suspension and Expulsion Rates (9th - 12th Grades) ................................................................................. 28
Figure 2.10: Connecticut State Department of Education Suspension and Expulsion Rates by Race and Ethnicity ..................................................................................... 29
Figure 2.11: Connecticut State Department of Education Incident Types leading to ISS, OSS and Expulsion ....................................................................................... 30
Figure 2.12 Connecticut State Department of Education District Profile and Performance Report for School Years 2014-2015 - Seaside Public Schools - Chronic Absenteeism and Suspension/Expulsion .............................................................................. 31
Figure 2.13: Per Pupil Spending in Fairfield County, Connecticut (2015) ......................... 36
CHAPTER III
Figure 3.1: Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2016) Unemployment rates in CT ................. 62

CHAPTER IV
Figure 4.1: Survey Results – Salary – Current study ................................................. 75
Figure 4.2: Survey Results – Salary – Original study ................................................. 76
Figure: 4.3: Survey Results - Class Size – Current Study ............................................. 77
Figure: 4.4: Survey Results - Class Size – Original Study ............................................. 78
Figure 4.5: Survey Results - Physical Condition of Work Environment ......................... 79
Figure 4.6: Survey Results - Friendliness of Other Staff – Current Study ....................... 80
Figure 4.7: Survey Results - Friendliness of Other Staff – Original Study ....................... 81
Figure 4.8: Survey Results - Classrooms Present an Atmosphere Conducive to Learning .... 81
Figure 4.9: Survey Results - Working with others to Achieve Shared Goals ..................... 82

CHAPTER V
Figure 5.1: Coded themes from teacher interviews broken down by levels of need as described
by Maslow (1943) ........................................................................................................ 101
Figure 5.2: Graphic Representation of the researcher’s new theory .................................. 104
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Teacher Retention in Urban School Districts

Background of the Study

The challenges of teaching in this day and age are demanding. Research indicates that many teachers leave the profession within the first three years, and many more in the following two years. In their research studies, Benner (2000) and Rowan, Correnti, and Richards (2002) found that one-quarter of all beginning teachers leave teaching within the first four years of their careers. Students across America sit in classrooms, with revolving doors of new teachers in front of them, which begs the question of teacher effectiveness. Teacher effectiveness, defined as a teacher’s ability to impact his/her students' learning (Goe & Stickler, 2008), is the overriding factor influencing student academic development (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997).

New teachers are still developing their praxis, a process that takes time. The Connecticut State Board of Education believes that new teachers need support in order to become effective teachers. Accordingly, the Connecticut State Department of Education established the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program in 2009, to improve on the previous program, Beginner Educator Support and Training (BEST). TEAM “includes guided teacher support and coaching and the completion of instructional modules” (p. 2). According to the TEAM Mission and Goals, the state “recognizes that learning to teach is a developmental process” and that in the first few years as an educator, “beginning teachers face the challenge of translating theory from teacher preparation programs into practice. Beginning teachers are novices working towards proficiency” (p. 2). They feel that the development of an effective teacher requires a deep-rooted
commitment to extended professional learning and, therefore, creating an environment that fosters a strong mentoring program is important. Feiman-Nemser (2001), a leading educational researcher, explains that informative mentoring rests on "an explicit vision of good teaching and an understanding of teacher learning," in contrast with “approaches that emphasize situational adjustment, technical advice and emotional support” (pp.17-18). Providing new teachers with these mentors is one approach states take in their efforts to support new teachers.

According to Goldrick (2016) of the New Teacher’s Center 2016 Review of State Policies on New Educator Induction, Connecticut is one of only three states, nationwide, that requires a “comprehensive, multi-year induction program that accelerates professional growth of new teachers, reduces the rate of new teacher attrition, provides a stronger return on states’ and school districts’ investments, and improves student learning” (p. 2). Having new teachers, who are still developing their pedagogy, does not ensure students will have highly effective teachers in front of them each day.

Problem Statement

New teachers and effective, veteran teachers leave the profession for many different reasons. Darling-Hammond (2005), Ingersoll (2001) and Strong (2005) determined that the following are major reasons teachers leave their positions: relocation or migration; career change; job change or relocation of spouse, family member, or significant other; lifestyle change; being counseled out of the profession; poor pay and benefits; inadequate resources; high stress and lack of support; difficult working conditions and “bashing” of the teaching profession.

Urban districts across the country struggle with teacher retention. According to several researchers, when given the opportunity to leave schools serving largely poor, low-performing
minority students, many teachers opt out which, in turn, costs their districts millions of dollars annually (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2005; Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin, 2004; Stinebrickner, Seafidi & Sjoquist 2005). The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2003) found that excessive teacher turnover can be costly and detrimental to instructional solidarity in schools. The report also explained that teacher attrition is almost a third higher in poor urban school districts (NCTAF, 2003). The exact fiscal cost of teacher turnover is difficult to determine due to the limited number of studies addressing this issue. The Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE, 2005), a non-profit organization that aims to impact the college preparedness of high school graduates, analyzed the U.S. Department of Labor estimates and released a national analysis of teacher turnover costs; they believe that the cost of replacing public school teachers that leave the profession is $2.2 billion, nationally, per annum. While this number is large, it is important to note that the cost of replacing teachers in schools varies by school district, due to salaries, training and mentoring programs as well as benefits programs offered.

The Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2003 (SECTQ, 2003) recapitulate this issue when they studied data for 270,000 teachers in 7,000 schools across five different states, finding that the highest rate of teacher turnover occurs in schools where 75% or more of the student body live below the poverty line and are, therefore, eligible for free and reduced priced meals. What does this mean for students in these schools?

Johnson, Birkland, Kardos, Kauffman, Lui and Peske (2001) explain that the challenge of attracting and retaining quality teachers is heightened by increased pressure for district and school accountability, usually measured by high-stakes testing, and national standards. In response to all these mandates, districts are introducing reforms and initiatives at a frantic pace.
In reaction, new educators struggle to hone their skills as teachers, due to the chaotic environment. Districts can no longer expect to fill their schools with teachers and leaders who plan to spend their entire career in the same school, district or profession (Payzant, 2010).

The importance of keeping good teachers in classrooms is clearly a priority; the immensely criticized National Education Legislation, No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB] (2002), understood the importance of having “Highly Qualified” teachers in every classroom, but failed to specifically define what "Highly Qualified" entailed (NCLB, 2002).

Glatthorn, Jones and Bullock (2005) reviewed literature and reflected on their own experience to formulate this figure to understand what makes for a highly qualified teacher. Figure 1.1 shows that highly qualified teachers have the necessary credentials: a Bachelor's degree and full certification. These teachers then demonstrate competence in three major areas - quality learning, the science of teaching (which includes the essential skills and subject skills), and teacher professionalism.
Figure 1.1. The credentials held by high quality teachers (Jensen, 2009).

They go on to explain that highly qualified teachers get results and produce quality learning (Glatthorn, et al. 2005). The significance of having high quality teachers in classrooms across the country is immeasurable.

In 1996, Sanders, et al., studied the effects of teachers in classrooms, looking at students who had three years of effective teachers (teachers whose students make academic gains) in a row, versus students who had three years in a row with an ineffective teachers. Stronge (2013) defines ineffective teachers as those who have a negative longitudinal effect on student learning. Sanders, et al. (1996) found that students who had the stronger teachers performed at an impressive fifty percent above those who had the weaker teachers. Mortimore and Sammons (1987) found that the quality of teaching has six to ten times as much impact on achievement as all other factors (inequity, family issues, poverty and crime) combined. Specifically defining
effective teaching is difficult, as it varies between and among classrooms, but for the purpose of this study, an effective teacher will be defined as “a teacher who adds to gains in student learning as measured by standardized test scores” (Strong, Gargani, & Hacifazlioglu, 2011, p. 379).

It is important to note that teacher quality is not the only factor that impacts student learning, other than the students themselves, but it is the most substantial factor. Hattie (2003) created Figure 1.2 to show that, while the teachers play a significant role, they are not the only factor that impacts student achievement.

![Figure 1.2. Factors that Impact Student Achievement (Hattie, 2003).](image)

One factor for which Hattie (2003) does not account, but which many other researchers find influential, is school leadership. Jacobson (2011) explains that, although teacher quality has the most significant influence on student motivation and achievement, the caliber of school leadership matters in determining the motivation of teachers and the quality of their teaching, which subsequently affects student performance (Fullan, 2001; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Sergovanni, 2001).
Frahm (2014) explains that the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching says in its report that it is not money, or lack thereof, which leads to teachers leaving schools. It is, instead, the lack of administrative and professional support that leads to teachers leaving schools. There are many issues related to this matter: teachers feel isolated from colleagues, they get minimal feedback on their performance, are offered poor professional development and receive low levels of emotional support from their administrators.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to investigate how one urban school district can address teacher retention. The researcher has explored this issue by surveying and interviewing tenured teachers in the Seaside Public Schools (pseudonym assigned to the school district in order to protect the identity of participants), as well as interviewing the president of the Seaside Council of Administrators and Supervisors. Tenured teachers, as described in Connecticut State Statute Sec. 10-15, are teachers who have been employed by a Board of Education for 40 consecutive months. The researcher included the insights of a principal/union president in the study, in order to gain a well-rounded understanding of the problem, from both the teacher and principal perspective. There has been extensive research conducted on why teachers leave, but limited information about why teachers stay, hence the need for this study.

Why do some teachers remain in urban schools and districts, while others leave? Jacob, Vidyarthi, and Carroll (2012) of The New Teacher Project, believe that there are five simple ways school administrators can keep highly effective teachers in schools:

1. Start the school year with great expectations;
2. Recognize excellence publicly and frequently;
3. Treat your irreplaceable teachers like they are irreplaceable;

4. Start having the “stay conversations” by Thanksgiving; and

5. Hold the line on good teaching.

Tye and O’Brien (2002), Ingersoll (2001) and MacDonald (1999) all determined that lack of job satisfaction is directly attributable to poor/weak administration, recurring student discipline issues and low salaries, all reasons that teachers give when leaving the profession. So, why and how do some teachers look past these issues, and remain in these challenging schools? Studies have shown that people who enjoy their work are more productive and creative, in addition to experiencing greater job satisfaction (Hodges, 2004). Ingersoll and Strong (2011) explain that there are four key programs and practices that can impact teacher retention:

1. Comprehensive induction programs;

2. Supportive Administrators;

3. Skilled Mentors; and

4. Helpful Colleagues.

It is important to note that even though this research study takes place in a failing urban school district, not all urban school districts are failing, as measured by standardized assessments. There are urban districts in America that contradict the current trend of underachieving inner-city schools. Under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2002), a failing school or district is one that is not making adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two or more years in a row. The AYP figure is an annual achievement target that students are expected to reach (NCLB, 2002). Under President Obama’s 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) AYP was eliminated, giving individual States the decision making authority to determine school accountability based on a selection of criteria, such as: results on state standardized tests in
reading, math and science; English language learners proficiency; and graduation rates.

Union City, New Jersey, defies the trend. The city has an unemployment rate 60% higher than the national average and 75% of the student population live in homes where Spanish is the only language spoken. Yet in 2011 Union City Public Schools had a 90% high school graduation rate which, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics, exceeds the national average of 82%. Further, 75% of those graduating students enrolled in colleges (Kirp, 2013).

Union City is considered an urban, impoverished school district, and accordingly, the New Jersey Supreme Court has leveled the playing field for these students, ruling in favor of equalizing funding in all schools, regardless of neighborhood, in the landmark Abbott v. Burke case in 1997-1998 (Abbott v. Burke 149 N.J. 145 1998). In addition to equalizing funding, they also directed the State to provide additional moneys for “supplemental” programs to tackle the needs of students living in poverty; these programs included early childhood education, full-day kindergarten, intensive early literacy support and social and health services (Education Law Center, n.d.).

There are successful urban districts in America, like Union City, N.J., but it is worthy to point out that many urban districts that serve minority populations academically lag behind their suburban counterparts, as seen by the national achievement gap. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2015), the racial breakdown of people living in poverty is primarily comprised of minorities. Additionally, according to Nowicki (2016) from the U.S. Government Accountability Office, “schools with high concentrations of students from low-income families were generally associated with worse outcomes, and schools with higher concentrations of students from middle- and high-income families were generally associated with better outcomes” (p. 8).

Nowicki (2016) defines outcomes as academic results, such as test scores, grade point averages,
high school dropout or graduation rates, and college enrollment.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2015) reports that racial minorities have lower graduation rates than their white peers as seen in Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3. National Center for Education Statistics Graduation Rates by Race and Ethnicity. (2015)

The racial imbalance in the national graduation rates is alarming. In the National Center for Educational Statistics, The Condition of Education (2015) report, researchers Mulligan, Hastedt, and McCarroll (2012) reported that with regard to academic performance, gaps in learning behaviors, knowledge, and skills among children in various racial/ethnic groups are found as early as infancy, preschool, and kindergarten (p. 12). With deficits at such an early age, closing the gap falls on teachers across grade levels to help these children succeed.

This qualitative case study has enabled the researcher to gain a clearer understanding of why some teachers can look past the numerous issues associated with teaching urban students
and spend their educational careers in an urban school. Why are some teachers willing to invest years honing their skills and becoming great educators in these challenging settings? The study results will be shared with the Recruitment, Hiring and Retention Committee as well as the Superintendent of Schools and Head of Human Resources for the district in order to gain insight into why some teachers stay. The information captured in this study, using the Rhodes, Neville and Allen (2004) Forty Facets of Job Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction Survey, teacher, and administrator interviews, will be helpful to the school district. The findings will potentially assist the school district retain teachers.

Five schools participated in this research study, all purposefully selected (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010) according to their teacher turnover rates, determined by the Seaside Board of Education public record meeting minutes.

**Research Questions**

The researcher will address teacher retention in a New England urban school district through the following questions:

1. *Are the results of the Job Satisfaction Survey, from this specific sampling population, similar to those of the original study?*

2. *What perceptions do tenured teachers hold about teacher retention in their schools?*

3. *What perceptions do tenured teachers hold about teacher retention in their district?*

**Conceptual Framework**

The role of teaching in an urban school district is incredibly challenging. Teachers work
with children who are faced with the issues of growing up in poverty, in low-income
neighborhoods, yet are expected to perform at the level of their suburban counterparts.

Many teachers struggle to withstand the pressure of working in these neighborhoods,
with students with such high needs. Ingersoll (2003) found that teachers who start their careers in
high-poverty urban schools are more likely to transfer to a different school or district, or stop
teaching altogether, within the first three years of their new careers. According to the National
Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCAFT) in 2003, approximately one-third of
new teachers leave their positions as educators in the first three years, and almost half leave
during the first five years of their careers. Attrition and retention factors are exposed and
enunciated in the literature review chapter of this dissertation. The need to address these high
turnover rates and find out why some teachers stay is the basis for this study. The researcher has
therefore included motivation theory and human motivation theory (Maslow's Hierarchy of
Needs, 1943) in this study, and has approached this study with the intention of creating new
theory regarding teacher retention in urban school districts.

In order to conduct this study, the researcher gathered research about attrition and
retention, and found no studies that share the teacher’s perspectives about why they stay. Using
this deficit as a driving tool, the researcher formatted the case study around a Job Satisfaction
survey from a similar study. Rhodes, Nevill and Allan (2004) had developed a survey
instrument, then tested and administered it to identify factors that lead to retention and attrition.
Using this instrument as the initial data collection lead the researcher to develop open-ended
interview questions to extract even more information from participants regarding their decision
and motivation to stay in urban schools. The data collection and research findings allowed
established and new theories to emerge.
Nature of the Study

The research study was conducted as a qualitative case study, which met the needs of the researcher in order to solicit valuable personal information from the participant. Using surveys and interviews to gather information was an effective method to gain a clear understanding of why some teachers stay in their urban teaching positions. The case study was a multi-site design, using five schools in the Seaside Board of Education. The schools were purposefully selected from a deviant/extreme sampling as a result of being identified as the schools with the lowest teacher turnover rates over a three-year period.

The data collected from the teachers' surveyed lead to the development of the interview questions, in order for the teachers to provide a more descriptive response to the Likert scale used in the survey instrument. All interview data was analyzed for themes and member checked for accuracy. During the course of the study, an additional interview as added with a Board of Education Principal, who is head of the administrator union in the city. This addition provided a new perspective to teacher retention, as it addressed the issue from a different mindset, than those of the teacher participants.

Operationally Defined Terminology

When addressing Teacher Turnover, the researcher is employing the Boe, Cook & Sunderland (2008) definition:

Teacher turnover is a major change in a teacher’s assignment from one school year to the next. There are three designations under teacher turnover, 1. Attrition - leaving the teaching profession, 2. School transfer/teacher migration - moving to different school, and, 3. Teacher transfer - teachers changing assignment, for example a special education teacher switching to a general education teacher (p.8).
For the purpose of this study, an effective teacher will be defined as “a teacher who adds to gains in student learning as measured by standardized test scores” (Strong, Gargani, & Hacifazlioglu, 2011, p. 379).

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of this research study is described in terms of filling a void in the current research regarding teacher retention in urban schools. The potential social change that the results yielded is crucial. If an urban school district can change its hiring procedures and policies in order to employ highly committed teachers who remain in their classrooms, the potential impact on student achievement in these schools is substantial.

**Summary**

In order to help students in poor, urban communities, the urgency to retain highly qualified, committed teachers, needs to be addressed. In order to understand why some teachers stay in these challenging work environments this study solicited the opinions of teachers who are tenured in the Seaside Public Schools. The researcher surveyed and interviewed these teachers in order to discover what motivates them to stay in their role as educators in an urban school district. Additionally, the researcher interviewed the head of the Administrators Union, to gain valuable insight into the impact teacher turnover has on schools as a whole.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Teaching students in urban, low-income neighborhoods is full of challenges. Teachers have to address issues of poverty, school and classroom budgetary deficits, crime, and numerous other problems that stem from living in low-income neighborhoods. Retaining top teachers in these schools is even more difficult. Why are some teachers able to look past the numerous challenges and remain in these trying environments? The review of the literature presents the underlying reasons why teachers leave and the reasons teacher stay. The challenges urban teachers face regarding educating students who live in poverty, who lack cognitive stimulation, the numerous factors that impact learning, teacher preparation, administrative support, funding and school culture are reviewed in this chapter. The proposed research study aims to fill an apparent void in the body of literature regarding the retention of tenured urban teachers by providing the educational community with a clear understanding of why some teachers stay in urban schools.

Reasons Teachers Leave

Retaining teachers is imperative, Hewitt (2012) explains that over the next two decades, it is estimated that 1.7 -2.7 million new teachers will be needed in public education. Understanding what factors impact the decision to leave the profession is a crucial step in addressing this issue and taking potential steps to combat the high turnover rates in education.
Factors that Lead to Teacher Turnover and Attrition

The Challenges of Poverty

Teaching in poverty-stricken neighborhoods is a challenge. According to Strange (2011), poor children are disproportionately assigned to inadequately funded schools: schools with the largest class sizes (Barton, 2004) and staffed with the lowest paid teachers (Palardy, 2008). Actively addressing issues such as improper development of emotional responsiveness, stress and sleep deprivation, which have been found among children living in poverty, is crucial. The population of people requiring assistance is growing as seen in Figure 2.1, which illustrates the rate of people that are requiring annual social and economic supports in the United States in 2012:

![Figure 2.1](image)

**Figure 2.1.** Current Population Survey - Annual Social and Economic Supplements. U.S. Census Bureau (2012).

Poverty status is determined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services by “comparing pre-tax cash income against a threshold that is set at three times the cost of a

The 2016 Poverty Guidelines are as follows:

![2016 Poverty Guidelines for 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons in family/household</th>
<th>Poverty Guideline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$11,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>28,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>32,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>36,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>40,890</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For families/households with more than 8 persons, add $4,160 for each additional person.

*Figure 2.2. Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines 2016.*

The Children’s Defense Fund (CDF), 2008 defines poverty as a family or individual who cannot afford basic human necessities, such as food, healthcare, clothing, housing, childcare and education. Educating poor students has been an ongoing struggle in America. Bradley, Whiteside, Mundfrom, Casey, Kelleher and Pope (1994) examined data from the Infant Health and Development Program and found that 40 percent of children who were living in chronic poverty had inadequacies in at least two areas of functioning, such as emotional responsiveness or language, by age three. Statistical demographics show a disproportional connection between poverty and minorities. The Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 60s resulted in the
desegregation of schools, yet, in 2016, many schools are still divided by socio-economic status and therefore race. A study conducted by the U.S. Government Accountability Office explains that between 2000 and 2014 the percentage of Black or Hispanic students in K-12 public schools in high poverty neighborhoods has steadily increased from 9% in 2000-01 to 16% in 2013-14 (Nowicki, 2016).

The landmark Supreme Court Ruling of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka 347 U.S. 483 in 1954, declared that racial segregation in schools was unconstitutional and that government and local educational agencies needed to integrate their schools. Yet, in 2017, students still sit in segregated classrooms. The Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Educational Funding (CCJEF, N.D.) filed a lawsuit against State Governor Jodi Rell in November, 2005, challenging the state constitutionality of Connecticut’s Pre-Kindergarten -12 Grade education finance system. The overarching goal of CCJEF is to “ensure equal educational opportunity and quality schooling for all” (p. 1). According to the Connecticut School Finance Project, schools across the state are not funded based on student learning needs, which this organization advocated to change. There are more than 10 different funding formulas, used by the Connecticut State Department of Education, that are not based on need, but rather on the location and type of school (traditional district, magnet, charter, etc.). Local property taxes are the largest funding source for public schools, which is the root of the issue in Connecticut Public Schools. The wealth gap between communities in Connecticut is incredibly large, which in turn leads to a huge disparity in spending per pupil in public schools statewide and, therefore, allows for racially segregated schools (CT School Finance Project). When comparing schools in Fairfield County, Connecticut the district with the most per pupil spending is Greenwich, which, according to The CT School Finance Project, spent $21,667 in 2015. The demographic enrollment in Greenwich
Public Schools can be broken down as follows in Figure 2.3:

![Table of Students Enrollment](image)

*Figure 2.3. Connecticut State Department of Education District Profile and Performance Report for School Years 2014-2015 - Greenwich Public Schools.*

In contrast, Seaside Public Schools spent $13,923 per student annually, and the demographic enrollment shows a considerably higher percentage of minority students.
According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2015), the racial breakdown of people living in poverty is primarily comprised of minorities. The Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is one of the three National Poverty Research Centers sponsored by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. They created a graph based on their research in this area to show the racial makeup of Poverty Rates in the U.S. in 1968, 1990, 2014.
Figure 2.5. Graph adapted from U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement created by The Institute for Research on Poverty - University of Wisconsin-Madison (2015).

The graph clearly shows that African Americans and Hispanics comprise the largest groups living in poverty: 32.8% of African Americans were living in poverty in 1968, that figure has since dropped to 24.1% in 2014; the Hispanic population saw a significant spike in the number of people living in poverty between 1968 and 1990, from 23.8% to 28.3% but has since declined to 21.4% in 2014. One of the founding fathers of America, Thomas Jefferson once said, “talent and virtue, needed in a free society, should be educated regardless of wealth or birth” (as quoted in Weber, 2010, p. 146). The children living in these neighborhoods are entitled to a free and equitable education in America. Books (2004) posits that these children do not have equal
opportunities to access the education they deserve for numerous reasons, including:

1. school readiness;
2. access to fewer high quality teachers, nurses, and guidance counselors;
3. access to well-equipped school facilities and instructional resources;
4. access to extracurricular activities; and
5. access to nutritional meal.

The Challenges of Cognitive Stimulation in Urban Students

Urban teachers are challenged by teaching children who, research has found, have not had the same cognitive stimulation as their well-off peers. Jensen (2009) explains that the cognitive stimulation that parents provide in the early years of child's life is crucial; yet, poor children very often receive less than their more affluent peers. Bradley, Corwyn, Burchinal, McAdoo, & Coll (2001) elaborate, stating that the deficits of cognitive stimulation have been linked to underdeveloped cognitive, social, and emotional competence in later childhood, and have been shown to be increasingly important influences on vocabulary growth, IQ, and social skills. Studies of risk and resilience in children have shown that family income correlates significantly with children’s academic success, especially during the preschool, kindergarten, and primary years (van IJzendoorn, Vereijken, Bakermans-Kranenburg & Riksen-Walraven, 2004). Kumanyika and Grier (2006) solidify to the researcher that children who live in low socio-economic homes have fewer cognitive-enrichment opportunities, and tend to have fewer books at home. In addition, these children do not visit the library as often and spend considerably more time in front of the television than their middle-income counterparts. Low socioeconomic
status children are frequently left home on their own to tend to their own needs and their younger siblings, while their parent/caregiver works long hours. Poor children are half as likely as their affluent peers to be taken to museums, theaters, libraries, on vacation, or to fun, culturally-enriching outings (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002), so it becomes the challenge of the classroom teacher to provide enrichment opportunities for these students. Making up for this lack of exposure and opportunity is daunting, which has the potential to lead to teacher turnover. Researchers have found that teacher turnover rates tend to be higher in urban and lower-performing schools (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 1999).

The Challenges of the Physical Environment in Impoverished Neighborhoods

Children living in poverty, when juxtaposed against their affluent peers, are disproportionately exposed to inauspicious social and physical environments (Jensen, 2009). He goes on to explain that poor neighborhoods tend to have lower-quality social, municipal and local services. The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF, 2004) found that poor children often breathe polluted air and drink impure water; they also found that the homes in which these children live are often overcrowded, noisy, and physically dilapidated, and contain a greater number of safety hazards. In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau found that, when compared to their wealthier counterparts, low-SES children spend less time playing outside, are less likely to participate in afterschool activities and spend more time watching television. This time in-turn leads to an improper development of emotional responses and a severe lack of experience. Many of these experiences and skills cannot be learned from watching cartoons, but rather need to be modeled in person-to-person interactions. Sameroff (1998) shows just how much experience can impact the development of youth, and how significant the role of socio-economic status plays in this development, indicating that children from low socio-
economic homes are considerably below the normal trajectory of their peers.


Ensuring that these students "catch up" to the normal trajectory is incredibly difficult and can lead to teacher turnover. Educating these students becomes more difficult because of the deficits brought on by their experiences in the environments in which they live.

**The Challenges of Improper Development of Emotional Responses**

Many students in urban districts struggle to develop proper emotional responses to various stimuli. Jenson (2009) explains that students who grow up in poor households often fail to learn healthy, appropriate emotional responses to situations, which in turn is a detriment to their school performance. He goes on to posit that, “students with emotional dysregulation may get so easily frustrated that they give up on a task when success was just moments away” (p. 18).
Many teachers may interpret a student’s deficits of response as a lack of respect or manners. Jensen (2009) lists six ways that students raised in poverty are likely to demonstrate these deficits:

1. Acting-out behaviors;
2. Impatience and impulsivity;
3. Gaps in politeness and social graces;
4. A more limited range of behavioral responses;
5. Inappropriate emotional responses; and

All these behaviors impact a student’s learning career and the relationships they have with their teachers. Many of these behaviors issues are dealt with, using disciplinary actions by the schools.

The Connecticut State Department of Education collects behavioral data from districts across the state. The Seaside Public Schools are designated as an Alliance District by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CTSDE). This label identifies Connecticut’s 30 lowest-performing districts. The lowest performing 10 districts, in the 30 total, in Connecticut are additionally designated as Educational (ED) Reform Districts. These districts are Seaside, East Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwich, Waterbury and Windham.

The following graphs (Figures 2.7 – 2.9) show the disproportionate numbers of students in Alliance or ED Reform districts being penalized for inappropriate behaviors:
This data shows that ED Reform districts and Public Charter schools have much higher rates of suspension and expulsion than the state average and all other designated groups.

Figure 2.7. Connecticut State Department of Education Suspension and Expulsion Rates PK-5th Grades 2014-2015.
Suspension/Expulsion Rates in Middle Grades (6-8) by District Category

*Figure 2.8. Connecticut State Department of Education Suspension and Expulsion Rates Middle School 2014-2015.*
Suspension/Expulsion Rates in High School Grades (9-12) by District Category

Figure 2.9. Connecticut State Department of Education Suspension and Expulsion Rates 9th-12th Grades 2014-2015.

The CTSDE goes on to break down the data by race, as shown in Figure 2.10:
Black or African American students have the highest rate of suspension/expulsion every year. The CTSDE additionally breaks down the data into categories of offenses, providing the reasons why students are being suspended and expelled, in Figure 2.11:
Many of the students living in Seaside are growing up in poor households, as shown earlier, and are unable to emotionally regulate themselves as seen by the high levels of student disciplinary consequences reported in urban school districts. Figure 2.12 presents Chronic Absenteeism and Suspension/Expulsion figures for the 2014-2015 school years.

*Figure 2.11.* Connecticut State Department of Education Incident Types (Offenses) Resulting in ISS, OSS and Expulsion 2014 -2015.
The behaviors that these students display inhibit the ability of teachers to deliver meaningful instruction. Ensuring that students are readily available to learn is beyond the scope of many teachers, and therefore can be described as a reason some teachers might leave their schools.

The Challenges of Teacher Preparation

Helping children living in poverty is an aspect of the teaching profession that is rarely addressed in colleges or graduate schools and, therefore, many teachers are underprepared for the challenges inherent in dealing with these children. In a recent study of teacher education program graduates, Johnson, Berg and Donaldson (2005) found that many novice teachers felt ill prepared and reluctant to teach in urban schools. Other studies have found that new teachers who start their careers in high-poverty urban schools are more likely to transfer to a different school or district or stop teaching altogether within the first three years of their teaching careers (Ingersoll, 2003).
Jensen (2009) believes that it is crucial for teachers to remember that there are many factors, some of them invisible, which play a significant role in a child's classroom actions. He goes on to explain that teachers need not come from their students’ culture or background in order to teach them, but must be able to employ a level of empathy and cultural awareness. Recruiting high quality, high performing teachers is extremely difficult. Researchers, who used ACT and SAT scores as proxies for teacher quality, have found that teachers who scored higher on these tests are less likely to teach in low-income and inner city schools (Bacolod, 2007; Podgursky, Monroe & Watson, 2004).

The Federal Government, under President Obama, acknowledged that current teacher preparation programs across the nation were not adequately preparing teachers for their crucial role in classrooms. In October 2015, in an open letter to America’s college presidents, the former Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, wrote "The system we have for training teachers lacks rigor, is out of step with the times, and is given to extreme grade inflation that leaves teachers unprepared and their future students at risk” (p.1).

In October 2016, the federal government initiated regulations on Universities to address the preparation requirements of becoming a teacher (U.S. Department of Education). These regulations were launched to bring about transparency of the effectiveness of their programs offered, help them continuously improve and to respond to teachers, nationally, who do not feel prepared to enter the profession after graduation. The regulations require that teacher preparation institutions report on the following data to the Department of Education:

- Placement and retention rates of graduates in their first three years of teaching, including placement and retention in high-need schools;
Feedback from graduates and their employers on the effectiveness of program preparation;

Student learning outcomes measured by novice teachers' student growth, teacher evaluation results, and/or another state-determined measure that is relevant to students' outcomes, including academic performance, and meaningfully differentiates amongst teachers; and

Other program characteristics, including assurances that the program has specialized accreditation or graduate candidates with content and pedagogical knowledge, and quality clinical preparation, who have met rigorous exit requirements (2016).

While these are all relevant regulations, teacher preparation institutions are still not addressing the issues of educating poor children. Haberman (1996), a researcher who focuses on urban schools and their teachers, explains that teacher preparation programs at universities generally focus on three core areas: learners and learning (child development), subject matter, and teaching children with special learning needs. Once again, these aspects are important, but do not address the issue of educating poor children. Meyerson (2001) articulated the issues eloquently when he stated “The failure of most public schools to teach poor children is a national tragedy and national disgrace” (p. 1).

While researchers have identified specific characteristics of teachers who are successful in urban settings the transfusion of this information into teacher preparation programs is lacking, thus leading to teachers leaving the profession. Researchers have found that new teachers are generally not fully prepared for complex settings found in urban schools (Haberman, 1996; Helfeldt, Capraro, Capraro, Foster, & Carter, 2009). The importance of recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers is imperative, as the U.S. Census Bureau (2004) posits that a staggering
13 million American children under age eighteen were living in poverty. That is an overall child poverty rate of 17.8 percent (Jacob, 2007). With such a high level of childhood poverty, the role of educating these children has become even more essential; having teachers prepared for the challenge is imperative.

The Challenges of School Funding

After the 2012 presidential election, the House and Senate focused on rewriting the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), focusing on all students, not just those living in affluence or those living in poverty. Addressing this was somewhat controversial, considering the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) study (2009) explained that the United States is one of the only countries that does not devote supplemental money to help schools serving students living in poverty, even though the government funds the Title 1 Program. When the ESEA was originally passed in 1965, the federal government believed that if they simply provided supplemental resources to the schools whose tax base did not afford them the opportunity to create the educational opportunities needed to succeed, that that would solve the inequality problem. The problem still exists and exhibits itself in different ways; one example is the State of Indiana, Article 26, where children in public schools rent textbooks at the parent’s expense. (IC 20-26-12).

Title I funding for schools. The United States government does have one program that provides federal support for children living in poverty. The Title 1 programs of the ESEA and Head Start Programs provide additional funding to schools that serve children living in poverty. The purpose of the Title I program is to “ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency
on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments” (U.S. Department of Education, 1965). In order to qualify for Title 1 funds, schools must have at least 40 percent of their student come from low-income families. The U.S Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (2015) explains that these funds are for school-wide programs that are aimed at upgrading their entire educational programs which in turn improves achievement for all students, especially the lowest-achieving students.

According to the Connecticut School Finance Project (http://www.ctschoolfinance.org/) a not for profit organization aimed at “providing trusted, nonpartisan, and independent sources of accurate data and information that transcends special interests”, the per pupil spending in school districts in Fairfield County is significantly disproportionate. Figure 2.13 shows the spending difference per pupil according to the Connecticut School Funding Project:
The difference in per pupil spending between the highest spending district, Greenwich - $21,667 and the lowest spending district, Danbury - $12,715, is $8,952. That is a 70.4% difference in spending. According to the Connecticut School Finance Project, the breakdown of per pupil spending varies in each district, for example, Greenwich uses 3% of its’ per pupil capital on transportation, whereas Danbury spends double that at 6%. Greenwich spends 7% on Student Support Services and Danbury spends only 5% (CT School Finance Project, 2015). Facing such dire financial discrepancies can lead teachers to move to a different district, where resources are readily available.
The Role Urban Living Plays on Students’ Development and Learning

Factors that Impact Learning

The role of stress. Jensen (2009) explains that children raised in poverty are especially prone to stressors that weaken school behavior and performance. He elaborates, expressing that stress can be defined as the psychological response to the notion that one has a loss of control resulting from an unfavorable situation or person (p. 22). Almeida, Neupert, Banks & Serido (2005), confirm that children living in poverty experience significantly greater chronic stress than do their more affluent counterparts. Jensen (2009) and Evans and English (2002) describe stressors in low-income families as living in overcrowded homes, substandard housing or unsafe neighborhoods, enduring community or domestic violence, separation or divorce, or the loss of family members, experiencing financial strain, forced mobility or material deprivation. The reality of all these stressors often leads to low-income parents, who are overstressed, ending up in states of depression and negativity, which subsequently can lead to inadequate nurturing, emotionally detached parenting and a difficulty in prioritizing the needs of the child. This increases the difficulty of trying to meet the daily needs of their families (Jensen, 2009). Research has clearly found that socioeconomic status positively correlates with good parenting, which in-turn improves academic achievement (DeGarmo, Forgatch & Martinez, 1999) and, unfortunately, the converse proves true: the chronic stresses of living in poverty diminishes parenting skills, and withdrawn or negative parenting in turn impairs children's school performance (Jensen, 2009). Johnson (1981) found that low-socioeconomic status students are more likely to give up or become passive and disinterested in school. Giving up, otherwise known as “learned helplessness”, is not a genetic trait, but rather an adaptive response to life conditions. Again, this leads to an additional challenge for teachers to address in order to educate
the child, making their work more difficult which, in turn, can lead to attrition.

The role of cognitive ability and performance. Gottfried, Gottfried, Bathurst, Guerin and Parramore (2003) found significant correlation between socioeconomic status and cognitive ability and performance that persists throughout the stages of development, from infancy through adolescence and into adulthood. Sapolsky (2005), a Stanford neuroscience and stress expert, found the lower a child’s socioeconomic status is, the lower their overall health is. Further research by Bradley and Corwyn (2002) has found that the lower a parent’s income is, the higher the chance that they will have a baby prematurely, low in birth weight, or with a disability. Numerous studies have shown that expectant mothers living in poverty have a higher risk and are more likely to live or work in a hazardous environment or be exposed to toxic pesticides. They are also more likely to smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs during their pregnancies, all these factors are linked to prenatal issues and birth defects (Moses, Johnson, Anger, Burse, Horstman, Jackson, Lewis, Maddy, McConnell, Meggs & Zahm, 1993; Bradley and Corwyn, 2002; Chasnoff, Anson, Hatcher, Stenson, Iaukea & Randolf, 1998).

Jensen (2009) elaborates about how the health issues among poor children lead to an increase in 1) school absences, 2) duration of school absences, 3) tardiness rates, 4) incidents of illness during class, and 5) rates of undiagnosed and/or untreated health problems or disabilities. These issues lead to a student's missing important classroom instruction and skills. Several studies suggest that the negative effects of exposure to toxins, maternal stress, trauma and alcohol can be eased with environmental enrichment (Döbrössy & Dunnett, 2004; Green, Melo, Christensen, Ngo, & Skene, 2006; Guilarte, Toscano, McGlothan & Weaver, 2003; Nithianantharajah & Hannan, 2006). Enrichment in schools, Jensen (2009) explains, includes the following:
● Provides wraparound health and medical services;
● Minimizes negative stress and strengthens coping skills;
● Uses a cognitively challenging curriculum;
● Provides tutoring and pullout services to build student skills;
● Fosters close relationships with staff and peers; and
● Offers plenty of exercise options.

These factors impact the day-to-day operations of a classroom, adding yet another layer of work for the teachers to address, in addition to all the other factors being discussed. This too, can lead to teacher turnover.

**The role of sleep deprivation.** An additional serious issue that impacts the academic career of urban children is sleep deprivation. Singh and Kenney (2013) found that children living in disadvantaged neighborhoods, which are defined as having high levels of violence, exhibit high risks for sleep difficulties. On the National level, it is estimated that one in six children living in low-income neighborhoods (characterized by violence, poor housing, litter and vandalism) have reported sleep problems, when compared with only one in ten children living in more desirable social environments. Research has shown that adolescent sleep problems have been linked to a variety of mental and physical health problems, not limited to poor academic and cognitive performance (Kliweer & Lepore, 2015).

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reveals that insufficient sleep is a public health epidemic in both children and adults (CDC, 2015). The lack of restorative sleep can jeopardize the physical and emotional wellbeing of children and can impede their normal growth and development (Moturi & Avis, 2010). AlDabal and Bahammam (2011) have found that untreated sleep disorders can become persistent and lead to underachievement at school or work.
They can cause accidents, depression, interpersonal conflicts and can lead to a predisposition, or exacerbation of health problems like obesity and diabetes.

While the adversities explained above are daunting, research by Hill, Bromell, Tyson and Flint (2007) suggests that while the first five years of a child’s life are critical, there is immense opportunity during the school years for children to significantly transform. Jensen (2009) believes that the behaviors exhibited by children from low-SES homes are adaptive responses to the chronic conditions of poverty, but that the brain is equally adaptive to positive, enriching effects. These efforts need to be developed by teachers in order for them to remain in their roles in classrooms.

Factors that Impact Teaching and Learning in Urban Schools

The impact of teacher turnover in urban schools. Urban districts need to retain their teachers; churn is not good for students. Shortages in schools are hugely detrimental to students. According to the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) from the National Center on Education Statistics (NCES) and the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) in 2003, approximately one-third of new teachers in America leave teaching during their first three years, and almost half leaving during the first five years. NCTAF's analysis of the SASS data found that teacher turnover in urban, low-income schools is almost a third higher than other school districts (NCTAF). Ingersoll (2001 and 2003), as well as, Ingersoll and Smith (2003), worked with NCTAF, through a project funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, to develop a working definition of teacher turnover. There are three dimensions to the definition:

1. Within-District Movers: Teachers employed in a classroom teaching role in a school year, who are employed as a classroom teacher at a different school in the same school
district in year two, are defined as "cross-school, within-district movers";

2. Cross-District Movers: Teachers employed in a classroom teaching role in a school year, who are employed as classroom teachers in a different school district in year two, are described as "cross-school, cross-district movers";

3. Leavers: Teachers employed in a classroom teaching role in a school year, who are not employed as classroom teachers in any school district in year two, are described as "leavers" (p.11 – 12).

Each one of these categories leaves students in a classroom without the teacher with whom they started.

According to Barnes, Crowe, and Schaefer (2007), teachers leave high-need schools, which they define as high-poverty, high-minority, low performing school, at vitiated rates. The constant turnover of the teachers in these schools costs money and detrimentally impacts student learning. Researchers have estimated the cost of a teacher exiting the profession as $9,500 for a Chicago Public School teacher and $8,371 for a Milwaukee Public School teacher. These estimates included the direct cost of recruiting and hiring a replacement teacher, as well as the indirect costs of orientation, training and professional development (Barnes et al., 2007).

By addressing retention strategies in schools, districts and states can provide an opportunity to build a rich learning environment. Retention initiatives in these schools have great potential for impact and high return on investment, both in terms of money and school performance.

High rates of teacher attrition are concerning, not only because they may be a sign of underlying problems in how well the school runs, but also because they impact the quality of the
school community and how it functions (Ingersoll, 2001). Ingersoll (2001) explains that researchers have found that, among the most important organizational conditions identified, these four factors emerge: compensation structures for employees; the level of managerial or administrative support, especially for new employees; the levels of dissention and strife within the organization; and the degree to which an employee’s input and influence impacts organizational policy.

Jerald (2001) found that high-poverty, high-minority schools receive significantly less state and local funding than their well-to-do suburban counterparts. Furthermore, students in these high-poverty schools are more likely to be taught by teachers who are inexperienced or teaching outside of their specialties. Currently, the State Department of Education in Connecticut does not keep records of teacher turnover rates at the district or state level.

The impact of administrative actions on teacher retention. Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff, (2011) found, in a survey of New York City teachers, that dissatisfaction with the lack of administrative support was the main reason that teachers revealed for leaving or thinking of leaving their school. Gonzalez (1995) confirmed that administrative support was one of the main reasons urban teachers leave their jobs. Strong leadership is critical in all organizations, especially schools. One cannot discuss teacher retention without addressing school leadership. Leaders in urban schools are faced with numerous challenges, not limited to poor nutrition among students, high rates of transience, drug use, crime and other by-products of socio-economic disadvantage (Jacobson, 2011) yet, they are expected to raise test scores, prepare students for graduation and create an environment of high expectations and learning. The main responsibility and priority for all educational leaders is to create a learning system that engages students on all levels, intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Retaining top teachers is one way
to create this learning system. Using the term “sustainable leadership”, Lynch (2012) explains, that in order to set up these learning systems leaders need to consider the sustainability of their role, so that they may bring about change. Researchers have found that sustainable leadership goes past the temporary gains in achievement scores to create long-lasting, meaningful improvements in learning processes (Glickman, 2002; Stoll, Fink & Earl, 2003).

Retaining top teachers will help alleviate some of the struggles in the schools. According to Youngs and King (2002), school leaders influence student achievement in an indirect way, because they influence their schools’ organizational conditions and instructional quality. Principals play a substantial role in developing an organizational climate that is seen by early career teachers to be supportive of their work and those of their colleagues (Burke, Aubusson, Schuck, Buchanan & Prescott, 2015).

Leading an urban school also involves addressing working conditions. The field of environmental psychology explains that the conditions in which people work and learn affect their mental processes and therefore their productivity (Bechtel & Churchman, 2002). Deprived conditions of school facilities also lead to teacher absenteeism (Whitehead, 2009) as well as impacts teachers’ employment decision (Doan & Jablonski, 2012). Improving the physical environment is vital. Kozol (2001) found that schools with inadequate facilities also had the lowest test scores, lowest graduation rates, higher pregnancy rates, and higher teacher turnover. Addressing the physical environment needs to be considered when leading an urban school.

**The impact of teacher shortages in urban schools.** Filling schools with competent staff is important; keeping these people in schools is imperative. Even though the United States has an overall teacher surplus, further analysis reveals that U.S. schools have consistently
experienced teacher shortages by location, grade level, and subject area for nearly 40 years (Dwinal, 2015). Dwinal (2015) goes on to explain that, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, 45 states indicated that at least one of their school districts used some kind of teacher recruitment incentive during the 2011–12 school year. Currently, somewhere between nine and 10 million Americans are qualified to fill the 3.7 million teaching positions listed within the U.S. K–12 school systems (Hess, 2009). This surplus does not illustrate the acute local shortages that districts face. Teacher shortages in urban districts can be lessened if teachers remain in their positions, resulting in attrition rates dropping. Jacobs (2007) explains that a teacher shortage in an urban district means that the number of highly qualified teachers the district wants to employ is larger than the number of effective teachers who are prepared and able to work at a particular salary. Districts react to such deficits in a range of ways. They have to hire teachers with no certification or experience, use long-term substitutes, or increase the class sizes of the currently employed teachers.

According to Headden (2014), during the decade between 1998 to 2008, annual teacher attrition rose by 41 percent and currently nearly a third of teachers leave the profession within the first three years of their careers. In many urban, poor school districts, despite attempts to hold onto teachers through incentives like higher salaries, and mentoring programs like TEAM, the problem is even more serious, with more than half of all teachers routinely leaving within five years. Headden (2014) goes on to explain that studies have shown that beginner teachers are not as effective in their first years in the classroom when compared to those with more experience.

Researchers (Rockoff, 2004; Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2008) have found it difficult to assess whether or not teacher experience impacts student achievement. They struggled because newer, less effective teachers may leave the profession, which in-turn would skew a study of the
effectiveness of new versus veteran teachers. In contrast, Harris and Sass (2011) found that “experience enhances the productivity of both elementary and middle school teachers, but not high school teachers” (p. 805). They go on to explain their findings, clarifying that the majority of the experience effects are in the early years of a teacher’s career, but additionally found that there are marginal effects, even after 10 years of teaching.

Understanding the urban districts’ struggle with hiring, it is not a surprise that urban teachers tend to be less experienced and are less credentialed than those in suburban districts. According to the School and Staffing Survey (2003), 20.3% of teachers in urban districts had three or fewer years of teaching experience, with suburban districts having only 17.6 percent of teachers with that amount of experience. Urban teachers also are less likely to remain at the same school for a prolonged time; 52.4 percent (compared with 57.1 percent of their suburban counterparts) reported staying in the same school for four or more years (Jacob, 2007).

According to the Connecticut State Department of Education, for the 2015-2016 school year, subject shortage areas are Bilingual Education, PK-12, Comprehensive Special Education, K-12, Intermediate Administrator, Mathematics 7-12, School Library and Media Specialists, Science 7-12, Speech and Language Pathologist, Technology Education PK -12, TESOL PK-12, World Languages, 7-12. The CTSDE also lists the following districts as priority districts, that experience teacher shortages: Seaside, Danbury, Derby, East Hartford, Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, Stamford, Waterbury, Windham.

Summation of Why Teachers Leave

According to the literature discussed in this chapter teachers leave for the following reasons, provided in table 2.1.
Table 2.1

*Literature Showing Reasons Teacher Leave*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons Teachers Leave:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relocation; Darling-Hammond (2005); Ingersoll (2001); Strong (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career change; Darling-Hammond (2005); Ingersoll (2001); Strong (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job change of significant other; Darling-Hammond (2005); Ingersoll (2001); Strong (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseled out of the profession; Darling-Hammond (2005); Ingersoll (2001); Strong (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor pay/benefits/compensation; Darling-Hammond (2005); Ingersoll (2001); Strong (2005); Palardy (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate resources; Darling-Hammond (2005); Ingersoll (2001); Strong (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High stress; Darling-Hammond (2005); Ingersoll (2001); Strong (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult/disadvantaged working conditions; Johnson, Birkeland, Kardos, Kauffman, Liu and Peske (2001); Darling-Hammond (2005); Ingersoll (2001); Strong (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strife in the organization; Ingersoll (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bashing of the profession; Darling-Hammond (2005); Ingersoll (2001); Strong (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School facilities; Whitehead (2009); Kozol (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty; Bradley, Whiteside, Mundfrom, Casey, Kelleher and Pope (1994); Jensen (2009); Strange (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School classrooms/Budget deficits; Barton (2004); Rhodes, Nevil and Allan (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime; Mortimore and Sammons (1987); Jacobson (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of cognitive stimulation in students; Gottfried, Gottfried; Bathurst, Guerin and Parramore (2003); Sapolsky (2005); Bradley and Corwyn (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical environment impacts on children; Jensen (2009); Kozol (2001); Whitehead (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improper development of emotional responses by children/behaviors; Jensen (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are stressed from living in poverty; Jensen (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students cognitive ability and performance; Jensen (2009); Sapolsky (2005); DeGarmo,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forgatch & Martinez (1999)

Students suffer from sleep deprivation; Singh and Kenney (2013);
Teachers have no input into policy; Ingersoll (2001);
School culture; Peterson and Deal (2002); Hoy and Miskel (2008); Lynch (2012); Powers (2009);
Brunges and Foley-Brinza, 2014; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005

Reasons Teachers Stay

In contrast to the numerous reason that influence teacher’s decisions to leave schools, the researcher flipped the topic to investigate the reasons teachers stay, specifically in urban school districts, and found that there is a noticeable difference in the number of studies available on this side of the topic. The current research available covered characteristics of effective teachers, school environment, school cultures and administrative actions, all covered in the following section.

Characteristics of Effective Teachers

Haberman (1995, 2005), identified some key characteristics of effective urban teachers:

1. they protect children’s learning,
2. they are persistent,
3. their approach to at-risk students,
4. their application of theory into practice,
5. their professional/personal orientation to students,
6. their fallibility,
7. their emotional and physical stamina,
8. their organizational ability,
9. their explanation of teacher success,
10. their explanation of children’s success,
11. they are considered real teacher,
12. they make their students feel needed,
13. their awareness of material versus the student, and
14. their ability to gently teach in a violent society.

Furthermore, researchers McDermott and Rothenberg (2000) collected data from focus groups made up of parents, teachers and students to identify the necessary characteristics of successful teachers in urban districts. Their data can be summarized into following characteristics needed to effectively work with urban youth:

1. building trusting relationships with both students and families,
2. communicating frequently with families,
3. demonstrating high expectations, and
4. integrating students’ cultural knowledge throughout the curriculum.

**School Environment**

Campbell, Pungello, Miller-Johnson, Burchinal and Ramey (2001) believe that schooling should be rich, balanced, sustained, positive, and contrasting learning environments. They further believe that, with the development of academic enrichment, students living in poverty will see an increase in cognitive ability and a decrease in negative factors in a child's’ development, which could either have a positive or negative impact on teacher retention.
Table 2.2. The Benefits of Academic Enrichment for Children Living in Poverty

Kindergarten to 21 Years old

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increased</th>
<th>Decreased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Intelligence (IQ)</td>
<td>● Grade Repetition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Reading and Math Skills</td>
<td>● Special Education Placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Academic Locus of Control</td>
<td>● Teen Pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Social Competence</td>
<td>● Smoking and Drug Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Years in School, Including College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Full-Time Employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.2 presents the benefits of academic enrichment for children living in poverty.

While these points may seem obvious, many urban students do repeat grades and are identified as “special needs” children during their time in public schools.

School Culture and Teacher Turnover in Urban Schools

Peterson and Deal (2002) define school culture as “...the set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the ‘persona’ of the school. A school culture influences the ways people think, feel, and act” (p. 10). Researchers have found that organizational climate develops from routine policies, practices and beliefs that are fundamental to the members of the organization and to the organization itself, and in-turn the means in which members of the organization interpret and assess these policies, practices and beliefs (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Litwin & Stringer, 1968; Tagiuri, 1968; Pogodzinski, Youngs, Frank & Belman, 2012). Marzano et al. (2005) feel that "although a culture is a natural byproduct of people working in close proximity, it can be a positive or negative influence on a school's effectiveness. An effective leader builds a culture that positively influences teachers, who, in turn, positively
Hoy et al. (2008) suggests that school climate is an enduring characteristic of the school environment that is experienced by all members; it affects their behavior, and is based on their shared views of behaviors in schools.

“School culture is built up over time as people work together, play together, fight together, cry together, laugh together. The most profound values and relationships come into being as staff members face crises, deal with tragedy, make mistakes, enjoy success and recognize accomplishments—problems solved and conflicts resolved . . . The past is truly never far away. People remember (and are reminded in the stories that are told) the past and the feelings it produces” (Peterson and Deal, 2002, p. 49)

Lynch (2012) confirms that school cultures have a substantial effect on almost all teacher emotions. Peterson and Deal (2002) go on to explain that school culture has an effect upon that which people focus their attention, their commitment to the school, how hard they work, their level of motivation, and their levels of productivity. Hanson (2001) clarifies that schools also have their own unique cultures that are molded by a specific blend of values, beliefs, and feelings.

Kelly et al. (1998) artfully explain that each child deserves to learn in a school that is welcoming, scholastically stimulating, and safe. The atmosphere of the school and the value of instruction are improved as the school develops a harmonious rapport among all the stakeholders, the students, parents, teachers, and administrator. Creating the culture of learning, collaboration, and a safe environment falls on the school leaders; if the same teachers are in the building year after year, parents, students and community members can begin to develop trusting
relationships with these people.

Scholtes (1997) defines cultures as that which makes the experience of an employee working at one company different from doing the same work at a different company with similar products or services. It is important to note that when most employees are talking about their place of work, chances are they are actually talking about the culture of their organization (Nelson & Spitzer, 2003). One study found that a culture where everyone feels comfortable leads to a productive learning environment, which in-turn has a positive impact on student achievement. (Kelly et al., 1998).

Robbins and Alvy (2004) explain that school culture has a profound influence on students as well as adults in a building. Students will behave in the way they see the adults in the school model behavior. They go on to explain, “a critical leadership competency is the ability to understand, read and shape school culture” (p. 14). Powers (2009) goes on to elaborate that a schools’ organizational culture, which she defines as being made up of shared expectations, rituals, values, climate, and behaviors, is crucial because it impacts how teachers interact with each other and with their students. Understanding the role of culture is significant in understanding why people leave a school, a district, or even the teaching profession.

**Administrative Actions and Teacher Retention**

There are numerous arguments about how to keep teachers in schools. According to Rochkind, Ott, Immerwahr, Doble and Johnson (2007), The Public Agenda Study found that, when given the choice between two identical schools, 76 percent of secondary teachers and 81 percent of elementary teachers reported that they would rather work at a school where administrators strongly supported them than in a school that paid notably higher salaries.
Marinell and Coca (2013) surveyed 4,000 teachers in New York City Schools for the Research Alliance of New York City Schools and found that the majority of the teachers revealed that administrators did not bother to encourage them to stay in teaching. Communicating that one is needed and appreciated is a step any administrator can take to help with teacher retention. Disadvantaged working conditions and lack of meaningful on-the-job training and support are some of the chief reasons why many new teachers leave the occupation within five years (Johnson et al., 2001). School leaders can improve the culture of their organization by providing mentoring, recognition and reward as well as relevant, helpful professional development and good school culture. Workplace culture is one of the significant influences that expand employee commitment, engagement, and job satisfaction (Brunges & Foley-Brinza, 2014).

If administrative support is so clearly defined as a reason why teachers leave or think of leaving, then it needs to be prioritized within schools. Effective leadership is commonly recognized as being essential in achieving school improvement (Hopkins, Ainscow & West 1994; Stoll & Fink, 1996; Ofsted, 2000). Jacobson (2011) goes on, adding that although teacher quality has the highest effect on student motivation and achievement, the impact of leadership matters in influencing the motivation of teachers and the value of their teaching, which in-turn affects student performance.

Providing support to teachers is a challenge, but being available to listen, problem solve, advocate for teachers and recognize their hard work, are a few steps that will help with retention. Klassen and Anderson (2009) compared teachers from 1962 to 2007 and found that concerns about workload and student behavior have displaced issues pertaining to external sources, such as salary, buildings, and equipment. As a result, teachers are more likely to stay where they have supportive principals and cooperative colleagues who help them do their job well (Allensworth,
According to Borman and Dowling (2008) there are several specific forms of support that early career teachers need, which can impact their decisions to move schools or leave the profession entirely. These include availability of mentor support and professional development, teacher collegiality, executive support, and resources. Kapadia, Coca, and Eaton (2007) established that new teachers listed the strength of school leadership and how welcoming the faculty was as the greatest influence on their decision whether or not to leave their school or profession.

School leaders can play a meaningful role in shaping new teachers’ attitudes and behaviors concerning their work, through both direct relations with beginner teachers as well as through developing procedures and practices that support their work (Ebmeier, 2003; Spillane, 2003; Youngs, 2007). The formal hierarchical position of administrators places them in a unique position to interact with teachers and can influence the performance of a school through defining goals, coordinating activities, evaluating performance, and delivering resources and rewards (Bidwell, 2001; Boyd & Crowson, 1981; Friedkin & Slater, 1994; Parsons & Jones, 1960). Furthermore, administrators influence support and resources that new teachers receive through establishing mentoring relationships and providing new teachers with opportunities to collaborate with other teachers (e.g., by establishing curriculum teams). The administrative atmosphere greatly echoes the professional setting where the new teachers work, consequently affecting their future career choices (Pogodzinski et al., 2012).

**Summation of Why Teachers Stay**

According to the literature discussed in this chapter teachers stay for the reasons
presented in Table 2.3

Table 2.3

*Literature Showing the Reasons Teacher Stay*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons Teachers Stay:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong Mentoring/Induction Programs; Feiman-Nemser (2001); Ingersoll and Strong (2011); Brunges and Foley-Brinza (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation via leadership; Frahm (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Actions; Jacob, Vidyathi and Carol (2012); Tye and O'Brien (2002); Ingersoll (2001); McDonald (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful Colleagues; Ingersoll and Strong (2011); Capara, Barbaranelli and Steca (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Administrative support; Rochkind, Ott, Immerwahr; Doble and Johnson (2007); Brunges and Foley-Brinza (2014); Pogodzinski, Youngs, Frank and Belman (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition and Reward; Brunges and Foley-Brinza (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful PD; Brunges and Foley-Brinza (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Culture/Climate; Peterson and Deal (2002); Hoy and Miskel (2008); Litwin and Stringer (1968); Tagiuri (1968); Pogodzinski, Youngs, Frank and Belman (2012); Marzano, Waters, &amp; McNulty, (2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Worldview**

The researcher in this study is a social constructivist. According to Creswell (2007) the researcher in Social Constructivism, to which this case connects, will seek understanding in the world they live and work. This study investigates why some teachers stay in urban school districts.

Social Constructivism has its roots in phenomenology (Schultz, 1967), which fits with
this study in that the researcher is investigating the phenomenon of why some teachers stay in urban schools when turnover rates are so high.

The researcher sorted the perspectives, values, beliefs, emotions and assumptions of the teacher participants. The researcher acknowledges that she brings her own set of values, priorities and experiences to the study, as she is currently employed in an urban school district, but will clearly articulate these as biases throughout the study.

The research questions being investigated under the researcher’s social constructivist worldview sought to understand and make meaning of the world in which she lives and works. The researcher developed these questions in order to gain a clearer understanding of what influences teachers in their decision to stay in their urban teaching positions. Biesta (2010) explains that experience is the way in which living organisms are involved in their surroundings and environment. This study aims to understand the living organisms (teachers) in their surrounding environment (their schools).

Quantitative data was collected through an initial survey about job satisfaction, dissatisfaction, motivation and retention. The results of the survey were analyzed and the data collected has been used to guide the next steps in this research. The study was set up as a sequential design. After the survey data was analyzed and trends identified, the researcher developed semi-structured interview questions to continue data collection.

Theories that Influence this Research

Motivation Theory

Motivation theory is critical in this study as the researcher is attempting to understand what motivates teachers to stay in their teaching roles in urban school districts. “To be motivated
means to be moved to do something” (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Baron (1983) explains that motivation is a build up of different actions that influence and direct our behavior in a quest to reach our goals. Herzberg (1966) discusses worker motivation, identifying two levels of worker motivation, “hygiene and motivation”, each one providing a different purpose for workers. The “hygiene” factors include the tangible, day-to-day things at work, such as pay, working conditions, relationships with colleagues, competence of supervisors and company policies (Andrews, 2011). Herzburg (1966) believes that hygiene factors may not ensure that workers will be highly motivated. He goes on to break down motivation into four key factors: (1) achievement; (2) responsibility or autonomy; (3) recognition; and (4) opportunities for advancement.

Motivation, an important factor in schools, is malleable and impressionable. Social Learning Theory can help school leaders increase motivation in their schools. The key component of Social Learning Theory is that people learn through observation. Bandura (1989) illustrates that learning would be exceedingly painstaking, not to mention hazardous, if individuals had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. He goes on to explain that most human behavior is learned observationally through demonstrations; from watching others, one forms ideas of how new actions are performed, and on later occasions these observations become ways of conducting oneself. If highly effective teachers in schools are made to feel important and irreplaceable then social learning theory suggests that others will follow in an effort to become highly effective as they attempt to receive the same recognition reward.

Bandura (1977) specifically explains behavior is learned from environment through the process of observational learning. When school and district leaders take the time to recognize the
successes of individual teachers they are building motivation in their schools, allowing other staff to develop through observational learning. Motivation has also been broken down into intrinsic and extrinsic factors, which, when both are stimulated can lead to a fully committed employee (Danish & Usman, 2010). Bandura (1977) also points out:

The strength of peoples' conviction in their own effectiveness is likely to affect whether they would even try to cope with given situations . . . They get involved in activities and behave assuredly when they judge themselves capable of handling situations that would otherwise be intimidating . . . Efficacy expectations determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences. (p. 193-194)

Giving teachers the support and strength to face challenging situations is imperative in urban schools. Understanding motivation is key; La Motta (1995) believes that performance at one's’ job is the result of ability and motivation: the ability to complete the job at hand and the motivation to want to attempt it.

Leadership is a key component in motivation. Oosthuizen (2001) goes on to say that it is among the function of managers to motivate their employees successfully and influence their behavior to achieve greater organizational efficacy.

**Human Motivation Theory - Maslow’s Hierarchy of Need**

The next theory impacting this research study is the Hierarchy of Need developed by Maslow (1943) in his “A Theory of Human Motivation”. Motivational theorist, Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) believed that people cannot live life, and achieve self actualization until certain conditions are addressed. He developed the Hierarchy of Needs based on his beliefs.
Similarly, Hull (1951) developed “drive theory” saying that all humans require certain things for the continuation of their lives or for their well being. Without these “things” being addressed, one cannot progress.

Maslow (1943) theorized that there were four levels of need, before a man or woman can reach Self-Actualization, the top, fifth level of development. The most primary level is the basic needs required for human survival: food, water and shelter. This level is referred to as Physiological. The next level is Safety. At this point, a person’s safety is regarded as personal, financial, and physical/healthy well being. The third level in Maslow’s (1943) theory is that of Social Belonging. These represent interpersonal needs - the feeling of belonging. “Humans need to love and be loved - both sexually and non-sexually- by others” (Maslow, 1943). Loneliness, depression and social anxiety are possible in the absence of love or belonging. Maslow (1978) noted that when “physiological and safety-security needs are largely gratified, people hunger for affectionate relations with people in general” (p. 158). The fourth level is Esteem, Maslow (1978) divided this level into two categories: esteem for oneself, and the respect one receives from other people. He specified that the “lower” level need is the respect from others, and the “higher” version of esteem is self-respect.

Finally, the pinnacle of Maslow’s (1943) theory is Self-Actualization. “What a man can be, he must be” (Maslow, 1954). This is when an individual reaches his/her full potential and the realization of that potential. This level cannot be reached without mastering the lower preceding levels. Maslow (1962) acknowledged that self-actualization is achieved by very few people. This theory emerged as an overarching theory during the Results section of this study, when resulting themes and trends fit into categories of the Hierarchy.
Summary and Conclusions

The numerous challenges described in this chapter, like poverty, improper emotional development, urban neighborhoods, school funding and stress, to name a few, show just how many factors influence urban education. Using this knowledge, the researcher investigated why some urban teachers have been able to look past the copious challenges described in the literature as reasons teachers leave the profession, school, or district and spend their teaching careers in urban schools, teaching children living in poverty. Investigating teacher retention, from the teacher's viewpoint, giving tenured teachers a voice, and can help school districts understand what steps they can take to retain teachers. Retaining experience, quality teachers is beneficial, not only to school districts, but directly to the students they serve.
CHAPTER III
METHODS
Research Design

This case study was designed to investigate what specific reasons teachers could identify as influencing their decision to stay in urban schools and districts. If urban school districts have a clear understanding of specific details that keep teachers in their schools, districts can make informed decision about how to keep teachers in their classrooms and ideally stop the revolving door of urban teachers. This study was conducted as a case study in that it is developed a deeper understanding of teacher retention in one urban school district in New England.

The case study was a multisite design in that five schools participated in this research; "multisite studies offer a larger pool from which to recruit participants" (Beischel, Hart, & Turkelson, 2016, p. 204). The researcher elected to use five schools for this case study because using more than one location increases the sample size and in-turn increases the quantity of data collected. According to Axinn and Pearce (2006), there is no specific, universal rule regarding the number of sites to select for a multisite case study. These schools were purposefully selected as a deviant or extreme sampling due to being identified as having the lowest teacher turnover rates over a three-year period (Appendix A). This study was holistic in nature in that there are no specific subunits being identified within the study.

In order to increase the quality of the empirical research the researcher considered the validity and credibility of the data collected; measures such as member checking, thick, rich descriptions and data triangulation as described by Maxwell (1992) were employed. These factors will be described as they developed.
Research Questions

The researcher addresses these research questions in her study:

1. *Are the results of the Job Satisfaction Survey, from this specific sampling population, similar to those of the original study?*
2. *What perceptions do tenured teachers hold about teacher retention in their schools?*
3. *What perceptions do tenured teachers hold about teacher retention in their district?*

Location of the Study

The site of this study is one of the poorest cities in the Northeastern United States, a depressed municipality in lower Connecticut. The City of Seaside was once a thriving industrial city on the shores of the Long Island Sound but, over time, has seen a significant rise in the poverty rate of its residents. According to the U.S. Census Department, the number of “Persons below poverty level”, from 2009-2013, were 23.3% in Seaside, versus the Connecticut State average of 10.2%. In 2014, the official poverty rate was 14.8 percent in the United States; at that time, there were 46.7 million people in poverty in this country (US Census Data, 2014).

According to the Seaside Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC), “in 2014, 32.4% of Seaside children (12,000 persons) lived under the federal poverty level (FPL), a .3% decrease since 2013” (BCAC, 2015, p. 3). The report goes on to explain that in 2014, 54.1% of children under the age of 18 lived in single-parent families: 43.2% with a single mother and 10.9% with a single father. To put these factors into perspective, in order to rent a home in Seaside in 2015, “fair market rent in Seaside ($1,283) was 81% of what a parent working 40 hours a week at minimum wage ($9.15 per hour) earns before taxes ($1,586 a month) (BCAC, 2015, p. 5). The unemployment rate in Seaside is also significantly higher than surrounding towns and the
National average, as shown below in Figure 3.1 from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

![Unemployment Rates from October '14 and '15](image)


**The Seaside Board of Education**

The Seaside Board of Education oversees 41 schools, with just over 21,000 students from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), in the 2014 - 2015 school year the Board of Education employed 1,348.30 full time teachers, and 1,547.60 other staff members including instructional aides, administrators, librarians, guidance counselors and other support staff. There are 70.40 school administrators listed. Seaside Public Schools are made up of 49.6% Hispanic or Latino students, 35.8% Black
or African American students, 10.3% White students, 2.8% Asian students and 1.3% fall under the “other” classification (BCAC, 2015). The Seaside Public Schools receive fewer cost sharing dollars than their urban counterpart, Hartford, Connecticut, receiving $8,498 per student, whereas Hartford receives $9,373 per student (BCAC, 2015, p. 12). To start the 2015-2016 school year, the Seaside Public Schools hired just over 200 hundred teachers, meaning 14.8% of Seaside's teachers were new hires.

Another aspect to take into consideration when addressing teacher retention is the financial obligations associated with teacher turnover. Considering cost is crucial when addressing any situation in an urban school district. Seaside Public Schools are currently facing a 15 million dollar deficit for this school year. According to the director of Human Resources for the Seaside Board of Education it costs about $500 per new teacher hire, and for the 2015/2016 school year her department hired 200 new teachers (personal communication, March 18, 2016). When the budget does not cover all the expenses required to educate students, the working conditions have the potential to cause teachers to leave. This study aims to collect tenured teachers’ perspectives’ on why they were able to stay in a district with such budgetary issues. What are urban districts doing right, to help keep veteran teachers in their classrooms?

Participants

The five schools chosen to participate in this study were purposely selected (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010) by analyzing public-record Board of Education minutes, listing the number of teacher resignations during the 2012-2013, 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. Participant purposive sampling was employed because the teachers in these schools have demonstrated the lowest levels of turnover/attrition across the district. These subjects can “provide particularly
valuable information related to the research questions under investigation” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p.25). It is important to note that the sample being studied would also be considered a convenience sample, as the researcher is local. They are also a deviant or extreme sample of the population in that the schools are identified because they are either outstanding or failing with regard to the topic of research (Teddlie et al., 2009). In this qualitative case study, they are outstanding in that they have had the lowest teacher turnover rates in the district over a three-year period.

The Bear, Fish Hawk, Cougar, Mustang and Wolf Schools (assigned pseudonyms) were identified as the top five schools with the least amount of teacher turnover in the preceding three years, (Appendix A). An additional interview was added towards the conclusion of the study to gain insight into the administrative viewpoint regarding teacher retention and turnover in Seaside Public Schools. The head of the Administrators Union, and current principal in a district school was interviewed in order to gain insight into the impact teacher turnover and retention has on building principals and leading their schools. In order to protect the identity of the participants the school names have been changed. Permission was granted from the Superintendent of Schools in October 2016 (Appendix B) as well as the University of Bridgeport IRB committee in November 2016 (Appendix C).

**Procedures**

**Role of the Researcher**

The researcher takes a social constructivist stance in this study, attempting to investigate the levels of job commitment and satisfaction that veteran teachers hold with respect to their teaching positions in urban schools. When approaching the first research question, *Are the results of the Job Satisfaction Survey, from this specific sampling population, similar to those of*
The researcher is employing a post-positive stance, in that the question can be answered in a yes or no manner. In questions two and three, the researcher believes that the participants hold a specific perspective that is crucial to understanding teacher retention, and that through this study, the researcher will bring to light the considerations that impacts teacher retention. The researcher is an emic - insider (Merriam, 2009) during the study, in that she is employed by the same Board of Education, but emphasizes that she is not employed in any of the schools participating in the study. It is important to note that the researcher is an employee of the Board of Education in the district where the study takes place, therefore has contact with some of the participants at district facilitated trainings and professional activities. The researcher acknowledges her bias as a teaching professional in an urban district and has articulated this during her presentation of findings, but has make every attempt possible to remain neutral during the interview process.

Data Collection

Data collection began in the form of archival records analysis. The selection criterion was based on the researcher’s review of archival-secondary source data. Archival records can be broken down into various categories. The data collected for this section of the research is written public record. The researcher analyzed the Seaside Board of Education minutes from the 2012/2013, 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 school years. The researcher studied resignation data, organizing the data according by school. This data is written public record as it relates to a public school district.

Identified sampling population. Upon completion of this analysis, the researcher identified five schools with the least amount of teacher turnover according to the Board of
Education resignations (Appendix A). The Bear, Fish Hawk and Cougar Schools had no teachers leave over the three-year period. The Mustang School had .86% of teachers' leave, while the Wolf School has .93% of teacher leave during the same period of time.

The Board of Education meeting minutes are public record and list the teacher names, schools and reason for resignation. There are three categories listed as reasons for resignation: Personal, Another Position, and Relocation. (Appendix A). Through analysis of resignation data the researcher purposefully selected the five schools with the least amount of teacher turnover. This form of sampling is considered extreme or deviant case sampling category, because it involves selecting the cases: in this specific researcher study, the five schools with the lowest teacher turnover rates, that are near the ends of the distribution of cases of interest (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009), the schools in this urban district. Extreme or deviant sampling identifies cases that are either “outstanding” or “failing” with regard to the topic of research. The five schools in this research study had the least amount of teacher turnover across the district over a three-year period, so would be considered “outstanding”.

Purposeful sampling was applied to this study because it involves pinpointing and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that hold specific knowledge about, or have experienced with, a certain phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The researcher also acknowledges that convenient sampling is being employed due to the availability and willingness of the five schools and their tenured teachers to participate (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). In addition to the five schools being studied, the researcher interviewed the head of the Administrators Union in the school district being studied. The researcher believed that this individual could provide relevant insight into teacher retention and the impact it has on the school community.
It is important to note that, when using purposive sampling schemes, initially, the researcher establishes parameters or boundaries to delimit the specific cases or information characteristics that will be assessed or observed and to identify what the researcher will examine in terms of environmental artifacts or individual characteristics (Collins, 2012). The selection criteria parameters for this study were that the schools selected are under the Seaside Board of Education collective bargaining agreement, Title 1 schools, and have shown the lowest rate of teacher turnover in the last three school years.

Two of the identified schools are district magnet schools. Magnet schools are a public schools offering special instruction and programs not available elsewhere, designed to attract a more diverse student body from throughout a school district. The two magnet schools in this study draw from the same population of students as the other selected schools. All five schools are identified as Title 1 schools. Title 1 schools are part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and are the foundation of the federal commitment to closing the achievement gap between low-income and other students. Like all other schools within the district, 100% of the students at both magnet schools, as well as the three other identified schools, receive free breakfast and lunch each day.

Data collection, other than the secondary source public record data used for purposeful, extreme sampling, took place between February and October 2017. The findings and implications will be presented in November 2017.

**Data collection instrument.** Having completed the identification of the sampling population, the researcher surveyed the teachers using Rhodes, Nevill and Allans' (2004) Forty Facets for Job Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction survey (Appendix D). This instrument was selected because it has been used in Rhodes et al. (2004) study of Valuing and Supporting
Teachers. The study conducted investigated teacher satisfaction, dissatisfaction, morale and retention. The original study sought to allow teachers to disaggregate facets of their job experiences into varying categories of deep satisfaction and deep dissatisfaction. The study took place in the West Midlands region in the United Kingdom. The region is 4% below the national average of adults who have a National Vocational Qualification (a Higher Education certification). The borough has a falling population, is characterized as “the most deprived borough in the West Midlands and there are no significant areas of affluence within its boundaries” (Rhodes et al., 2004, p. 69). The population is described as diverse, and educational standards are beneath the national and surrounding neighboring averages in all key areas.

The survey instrument was developed through a focus group phase in their study. Seven teachers participated in the initial focus group (four elementary level and three high school level teachers in varying years in their careers). During the focus group discussions, forty possible facets regarding teacher job satisfaction or dissatisfaction emerged. The researchers found that these facets encompassed "organizational values, organizational climate, managerial processes, teaching and learning and self-realization" (Rhodes et al., 2004, p. 69). The research team validated the identified facets during the survey phase of their study, using the Wilcoxon Sign Rank Test. Because Rhodes et al. (2004) validated their survey instrument before administering it, it allowed this researcher to administer the survey without pre piloting the instrument.

The researcher attempted to gain a clear understanding of teacher satisfaction, dissatisfaction, morale and retention decisions in the five schools described earlier. In order to ensure credibility in this study, all surveys were administered digitally by a paid, third party service. The initial Job Satisfaction survey was sent to all teachers in the five schools via their school email addresses on Monday, April 17, 2017 and was available until Friday, April 28,
2017. Results were organized by the third party survey provider. The researcher did not know which participants responded to the Job Satisfaction survey, unless they selected to participate in follow up questions for the study. The researcher added one option to the survey, asking if the participant would like to participate in a follow up focus group or individual interview.

**Data Analysis**

 Upon completion of the survey, the researcher analyzed the results, looking for trends in the data, specific answers that stand out across the board of participants (Appendix E). As a sequential case study, the researcher developed semi-structured interview questions during the data analysis section of the study. These semi-structured interview questions delve deeper into the survey responses in order to gain a clear understanding of the respondents' perspectives.

 Five different focus groups (one per school) were available to the teachers, during the month of August 2017 to afford the opportunity to articulate their experiences and opinions about teacher career longevity in their schools. Teachers who agreed to participate in subsequent data collection, upon completion of the survey they provided the researcher with a contact email address. The researcher contacted each of the participants via email to invite them to join a focus group. There was no timely response to the focus group requests. In order to continue data collection, the researcher again sought out individual participants who had agreed to continue on in the study. Individual emails were sent to each participant to solicit their thoughts and opinions on teacher retention in the Seaside Public Schools in writing, rather than in a recorded focus group.

 Upon response to the individual emails, participants were assigned pseudonyms (letters) to ensure their confidentiality. Follow up emails were sent to invite participants to take part in
private interviews but, again, no one was able to meet in person, due to time restrictions with the beginning of the school year. In order to extract the valuable information, the researcher conducted the interviews via email. Each participant provided a private (non-Board of Education) email address. Pseudonyms (letters) were assigned to each email address. Email interviews were conducted during August, 2017. Each participant received the same seven interview questions (Appendix F) and asked to share their perspective on the survey results and teacher retention.

For the email interview section of the study, the researcher coded all transcripts for themes. Coding is used in qualitative research to organize themes or perspectives (Creswell, 2009). Using Creswell’s (2009) approach to coding, the researcher organized the coded themes as follows:

1. Codes that were expected, based on past literature and common sense;
2. Codes that were unexpected, that were not anticipated by the researcher;
3. Codes that are unusual, that are “of conceptual interest to the reader” (p. 187); and
4. Codes that address the overall theoretical perspective of the study.

The researcher analyzed the transcripts of the emails in August and September 2017. The codes that the researcher discovered during the transcript analysis were sent back to the focus participants and member checked for accuracy (Appendix G). Upon further analysis and additional coding, the research separated codes into themes that align with Maslow’s Hierarchy of Need (Appendix H).

The researcher member checked (Bryman, 1988; Guba & Lincoln 1989) the email interview transcripts and themes, for respondent validation as Maxwell (2012) refers to it, to
ensure accuracy. The study was completed as a case study, which will be shared with the Recruitment, Hiring and Retention Task Force for the Seaside Public Schools, as well as the Superintendent of Schools and the head of the Human Resources Department.

**Validity and Reliability**

Validity and reliability were addressed during the data collection phase of the study. In order to ensure that the researcher is “establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied” (Yin, 2003) the following steps were taken:

1. Select the specific types of reasons being identified by the participants and ensure that they relate back to the original objectives of the study.
2. Demonstrate that these specific reasons are measured and do indeed reflect the reasons that have been identified by the participants.

Yin (2003) also explains that the research must use multiple sources of evidence, which the researcher ensured by triangulating the data collected, using survey results, interview and focus group transcripts and district turnover data. All data collected was stored according to Internal Review Board policies. All analyzed data had been member checked during the course of the study, which adds to the validity needed to solidify the findings of this study. This step of the research process is crucial, to ensure that the researcher did not, unknowingly or knowingly, introduce bias into the study. Mason (2002) warns of the risk for qualitative researchers to press their personal views and interests into their research study, leading to the researcher’s voice influencing that of the participants. The researcher in this study used triangulation in order to ensure the validity of the data. Torrance (2012) breaks down triangulation as stemming from researchers attempting to validate their findings by generating and comparing different data sets
and various respondents’ perspectives on the researched topic, ensuring the researchers findings.

In order to ensure the reliability of this research, the researcher has taken numerous measures to ensure that everything was explicitly clear and has explained every procedure undertaken in the study. Yin (2003) explains that the aim of reliability is to minimize the errors and biases in a research study. Joppe (2000) explains reliability as the length to which the results of the data collected is consistent over time and is a precise representation of the entire population being studied. He goes on to explain that if the results of the study can be duplicated under a comparable methodology, then the research instrument is deemed to be reliable. In order to ensure reliability in this study the researcher is using a pre-piloted, validated survey instruments. All codes and themes were sent back to participants to member check for accuracy. Email interviews were coded by the researcher and once again shared with participants to ensure the accuracy of the themes that the researcher found emerged from the data.

**Limitations**

This case study is limited in that it is a small deviant sampling of the population within the Seaside Public Schools. The conclusions from this study are not transferable or generalizable due to the size of the sample population and the convenient sampling. While some of the elements may be helpful to other urban school districts, they will not be exact in that the populations will vary. This study also relied primarily on survey data from busy, hard-working teachers. The survey administered was selected as a data collection instrument due to the efficiency of the tool, but the researcher acknowledges that she had a 29% response rate from all the tenured teachers in the identified schools. The researcher actively encouraged participants by recruiting professional colleagues to remind each other to complete the digital surveys, as well as
emailed reminders. There was no financial incentive offered to participants. Participation was purely optional and considered a professional courtesy.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

In order to systematize the findings in this study, the researcher has organized them according to the data collection method, followed by a comparison of the findings collected from this sample to the findings discussed in the Rhodes et al. (2004) original study, which employed the survey instrument used in this study.

Data Collection Findings

Survey Data

The researcher's goal in this study was to understand why teachers stay in urban school districts when so many elected to leave. The survey phase of data collection for this research study took place during the Spring semester of 2017. The survey instrument (Forty Facets for Job Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction survey) administered was developed by Rhodes et al. (2004) (Appendix D). The researcher created a digital version of the original survey in order to allow for electronic distribution. The digital survey was distributed in May 2017. The principals of each of the five selected schools sent the survey via email to their staff. There are 193 certified staff (CT Department of Education) in the five schools; 64 teachers responded to the survey (33% response rate). As eight non-tenured teachers also filled out the survey, the researcher removed their data set as the study participants must specifically be tenured in the district, per the study guidelines. Therefore, 56 teachers (29%) responded to the survey. While the response rate was lower than the researcher anticipated, the information collected was valuable. In the Rhodes et al. (2004) study, there was a sample population of 368 teachers. However, unlike the current study, their study took place in an entire school district, and was not limited to schools with the lowest rates
of teacher turnover.

Upon completion of the survey data collection, full survey results (Appendix E) were analyzed and organized initially by their satisfaction or dissatisfaction scores. The researcher divided the results into negative and positive branches.

**Factors which Negatively Impact Urban Teacher Retention**

Many of the survey responses are similar to the results in the original Rhodes et al. (2004) study. Teacher Salary was clearly a hallmark of displeasure, as seen in Figure 4.1. The results show that 73.21% percent of the teachers surveyed were deeply dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the salary they receive.

![Salary](image)

*Figure 4.1. Current study response to prompt “Salary.”*

Almost three quarters of the responding teachers working in five identified schools are unhappy with the salaries they take home. In the original Rhodes et al. (2004) study, the
researchers asked participants to rank the facets that would most likely lead to retention in the next five years, and those that would lead to leaving the profession in the next five years. The number one factor that would lead to teacher retention was higher pay, with 113 participants (31%) ranking it as their top consideration, aligning with the findings of the current study.

Similar to the current study, in the Rhodes et al. (2004) study, 67% of participants were deeply dissatisfied with the salary they receive as shown in Figure 4.2.

![Salary](image)

*Figure 4.2. Rhodes et al. (2004) study response to prompt “Salary”.*

During the interview phase of the study, numerous participants discussed their salaries using words, like "underpaid" or "unfairly paid" when describing their income.

Additionally, teachers in the current study, reported that they were despondent about class size. When asked to respond to the prompt “The size of the classes ensures that all teachers can teach effectively,” 48.21% of teachers were dissatisfied and 21.43% were deeply dissatisfied, as seen in Figure 4.3.
Combined, 69.64% of teachers are dissatisfied or deeply dissatisfied with class size; however, 30.36% are either neutral, satisfied or deeply satisfied in this regard. In the Rhodes et al. (2004) study, smaller class sizes ranked tenth on the list of factors that would lead to retention and larger class sizes was fifteenth on the list of reasons teachers would leave in the next five years. Figure 4.4 illustrates the survey response in the original Rhodes et al. (2004) study. During the interviews, teachers discussed their inability to meet their student's individual needs, due to the number of students in their class.
Teachers in the current study responded negatively to the prompt “The work environment is in good physical condition,” 69.64% of teachers reported that they were deeply dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the physical condition of their work environment. This factor was not in the top 20 of either factors most likely to retain, or factors most likely to lead to leaving, in the Rhodes et al. (2004) study, but was clearly a significant factor in the current study, with more than two thirds of teachers reporting negatively about their physical work environment. This factor emerged intensely in the interviews, with teachers sharing information about the condition of the physical environment in which they teach. Air quality, cleanliness and temperature were discussed as serious issues.
The work environment is in good physical condition

Figure 4.5. Response to prompt, “The work environment is in good physical condition”.

Factors which Positively Impact Urban Teacher Retention

Overall the answers received in the current study were more positive than the Rhodes et al. (2004) one, with participants responding satisfied or deeply satisfied more frequently than the dissatisfied options. Teachers responded positively to the friendliness of other staff, classrooms present an atmosphere conducive to learning, working with others to achieve shared goals, there is a climate of achievement within the school, the school values contributions made by its members, the school works hard to make learning more effective, as well as classrooms stimulated student learning. Friendliness of other staff showed an 85.96% satisfied or deeply satisfied response, as seen in Figure 4.6:
The original, Rhodes et al. (2004) study shows similar results to the current study, as shown in Figure 4.7. Both studies display similar results regarding the friendliness of other staff. These figures show that the teachers in schools value the relationships with their colleagues and peers. Participants shared the importance of the co-worker relationships during the interview phase of the study.
Teachers shared that they felt that their classrooms presented in environment conducive to learning, as shown in Figure 4.8:

*Figure 4.7. Original study response to prompt, "Friendliness of other staff".*

*Figure 4.8. Response to prompt, “Classrooms present an atmosphere conducive to learning”.*
The highest positive response was to the prompt “working with others to achieve shared goals” as shown in Figure 4.9 with 66.67% of respondents feeling satisfied with working with others to achieve a shared goal and an additional 9.26% selecting deeply satisfied with this prompt.

*Figure 4.9. Response to prompt “Working with others to achieve shared goal”*

The top five factors Rhodes et al. (2004) found that would likely lead to teacher retention are found in Table 4.1:
Table 4.1. Developed from Rhodes et al. (2004, p.74) Table 3 Rank order factors most likely to lead to retention in the teaching profession in the next five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Five Factors Most Likely to Lead to Retention:</th>
<th>Number of Sample Population (368)</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Pay</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>30.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling Valued by Stakeholders in Education</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>19.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to Help Children</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>19.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Administration</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>17.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Non-Contact Time for Planning and Preparation</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>16.03%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The top five factors that would likely lead to leaving the teaching profession in the next five years are found in Table 4.2:

Table 4.2: Developed from Rhodes et al. (2004, p.75) Table 4 Rank order factors most likely to lead to leaving the teaching profession in the next five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Five Factors Most Likely to Lead to Leaving:</th>
<th>Number of Sample Population (368)</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Administration</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>26.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Overall Work Load</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>23.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Pupil Discipline and Behavior Issues</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>22.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worsening Balance Between Work and Home Life</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>20.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant Change and Initiative Overload</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>14.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, administration is listed as a factor to stay and leave in the Rhodes et al. (2004) research. The factor “Increase in Administration” was ranked number one by 96 participants (26.08%) as the top point that would likely lead to leaving; 43.86% of the population in the current study reported being dissatisfied/deeply dissatisfied with the portion of time spent on administration, time no spent with students. Another factor with which 57.14% of current study participants were dissatisfied/deeply dissatisfied was Pupil Behavior Issues, which 83 (22.55%) of the participants in the Rhodes et al. (2004) study ranked as reasons likely to lead to
leaving.

As indicated in the preceding paragraphs, comparing the two studies (Rhodes, et al. (2004) and the current study) has shown some overlap in findings in the survey results. The interview portion of the study showed many more commonalities in the findings in both studies.

**Interview Data**

Using the survey results, the researcher developed interview questions (Appendix F) for the participants who agreed to partake in a follow up interview. The interview questions were simple, open-ended questions to allow the participants to articulate their opinions. Seven participants agreed to participate in follow up questions from the survey, but when asked to set up a meeting were hesitant, due to time restraints. In order to continue the study, the researcher solicited the participants' viewpoints via email, sending each participant an individual email with the interview questions. The researcher used non-Board of Education email addresses for this portion of the study. Each email response was read and coded for themes (Appendix G). The codes were logged in a code book, and themes emerged when read by the researcher. All codes and themes were returned to interviewees to member check (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) to ensure that the researcher is accurately expressing the views of the participants (Appendix H).

**Code Development**

In order to gain a clear understanding of what the interview participants were sharing, the researcher created a code log. The codes used were letters that identified the various ideas being shared. Each code was counted and tracked for frequency in order to ensure that the researcher had concrete evidence of the themes emerging from the interview data. As the codes were tracked the researcher organized them in rank order by frequency of use. (See Table 4.3)
Table 4.3. Coded Themes

Coded themes developed from the interview phase of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME:</th>
<th>SALARY:</th>
<th>CLASS SIZE:</th>
<th>PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT:</th>
<th>WHY YOU STAY:</th>
<th>WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU LEAVE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>Unexpected</td>
<td>Expected/Overall Theory</td>
<td>Expected/Unexpected/Unusual/Overall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXAMPLES**

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salary issues - surrounding towns making more</strong></td>
<td>Salary issues surrounding towns making more</td>
<td>Detriment to student progress</td>
<td>Filthy and neglected buildings as we try to teach and learn in them</td>
<td>Affection for the kid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>DSP</td>
<td>CS</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unfair/dissatisfied</strong></td>
<td>Can’t differentiate and meet the needs of each student</td>
<td>Poor ventilation in schools (Air Quality)</td>
<td>Making a difference/giving back to community</td>
<td>Conditions so bad that unable to teach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UD</td>
<td>MN</td>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>MD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Underpaid/not compensated enough</strong></td>
<td>Could be so much more effective with lower class sizes.</td>
<td>Classroom temperature</td>
<td>Co-workers are a positive influence &quot;devotion and support for children is immeasurable&quot;</td>
<td>Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>CO-W</td>
<td>SI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OM</td>
<td>Have to spend some of your income on school supplies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Better able to service our students and meet their individual needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Poor physical environment is due to budgetary issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>Commitment to students / &quot;It's all about the kids&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Location closer to home/commute</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>&quot;Livable salary&quot; - 13 yrs to reach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>Student appreciation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparable job with a classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salary &quot;freezes&quot; in contract</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colleagues a source of support and inspiration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling unappreciated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unable to find job elsewhere</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transferring to uncomfortable teaching assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not enough time with family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4. Definition of codes

Each code was tracked and broken down by frequency of use. Table 4.4 shows the number of times each theme was articulated in interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>Salary Issue</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UD</td>
<td>Unfairly Paid/Dissatisfied</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>Under Paid</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OM</td>
<td>Own Money</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>Livable Salary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Class Size</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSP</td>
<td>Detriment to Student Progress</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN</td>
<td>Meet Needs</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ET</td>
<td>Effectively Teach</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>More Effective</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Dirty/Filthy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>Air Quality/Ventilation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>Physical Environment</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>Make a Difference</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-W</td>
<td>Co-Workers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Student Appreciation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Commute</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>Under Staffed</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR</td>
<td>Limited Resources</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG</td>
<td>Training Ground</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview Findings

The seven interviewees fell within a range of seven to fifteen years of experience teaching in the Seaside Public Schools, and they ranged in age from 30 to 58 years old. All email interview participants were Caucasian or Hispanic females.

When asked to describe their thoughts and feelings regarding the salaries that they earn, six out of the seven participants felt that they were underpaid for the job they do. The one participant (A) who did not feel that she was underpaid, discussed not making a livable wage until her 13th year of teaching, where she can now live on her salary after numerous step increases (salary raises), due to the union contract. She did, however, feel that “teachers should earn more money for the amount of time put in after school hours, the additional money we spend on supplies, and the extremely challenging nature of the profession.” She went on to explain that she was “satisfied and appreciative of the salary I currently earn.”

Participant B explained “I am dissatisfied, due to the fact that other teachers in surrounding districts make a lot more than we do for doing the same job. Some towns make $10,000 more annually. Working in Seaside is extremely stressful and we are not compensated enough.” Participant C revealed that she was not happy that “we haven’t had much of a raise in 6 years.” One clear theme that came through when discussing salaries is that all the teachers spend some of their salary on supplies and resources to teach their students. The results of the Rhodes et al. (2004, p.74) study listed Higher Salary as the number one ranked factor the would impact teacher retention, 113 (30.70%) of participants assigned Higher Pay the number one position when asked to rank the factors most likely to lead to retention in the teaching profession in the next five years.
The next key theme that emerged in the survey was Class Size. As noted in Figure 4.3, 69.64% of the teachers reported feeling dissatisfied or deeply dissatisfied with class size. When asked to share their thoughts on class size, all eight participants discussed the importance of class size in order to effectively teach. Participant E described her experience with class size, stating “as a special education teacher, I work with students who are self-contained, and have various needs, academically and emotionally, I have found that the class sizes are a detriment to my students’ progress.” She went on to explain “having large classes size makes it almost impossible to reach every student on the level they deserve and require to make adequate progress.” Participant D believes “we could be so much more effective as teachers, if our class sizes were smaller. It isn’t fair at all.” She went on to reveal that she thinks that class size, along with some of the other problems in Seaside, “stem from the fact that the amount of active parents is small” and that if “more parents made noise, maybe something would change.” The most common theme that emerged about class size was that the large number of students these teachers are expected to teach at one time inhibits their ability to help students reach their potential.

When asked to respond to the prompt “Work environment is in good physical condition”, only 14.29% of respondents were satisfied and none reported being deeply satisfied in this category. Email interview participants clearly agreed with the low results, as a common theme was “filthy and neglected” when describing their physical work space. Participants were asked to expand on this and share how they feel about the physical environment in which they work. Participant F specifically explained “I worked in classrooms that were not cleaned properly… some classrooms have leaking roofs or lack proper ventilation.” Participant D shared some serious health concerns, that there is dust and mold in her building. Three interviewees specifically mentioned air and ventilation in the spaces that they work. According to Participant
A, a group of teachers at her school has gone as far as filing a grievance against the district because the “main air supply and control units need to be replaced.” She explained that for “the past few years students had to wear coats in some classrooms, then go to a classroom that is 80 degrees and has no windows.” Each interviewee had specific problems to share regarding the physical environment in which they teach. Participant C articulated “the physical environment that I work in, is less than acceptable. Wall paint is coming off, floors and stairs are unsafe, the lack of air circulation is poor, and very few updates have been made to our school to meet the needs of an ever-changing technologically based world. Playgrounds are unkempt, bathrooms are filthy, and the list goes on truthfully.” Many of the interviewees discussed the fact that they understood that the physical environment in which they teach, is the way it is because the district is in such dire financial need. Physical environment did not appear in any of the responses in the Rhodes et al. (2004) study, leading one to believe that this may only be a locational issue in the district of the current study.

Desire to Help Children ranked in the top five factors that would likely lead to retention in the Rhodes et al. (2004) research:
Table 4.5: Extract from Table 2: Developed from Rhodes et al. (2004, p. 74) Table 3 Rank order factors most likely to lead to retention in the teaching profession in the next five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Five Factors Most Likely to Lead to Retention:</th>
<th>Number of Sample Population (368)</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Pay</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>30.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling Valued by Stakeholders in Education</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>19.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to Help Children</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>19.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Administration</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>17.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Non-Contact Time for Planning and Preparation</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>16.03%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The response among current participants was much higher. Three of the seven interviewees (42.85%) discussed their affection and desire to help “the kids”. When asked to discuss the positive responses to the survey questions, interviewees shared a range of reasons why they stay in the Seaside Public Schools. Participants A, E and F all shared their affection for their students. “Working with ESL students (K-6) provides me with more personal and professional satisfaction than working in suburban school districts. I feel I can make more of a difference working in the Seaside Public Schools than in any other school district.” Another interviewee (Participant E) reported, “As someone who grew up in Seaside, it was important for me to give back to the community. I feel that helping the students of Seaside is something that is very important to me. The children of Seaside require skilled, professional, creative, and understanding staff who will work with them and support them with gusto and enthusiasm. I stay in this district because I feel it is where the most need is and I want to give all that I can to help this very special population.”

Participant A talked about the appreciation she feels from the students. She mentioned the teacher friends she has made in district, but says “it’s all about the kids.” Participant B was somewhat torn in her response. She discussed the desire to move to a different district, that either pays more or is closer to her home, but also explained “part of me feels like working in
Seaside...I make more of a difference that I would at a suburban school... but it certainly takes a toll.” Participant C described her coworkers as having a positive influence on her. “It is coworkers like those at ________ and __________ that have made trying times easier to get through. Their devotion and support for children is immeasurable and their support for teachers is bar none, the best. The feeling of knowing someone will help you, guide you, intervene when a student has become too unruly and simply want a friendship that is meaningful, makes going to work more of a joy than an unpleasant experience.”

The final interview question yielded interesting responses. When asked, “What do you think would make you leave the Seaside Public Schools?” the participants responded as follows:

A: “The only thing that would cause me to leave Seaside is if there were no more funding and our pay were cut or if conditions got so bad that I could not effectively teach.”

B: “I would leave if I was offered a job in the town I now live - Oxford, or a town closer that paid more and had a student population that was easier to deal with.” This connects with the Rhodes et al. (2004) research results about factors likely to make one leave, in that the teachers in the previous study discussed two of the three concerns this participant shared.

Table 4.6: Extract from Table 2: Developed from Rhodes et al. (2004, p.75) Table 4 Rank order factors most likely to lead to leaving the teaching profession in the next five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Five Factors Most Likely to Lead to Leaving:</th>
<th>Number of Sample Population (368)</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Administration</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>26.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Overall Work Load</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>23.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Pupil Discipline and Behavior Issues</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>22.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worsening Balance Between Work and Home Life</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>20.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant Change and Initiative Overload</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>14.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant B struggles with the work/home life balance due to the distance of her commute, as well as the struggle of teaching urban children which, one can infer, are children with disciplinary problems. Participant C clearly explains why the work/home balance is such a struggle. “I currently put in for a leave of absence this year. I had a baby 10 months ago and almost lost her the second day she was born. My world changed! I want to be with my children and right now staying home with them is what I need to do as a mom. I have pondered leaving before...reason being commute, student challenges in urban schools and not enough time with my own family.”

D: “If I was offered a comparable job with a classroom (I am on a cart), I would leave in a minute. I am hoping I can hold out until retirement in this moldy, cramped atmosphere, pushing a cart around until I’m sixty-something.”

E: “As I said earlier, I would probably only leave Seaside Public Schools if I need to provide for a family on just my salary, since I don’t make enough money to support myself and others. Until I begin a family or am put in a situation in which I need more money to support a family I plan to stay in Seaside.”

F: “If they transfer me to teach ESL middle or high school students, I will seriously consider leaving the district. If I get transferred to work with an administrator that does not appreciate my instructional contribution to the team, does not support me and does not share my educational values, will be another reason to leave the district. Any change that departs from what has been a wonderful experience in these past three years will be a good reason to leave the district in addition to not getting a fair salary that matches my experience, responsibility or commitment to my students.”
Upon completion of the teacher interviews, the researcher felt it imperative to delve deeper into understanding the significance of teacher turnover and retention. In an attempt to gain further clarification of the issue, the researcher sought out and interviewed the head of the Administrators Union in the Board of Education. This individual is currently a principal of a school and has been in his role as union president for two years. His views on teacher retention provided a new perspective to this study, and added an additional data set to assist in triangulation, thus ensuring the validity of this study’s findings. Dr. A (assigned pseudonym) was asked to comment on the challenges that administrators/principals in Seaside Public Schools face, regarding teacher retention (Appendix J). He articulated five specific challenges that came to mind:

1. Surrounding communities offer 10K+ increase in salary
2. Limited resources for the classroom
3. SPS being a training ground for new teachers via Teach for America and Suburbs
4. Challenging working environment in some schools
5. Stipend for extra-curricular activities to supplement income and bond with students/school.

He went on to explain, “Teachers who remain in Seaside are a special group of individuals. The challenges are many, and they face it each year with the hope that kids will be successful from their efforts.” The list provided is interesting in that three of the five challenges listed by Dr. A were also significant in the teachers’ responses. Teachers expressed that salary, limited resources, and work environment were challenges that they faced. Describing Seaside as a training ground for teachers ties in with prior research regarding teachers in urban districts leaving in higher rates than their suburban counterparts.
Dr. A. discussed a valuable point that did not emerge in the teacher interviews and survey responses, but has been discussed in prior research. He explained the impact of having new teachers in his school. “At my school, certified teachers do not come with the high level of technical skills or theme delivers. [Researcher note: Magnet schools have an assigned specific theme that drives their school, instruction and curriculum.] As a result, professional development is a cost that is lost regularly via attrition and having to start over every two to three years in varied skilled areas.” He continued to emphasize, “Students are impacted as they are, at times, learning with the teacher who may not be able to offer high levels of skilled guidance, when complex challenges come in this niche area they are teaching.”

When asked to weigh in on what he thought could be done to help keep teachers in our schools, he responded with a holistic viewpoint. Dr. A. suggested “consider reducing/eliminating unnecessary expenses” emphasizing that there are unnecessary expenses that currently exist in the district. He went on to explain that each teacher should be provided with a welcome package of basic supplies each year to be ready for their classrooms. He also suggested that the district should “leverage grant opportunities which give schools the opportunity to be creative in their own ways to sustain growth.”

Dr. A. expressed that he felt that “schools are expected to be mirror images of each other from a systems view and that traditional mindset hold back progress for those who may have the will to be cage busters, creating opportunities that otherwise would not be realized.” He acknowledged that a single solution outlook for all is “bleak at best,” but explained “some teachers do not leave… finding teachers with the matched philosophy in education could be a critical difference if the school and district hold firm to progressive philosophy that serves the current needs of society.”
Summary

Upon the completion of the survey and interview portions of this research study, there are clearly numerous overlapping findings between the two studies. The researcher emphasizes that the two studies were conducted 14 years apart and on different continents, yet yielded comparable results. The distinct connection in the desire to earn a higher salary was observed in both studies as well as the passion to help children. In summation, yes, the results of the Job Satisfaction Survey by Rhodes et al. (2004), in both populations, yielded similar findings.

The perceptions held by tenured teachers and a school principal, about teacher retention in their schools, can be observed as a hierarchy of needs, based on Maslow’s theory (1943). The basic needs of teachers are not being met, the deficits of a financially deprived school district impact teacher retention, yet altruism, positive colleagues, and the desire to help children outweigh the basic needs for some teachers, elevating them up the Hierarchy pyramid into tenured teaching positions in the Seaside Public Schools.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

The struggle of educating students is ongoing. Retaining quality teachers is proving to be a challenge in many school districts around the globe. According to the UN News Service/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX there is a “projected worldwide shortage of 18 million teachers over the next decade” (2006). Research has shown that teacher effectiveness has the ultimate influence on the academic development of students (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Wright et al., 1997). Urban school districts across America battle teacher attrition. Boyd et al. (2005) have found that teachers in schools with low-performing minority students leave the districts when given the chance, not only costing the district money, but leaving the students with a revolving door of beginner teachers.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate how urban school districts can address this problem. The researcher researched this problem by examining the success stories in the district, exploring why some teachers stay.

Summary of Findings

The summation of this study has proven very meaningful. The researcher has a clear understanding of the character traits that participants exhibited and identified during the course of the study. The individuals who elected to participate in the study exhibit a high level of altruistic behaviors, the desire to help others, above ones own needs, and put the good of the children ahead of the negative factors associated with teaching in an urban school district.
The results of the current study are similar to the original study even though they were conducted in different decades and in different countries. The researcher concludes that there were enough overlapping factors in the two research studies to confirm research question one, that there were similar results from the current sample and the original study to demonstrate similarities between the respective studies.

Additionally, the researcher found that in spite of poor working conditions, low salaries and large class sizes, teachers in the selected school district are committed to helping the students. They feel an altruistic sense of responsibility towards the students and the community, and are able to face the daily obstacles with support from their colleagues. These findings are important. District and school leaders need to understand the motivation that keeps teachers in their schools and classrooms. If principals, human resource personnel and interview committees can tailor interview questions to solicit responses that reveal altruistic characteristics, the impact on teacher retention could potentially become tangible.

**Interpretation of Findings**

While this urban school district faces numerous challenges, there are teachers in schools that are highly altruistically committed to the students in this community. They aspire to make a difference in the lives of their students.

The current study found that the friendliness of the staff in a school plays a significant part in teacher retention, confirming the research on climate discussed by Ingersoll & Strong (2011); Klassen (2010); and Capara et al. (2003) in Chapter II. Creating a climate where teachers are working towards a shared goal, in classrooms that have strong working environments, are key components as to why some teachers stay. These findings are consistent
with the research surrounding school culture and climate. Researchers Hoy and Miskel (2008), Litwin and Stringer (1968), Tagiuri (1968), Pogodzinski et al. (2012) and Marzano et al. (2005) all discussed the significance of school culture and climate when it comes to teacher retention. Peterson and Deal (2002) specifically connected school culture to people's commitment to a school, how hard they work, their level of motivation and their level of productivity. The current findings align with the research concluding that connections among staff, students and the school as a whole, has a significant impact on teacher retention and attrition.

Additionally, the present study confirms the research regarding poor pay/compensation that researchers Darling-Hammond (2005), Ingersoll (2001), and Strong (2005) discussed, where they clarified some of the major reasons teachers leave their positions. They identified: relocation or migration; career change; job change or relocation of spouse; family member or other; lifestyle change; being counseled out of the profession, poor pay and benefits; inadequate resources; high stress and lack of support; difficult working conditions and “bashing” of the teaching profession; many of which were noted in the results of this study. Palardy (2008) specifically discussed the fact that teachers who educate poor students, are some of the lowest paid teachers in the profession. In his study, he found a causal relationship between salary, teacher quality, and learning. The current study showed that teachers are frustrated with their salaries and how much of their own money they have to spend on adequately supplying their classrooms. Participants also discussed the difficult working conditions, specifically identifying the physical disrepair of their working space.

Whitehead (2009) and Kozol (2001) explained the difficulty of teaching in poorly maintained, run down facilities. The current study findings match those described in Chapter II, where Whitehead (2009) explicitly discussed physical environment as being a factor leading to
teacher attrition. The teachers in this study unequivocally reported that the physical work environment is a major concern and that their buildings and classrooms require a substantial amount of work to repair the current conditions in which they are expected to teach.

The researcher dissected the coded themes from the teachers and the principal interviewee, and arranged them into the various levels of need, as described by Maslow (1943).

*Figure 5.1. Coded themes from interviews broken down by levels of need as described by Maslow (1943).*
These themes, assembled into the pyramid, provide a visual breakdown of the findings in this study. While the lowest level of need (Physiological) holds highly discussed frustrations by teachers, there is little to no control a teacher has over the physical/structural environment in which they teach. As this is an issue that can only be addressed by central office and state employees, it is beyond the scope of control of teachers and, to an extent, the building principals. Interestingly, each participant shared his/her disdain for the physical environment, yet the teachers all look past it and continue to teach in their respective schools.

The environmental factors discovered in this study relate back to motivation theory, one of the researcher’s driving theories. As discussed in Chapter II, Herzberg (1966) divided motivation into two levels, hygiene and motivation. He explained that hygiene factors (pay, work conditions, relationships with colleagues, competence of superiors and company policy) may not ensure worker motivation. The current research findings challenge this idea, in that they clearly separate relationships with colleagues from the hygiene category, and are shown to be a motivational factor in teacher retention decisions.

The second level from the bottom, Safety, also falls beyond the control of the teachers and principals in schools. Salaries and job security are part of a negotiated contract in the Seaside Public Schools and would also be considered "hygiene" by Herzberg (1966) and, therefore, in his theory, are not considered a true motivator. The state and city budgets determine the range of salaries affordable to the district and, therefore, are entirely out of the hands of the teachers and principals.

The Social Belonging level on the Hierarchy of Needs can be split into two in this study. One theme, “coworkers are a positive influence,” is a school based culture that can be
manipulated and developed, whereas “time with family” is difficult to control, due to contracted hours. The desire for a sense of belonging can be filled when coworkers support one another and rely on each other.

The next layer above, Self Esteem, shows a positive theme from the teachers in the five schools but is still part of the psychological needs level in Maslow’s (1943) theory, and would also be considered "hygiene level" by Herzberg (1966). During the interview phase of the study, numerous interviewees discussed the importance of their colleagues. Participant C explained "The feeling of knowing someone will help you, guide you, intervene when a student has become too unruly and simply want a friendship that is meaningful, makes going to work more of a joy than an unpleasant experience." This level is significant, in that participants discussed that they felt valued, and that they were making a difference in the schools where they teach, which can be identified as self-respect.

Finally, the apex of the pyramid, described as Self-Actualization, is observed, and emerges in the form of altruism. Altruism, a term used by French Philosopher Comte (1853) is described as the “concept of making a decision in which the decision maker voluntarily gives up something in order to increase the welfare of another person” (Frohlich & Oppenheimer, 1984, p. 5). The researcher believes that the participants have reached Self-Actualization, and that they are beyond the psychological/hygiene need for esteem; they have reached the self-fulfillment phase of the Hierarchy of Needs. Furthermore, the researcher concludes that if an individual can ignore the lower level psychological or hygiene needs in her/his work environment, then s/he can cultivate an ability to reach a level of motivation that meets her/his higher level needs. In simple thought, the higher level tiers (reasons to stay) outweigh the lower lever tiers (reasons to leave).
The researcher explains that an individual can reach the highest tiers of Maslow’s (1954) Hierarchy of Needs in his/her work environment and that state of being can “outweigh” the lower level needs.

Subsequently the researcher deduces an additional theory has emerged in the study. Erikson’s (1950) theory of Generativity has surfaced as a result of the researcher’s interpretation of the data. Generativity discusses the concern for the next generation, showing interest and care for children. “Generativity, then is primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation” (Erikson, 1950, p. 267). Erikson (1963) later defines generativity as an adult’s concern with guiding, nurturing, and establishing the next generation. The teachers in this study demonstrated the desire to help children, to make a difference and give back to the community.

The connection between generativity and self-actualization has been discussed by Schotts...
(1992) who describes self-actualizing people as being similar to those who have a sense of generativity. The teachers in this study have demonstrated altruistic tendencies that allow them to guide, nurture and help establish the next generation.

The desire to help others (specifically children) and work with like-minded individuals appears to allow some teachers to dismiss the negative work conditions, low salaries and various other challenges discussed, and reach a level of Self-Actualization that allows them to remain motivated and employed in urban school classrooms.

Furthermore, the evolutionary biology based concept of “reciprocal altruism” develops as an important locus in this study. When teachers demonstrate altruistic behaviors, they do so because they increase the likelihood of remuneration by their students in the future - not monetarily, but in the form of repayment to society. If students are well educated, then the potential impact that they can have on society is limitless, whereas if they are poorly educated the ramifications for the future have the potential to be increasingly negative. Reciprocal Altruism was first theorized by Robert Trivers, an American, evolutionary biologist. Trivers (1971) explained:

Reciprocal altruism can also be viewed as a symbiosis, each partner helping the other while he helps himself. The symbiosis has a time lag, however; one partner helps the other and must then wait a period of time before he is helped in turn. The return benefit may come directly, as in human foodsharing, the partner directly returning the benefit after a time lag. Or the return may come indirectly, as in warning calls in birds where the initial help to other birds (the warning call) sets up a casual chain through the ecological system (the predator fails to learn useful information) which redounds after a time lag to the benefit of the caller. The time lag is the crucial factor, for it means that only under
highly specialized circumstances can the altruist be reasonably guaranteed that the casual chain he initiates with his altruistic act will eventually return to him and confer, directly or indirectly, its benefit (p. 25).

This kind of reciprocal behavior may not be explicitly described, but the mission of the Seaside Public Schools, clearly considers reciprocal altruism as part of their philosophy.

The mission of Seaside Public Schools is to inspire our diverse community to work together in order to serve our students. We will support the development of excellent leadership, and utilize our unique resources to challenge and cultivate well-balanced individuals who seek knowledge and make significant contributions to society throughout their lives. (Seaside Public Schools - District Improvement Plan 2014 -2017)

Graduating students that are ready to make “significant contributions to society” can be assessed as a direct connection to the theory of reciprocal altruism.

Therefore the researcher concludes that teacher retention can be addressed with the understanding that individuals who are hired in this district need to display a level of altruistic compassion for the student, which can be fostered and developed during the teacher’s tenure in the district. They also need to exhibit a propensity for generativity, the desire to nurture and guide the next generation. Creating an interview committee for the school district with specific guiding questions can be an action step in the attempt to address teacher retention. Soliciting and evaluating specific character traits during the interview phase of the hiring process will potentially lead to more informed decision making when hiring new teachers in the Seaside Board of Education.

This process has the potential to impact the need for hiring new staff members over a period of time. The researcher emphasizes that the hiring practices and policies within the school
district would need to be audited and updated in order to target and pursue the desired information from prospective candidates. These steps are ambitious and time consuming initially, but have the potential to only be rigorously needed/used for a limited amount of time. If altruistic character traits and a sense of generativity are identified during initial interviews, in-turn leading to the hiring of the candidate; then, the researcher concludes, that the continuous attrition in the school district ought to diminish as these new hires remain in their teaching positions. Finding ways to derive specific details that allow the interview committee to discern the likelihood of an individual lasting in the profession will require further research.

Limitations of the Study

While this study provided valuable information from the tenured teaching participants, it was conducted with small, extreme sampling population, and had a low response rate from the participants. Even though the study’s findings have been deemed similar to those in the Rhodes et al. (2004) study, these results are not generalizable to a larger population. Additionally, the researcher emphasizes that the lack of in-person interviews was not the intended form of data collection, and believes that the information collected via email still provides a great deal of value to the research. Due to the interviews being conducted through email, the researcher was unable to ask follow up questions and relied on the participants to articulate their thoughts and perspectives.

Recommendations

Future Research

The researcher is aware that this study did not take into account student performance, but
has found it interesting to inspect student data at the five schools involved in the study, and compare it to the other schools in the district. The researcher emphasizes that the table below is simply shared as a point of interest and does not directly connect teacher retention to student achievement.

Table 5.1 Smarter Balanced Assessment 2015-2016 ELA and Math Results from the five participating schools - % of students who met (scored 3) or exceeded (scored 4) the benchmark. Compiled from Connecticut State Department of Education Edsight.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>% Level 3&amp;4 Met or Exceeded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Bear School</td>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fish Hawk School</td>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wolf School</td>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mustang School</td>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cougar School</td>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>65.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Average</td>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>23.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bear School</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fish Hawk School</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wolf School</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mustang School</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>16.8</td>
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<td>The Cougar School</td>
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<tr>
<td>District Average</td>
<td>Math</td>
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</table>

The data presented in Table 5.1 shows that the schools with the least amount of teacher turnover outperformed the district average scores on the Smarter Balanced Assessment in 2015-2016 in all categories, except one school, in math. However, it is important to note, researchers (Boyd et al., 2005; Hanushek, et al., 1999) have found a correlation between teacher turnover and lower student achievement, but there are very few causal studies between student teacher
turnover and student achievement, leading this researcher to consider researching a causal relationship in a future study.

Additionally, research should be conducted to investigate if and how generativity and altruistic dispositions can be solicited in interviews and employed in the hiring practices within the district. Eventually, leading to a further longitudinal research study, investigating if the teachers who exhibited altruistic propensities during their interviews do, in fact, remain in their teaching positions longer than those who do not show an altruistic disposition.

**Implications**

These findings and further research considerations are important in that school leaders need to have a definitive understanding of what factors can lead to teacher attrition or can help teachers remain. The implications of having this expertise, as a leader, are immeasurable in that at the end of the day, good quality teachers who have developed their pedagogy in classrooms have the greatest impact on student learning and their futures. If leaders can identify, and hire, teachers who exhibit a propensity for altruistic behaviors and generativity, they have a significant tool to address teacher retention.

Furthermore, leaders who value their teachers can also provide time to collaborate, and specifically focus on and emphasize relationship development among the staff. Allowing teachers to build sustainable peer relationships aids in fashioning a positive school culture which in turn, impacts teacher retention. Empowering teachers to effectively teach by ensuring they have the necessary resources in a clean, safe work environment is a tangible step, leaders can take to address teacher retention.

All these factors can assist urban school principals and district personal in teacher
retention in the Seaside Public Schools.

**Conclusions**

The value of a strong teaching staff is immeasurable; the impact they have on the lives of their students is monumental. Retaining top quality teachers in urban schools can, in this researcher's opinion, help break the cycle of poverty and allow the students in their communities to use education to change their lives. Understanding why teachers stay is key to addressing teacher turnover. This study provides a snapshot of why some urban teachers rise above the enormous list of issues facing their school district, and come to school each day to educate this seemingly neglected population of students who, at the end of the day, are children in a first world country. Possessing qualities of altruism and generativity are key ingredients in the personalities of teachers who remain in the Seaside Public Schools. Finding ways to employ individuals with these same qualities is imperative to combat the turnover rates in urban schools.

This study aimed to identify the reasons teachers stay and, in doing so, the research progressed beyond the humble reasons teachers stay, into a deeper understanding of the specific character traits held by tenured teachers. The study concludes that there are numerous overlapping results on the Job Satisfaction Survey by Rhodes et al., (2004), that even with a different sampling population the results show similarities. The discovery of the innate desire to help others, almost to the point of self-sacrifice shows a defining characteristic, needed in urban schools.
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George H. Litwin [And] Robert A. Stringer, Jr. Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University.


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Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)


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Appendix A:
BOE Resignation Data

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>3yr. Ave. number of Certified Full Time Teachers</th>
<th>3yr. Total number of teaching staff left.</th>
<th>% of Staff Leaving between 2012 - 2015</th>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>Multicultural Magnet School</td>
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<td>Bryant School</td>
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<td>Waltersville School</td>
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<td>Cesar Batalla</td>
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<td>Dunbar School</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>26.30%</td>
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</table>
Appendix B

Permission to Conduct Research

Good Afternoon,
This proposal sounds interesting, and it is fine with me.

Thank you,

Rebecca Cabrera
Principal
Madison Elementary School
576 Wayne Street
Bridgewater, CT 06606
203-576-7186 (phone)
203-337-0180 (fax)

Hi Sarah-Jane,
You may conduct the research. It may help to meet first so that we can establish a time, schedule, etc. Please call or email me so that we can set up a time.

Regards,
Sharon
To: Henry, Sarah-Jane;
Cc: Planas, Herminio; Cabrera, Rebecca; Planas, Luis G; Carbone, Francine B; Marshall, Amy; Newton, Dyrene;

Sarah- Jane,
You need to secure permission from the principals. I know that this is a very busy time of the year.
Fran Rabinowitz

From Fran Rabinowitz

Good afternoon Ms. Henry,

I would love to help. My cell phone is (203) 895-6517. Please feel free to call me to set up dates and times.

Tito Planas
To: Henry, Sarah-Jane;

This sounds great! Can you forward me your proposal? I will speak with the staff to give them further information about this.
Dr. Planas

Sent from my iPhone
November 10, 2016
Ms. Sarah-Jane Henry School of Education University of Bridgeport
Dear Ms. Henry:
Type of Review: Project Title:
Investigator: IRB ID: Funding Agency: Grant Title: Grant ID: IND or IDE:
Initial
Sarah-Jane Henry 2016-11-02
N/A
N/A
N/A N/A
APPROVAL OF RESEARCH
On November 10, 2016 a designated IRB member approved the following human subject research via expedited review:
Before November 10, 2017 or within 30 days of study close, whichever is earlier, you are to submit a completed “UB HRP-212 FORM: Continuing Review Progress Report” and required attachments to request continuing approval or study closure.
If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of November 10, 2017, this research expires on that date.
In conducting this research you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual.
Sincerely,
Christine Hempowicz, Ed.D. IRB Administrator
CC: Thomas Christ, Ph.D. Linda Paslov, Ed.D.
126 Park Avenue • Bridgeport, CT 06604 • Tel: 203.576.4973 • E-mail: irb@bridgeport.edu
### Appendix D

**Job satisfaction survey & Permission from Publication**

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<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
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<td>Proportion of time spent on administration</td>
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<td>Friendliness of other staff</td>
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<td>Society’s view of teachers</td>
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<td>Non-contract time is well allocated</td>
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<td>Pupil behavior issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>The size of the classes ensures that all teachers can teach effectively</td>
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*Permission is granted at no cost for use of content in a Master's Thesis and/or Doctoral Dissertation. If you intend to distribute or sell your Master's Thesis/Doctoral Dissertation to the general public through print or website publication, please return to the previous page and select 'Republish in a Book/Journal' or 'Post on intranet/password-protected website' to complete your request.*
<p>| Salary | Recognition of my efforts | Managers provide effective support for teachers | Classrooms present an atmosphere conducive to learning | Working with others to achieve shared goals | There is a climate of achievement within the school | Support on discipline issues | Support from pupils’ parents | The school values contributions made by its members | Relationship with line manager | The school works hard to make learning more effective | Autonomy over my own teaching | Availability of resources for learning and teaching | Sharing work experiences with one another | Prospects of career advancement | Impact of performance management | Classrooms stimulated pupil learning | The work environment is in good physical condition | Having a belief that one can take on challenges within the school |
|--------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 136    | -                        | -                                             | -                                              | -                           | -                                              | -                           | -                               | -                                | -                           | -                                              | -                           | -                                | -                               | -                           | -                               | -                           | -                                | -                           |</p>
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<td>show initiative</td>
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<td>School policies support teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>is offered which is relevant</td>
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## Appendix E
### Survey Results

### Teacher Retention

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<th>Agree</th>
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### Q2. Are you a tenured teacher in the Bridgeport Public Schools

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<th>Q2.</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>3</th>
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### Q3. The work load

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<td>Deeply Satisfied</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.36%</td>
<td>3</td>
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<table>
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<td>40.35%</td>
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Q28. The work environment is in good physical condition

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Answered 56

Skipped 1

Q29. Having a belief that one can take on challenges within the school

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Answered 56

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Q30. School decision making is participatory

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Answered 56

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Q31. Intellectual challenge

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Skipped: 2

Answered: 55
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Q42. There is a negotiated approach to the deployment of resources

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Answered 56

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Q43. Are you willing to participate in an interview or focus group as part of this study? If yes, please leave your email address:

Answered 11

Skipped 46
Appendix F
Interview Questions

1. Personal Info (used to describe the studied population)
   a. Age:
   b. Race:
   c. Years of experience:

2. Please describe your teaching experience.

3. According to the survey results many teachers stated that they are dissatisfied with the salaries they receive from the Bridgeport Public Schools. Can you please describe your thoughts and feelings on the salary you earn annually?

4. Another facet that came up negatively in the survey results was that of class size, please share your thoughts on this topic.

5. The prompt “Work environment is in good physical condition” came back with strong dissatisfaction amongst the teachers surveyed, how do you feel about the physical environment that you work in?

6. On the positive side, many teachers responded favorably to prompts about school culture, shared goals, an atmosphere conducive to learning and the friendliness of other staff. Please describe to me why you chose to stay in the Bridgeport Public Schools

7. What do you think would make you leave the Bridgeport Public Schools?
Appendix G
Interview Transcripts

PARTICIPANT A:

Personal Info (used to describe the studied population)

Age: 47

Race: Caucasian

Years of experience: starting my 14th year

Please describe your teaching experience.

I currently teach art in a k-8 school, so I teach all grades. Over the past 13 years that I have been teaching, I have been in three other schools, teaching a variety of grades from k-6. I was split between two schools for five years. At one of these schools I was on a cart for that time. I have been told I would have a classroom, gone in over the summer to set it all up, then had it taken away in September due to the fact that it was needed for another kindergarten. At one school where I taught for 5 years, my schedule indicated that I was to end one class period at 9:35am and begin the next class at 9:35am (the second class was on another floor and I was on a cart). At other times when there have been several art teachers in a building, two art teachers were assigned the same class back to back. So the children had two art periods in a row, but with two different teachers who were given zero time to plan for this.

I wanted to list some of the challenges of my teaching experience because I believe that many of them are experienced only by specialists, but are experienced by many specialists throughout the district. The need for a proper physical space (classroom) for art is rarely prioritized. And our schedules are made by simply sticking us in the empty spaces of
classroom teachers so they can get their prep times. ALL of this creates an undercurrent that we are not valued as professionals, which, in turn, makes the day to day challenges of working in an urban setting (lack of supplies, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient training on grading and evaluative procedures, having students who do not speak English with no support in our classes, extreme behavior challenges, etc) that much more frustrating. I must say that now I work in a magnet school which has been a far better experience than what was described above. I have a classroom, a reasonable schedule, and minimal behavior issues with students, thank God.

**According to the survey results many teachers stated that they are dissatisfied with the salaries they receive from the Bridgeport Public Schools. Can you please describe your thoughts and feelings on the salary you earn annually?**

I actually like that teachers’ salaries increase via step over time. So over 13 years, it has increased quite a bit to the point that it is finally a livable salary. But for a long time it was not enough to live on. I do believe that teachers should earn more money for the amount of time put in after school hours, the additional money we spend on supplies, and the extremely challenging nature of the profession. That said, I am satisfied and appreciative of the salary I currently earn.

**Another facet that came up negatively in the survey results was that of class size, please share your thoughts on this topic.**

Large class size is one of the main challenges of working in Bridgeport. Having anywhere from 25 to 29 students in a small space (go back to lack of prioritizing physical space) is hard enough, but challenge is made worse by the scheduling expectation of a 35 minute art period.
in most cases. If we had 29 students with a sufficient classroom and sufficient time to teach (at minimum 45 minutes), with sufficient supplies and sufficient behavior supports, the high number would not be so bad. The frustrating part is that our neighboring districts have the low numbers of students, the adequate space, the supplies and the support. It feels like Bridgeport students and teachers lose all the way around.

The prompt “Work environment is in good physical condition” came back with strong dissatisfaction amongst the teachers surveyed, how do you feel about the physical environment that you work in?

As stated earlier I am thrilled to just have a classroom, but I cannot say it is anywhere near in good physical condition. The cabinets are literally falling off the walls. The art tables are shaky and “too expensive to replace”. I have a kiln but it is ancient and does not work how it should. Once that dies I have been told it cannot be replaced. Yes, the room is dirty but we have far fewer custodians per building than other districts. At my school we actually currently have a grievance in because the main air supply and control units need to be replaced so throughout the past few years, students had to wear coats in some classrooms, then go a classroom with temp in the 80s (and we have no windows).

On the positive side, many teachers responded favorably to prompts about school culture, shared goals, an atmosphere conducive to learning and the friendliness of other staff. Please describe to me why you chose to stay in the Bridgeport Public Schools.

I stay in the Bridgeport Public Schools because the students truly do appreciate the arts.
I have had different experiences in other districts and have never experienced the feeling of appreciation like I do in Bridgeport. Generally speaking, many kids do not have as many additional enrichment experiences that students in nearby districts do. So the art experiences are truly inspiring, spark creativity, allow for an outlet of emotion, and develop problem solving skills, build unity and collaboration in a way that is more powerful than I could have imagined. It’s all about the kids. I have met exceptional teachers, the very best, who work in all of the four schools I have been a part of. I am still friends with many of them but it is the kids that keeps me here. Additionally, when our art department is able to function as it should (when our supervisor position is not cut, when we have a supervisor who actually knows about art, when we are given time to meet, plan, collaborate with one another), this has been a source of support and inspiration. In the school setting, an art teacher has different challenges and triumphs than a classroom teacher, so it is imperative that we are given the opportunity to meet together.

**What do you think would make you leave the Bridgeport Public Schools?**

The only things that would cause me to leave Bridgeport is if there were no more funding and our pay were cut or if conditions got so bad that I could not effectively teach art.

Participant B:

Personal Info (used to describe the studied population)

Age: 39

Race: white/Hispanic

Years of experience: 12
Please describe your teaching experience.

Q. According to the survey results many teachers stated that they are dissatisfied with the salaries they receive from the Bridgeport Public Schools. Can you please describe your thoughts and feelings on the salary you earn annually?

I am dissatisfied due to the fact that others teachers in surrounding districts make a lot more that we do for doing the same job. Some towns make $10,000 more annually. Working in Bridgeport is extremely stressful and we are not compensated enough.

Q. Another facet that came up negatively in the survey results was that of class size, please share your thoughts on this topic.

It makes it much harder to teach quality lessons when the class sizes are so large. I am not able to give the individual attention I want to and have the choose lessons that are not as difficult or on grade level. Last year I couldn't even paint with Kindergarten due to their difficult behavior and the fact that they took away the paras.

Q. The prompt “Work environment is in good physical condition” came back with strong dissatisfaction amongst the teachers surveyed, how you do feel about the physical environment that you work in?
My school is very old. I do not have a sink in my room or adequate storage. The school is hard to keep clean I suppose due to the age of it. Perhaps we also need more staff to keep it clean.

Q. On the positive side, many teachers responded favorably to prompts about school culture, shared goals, an atmosphere conducive to learning and the friendliness of other staff. Please describe to me why you chose to stay in the Bridgeport Public Schools

I stay because I have not been able to get a job in another district. I have the interviewed in Trumbull twice. Part of me feels like working in Bridgeport I make more of a difference than I would at a suburban school. But it certainly takes a toll.

Q. What do you think would make you leave the Bridgeport Public Schools?

I would leave if I was offered a job in the town I now live- Oxford, or a town closer that paid more and had a student population that was easier to deal with.

Participant C:

Personal Info (used to describe the studied population)

Age: 40

Race: Caucasian

Years of experience: 15
Please describe your teaching experience.

According to the survey results many teachers stated that they are dissatisfied with the salaries they receive from the Bridgeport Public Schools. Can you please describe your thoughts and feelings on the salary you earn annually?

Response: I feel that the when looking at the state of CT as a whole, Bridgeport salary wages are competitive. When looking more closely at districts in Fairfield County, which Bridgeport is in, then no, our salaries do not meet the standards of other school systems within a close proximity. We would need to take into account the number of steps and education lane advancements each district is composed of. Am I dissatisfied with my salary? I would say yes based on a number of factors. First, the urban school district in which I teach is one of the top 10 worst cities in the country. This often times comes with challenging children, little education of parents and a community that is unable/won’t support the local school system’s practices, thus making my job harder than others in suburban or rural areas. The second reason I feel we are underpaid, so to speak, is based on the before mentioned idea that surrounding districts make thousands of dollars more annually for the same length school day, education and days per year required of teachers.

Another facet that came up negatively in the survey results was that of class size, please share your thoughts on this topic.

Response: Class sizes, in particularly in urban districts, should not exceed the state norm for childcare centers. There is a 1:10 ratio for daycare centers and for before and after school care centers. Truthfully, why should the classroom be any different? I’m not suggesting that two full-time teachers be in a classroom of 20 but a certified teacher and additional staff
member would make the classroom a safer environment. It would also give students that excel in their grade level the opportunity to seek more challenges and those that struggle an opportunity for additional one on one or small group instruction.

The prompt “Work environment is in good physical condition” came back with strong dissatisfaction amongst the teachers surveyed, how do you feel about the physical environment that you work in?

Response: The physical environment in which I work is less than acceptable. Wall paint is coming off, floors and stairs are unsafe, the lack of air circulation is poor, very few updates have been made to meet the needs of an ever-changing technologically based world, playgrounds are unkempt, bathrooms are filthy, and the list goes on truthfully.

On the positive side, many teachers responded favorably to prompts about school culture, shared goals, an atmosphere conducive to learning and the friendliness of other staff. Please describe to me why you chose to stay in the Bridgeport Public Schools

Response: I have stayed in the Bridgeport public schools for 12 years. I taught in two different schools and have felt more than accepted by staff at both locations. It is coworkers like those at both Beardsley and Barnum that have made trying times easier to get through. Their devotion and support for children is immeasurable and their support for teachers is bar none the best. The feeling of knowing someone will help you, guide you, intervene when a student has become too unruly and simply want a friendship that is meaningful makes going to work more of a joy than an unpleasant experience. And this is something that fosters a positive climate…one in which everyone wants to be a part of daily.

What do you think would make you leave the Bridgeport Public Schools?
Response: I currently put in for a leave of absence this year. I had a baby 10 months ago and almost lost her the second day she was born. My world changed. I want to be with my children and right now staying home with them is what I need to do as a mom. I have pondered leaving before. Reason being, commute, student challenges in urban schools and not enough time with my own family.

Participant D:

Personal Info (used to describe the studied population)

Age:
56 :(

Race:
Caucasian

Years of experience: Been teaching since 1983, but in public school settings 20 years

Please describe your teaching experience.

Public schools- K-6 general music, high school instrumental and choral, middle school general and choral, private and group instrumental lessons and ensembles, private infant and toddler classes, private school middle school teaching.

According to the survey results many teachers stated that they are dissatisfied with the salaries they receive from the Bridgeport Public Schools. Can you please describe your thoughts and feelings on the salary you earn annually?
I'm grateful BPS took me back on the actual salary step I deserved, although they tried to shaft me by offering me less right before I signed the contract. They readily corrected the problem after I brought it to their attention. I'm not happy that we haven't had much of a raise in the 6 years I've been back.

Another facet that came up negatively in the survey results was that of class size, please share your thoughts on this topic.

We could be so much more effective as teachers if the class sizes were smaller. It isn't fair to the students at all.

I believe class sizes, along with other problems in Bpt, stem from the fact that the amount of active parents is small. If more parents made noise, maybe something would change.

The prompt “Work environment is in good physical condition” came back with strong dissatisfaction amongst the teachers surveyed, how do you feel about the physical environment that you work in?

I am extremely concerned with the mold problem in my building. As soon as I came back to school, I developed a sinus infection. My colleague has even more health issues due to the environment, and has used up all her sick days in the past because she teaches in a moldy, leaking, dusty environment. The stage curtains and equipment, where I teach a good portion of my week, is covered with dust that is an inch thick. The most heartbreaking realization, is that brand new buildings fall quickly into disrepair because the upkeep is severely neglected. It flies in the face of the special grants and funding that we receive. The negative press that government assistance receives is well deserved in this regard. The Bridgeport Schools have been severely negligent, careless, and dare I say, fraudulent, in the use of taxpayer, donor, and government money to allow buildings to

160
become run down and SICK. It also shows an extreme lack of respect for students and faculty to allow buildings to fall apart as we try to teach and learn in them.

**On the positive side, many teachers responded favorably to prompts about school culture, shared goals, an atmosphere conducive to learning and the friendliness of other staff. Please describe to me why you chose to stay in the Bridgeport Public Schools.**

Quite honestly, I accepted the job that offered me a fair salary. I am not happy with what I perceive as the lack of professionalism, leadership and maturity amongst faculty, staff and administration. I am here because I am too old and over-educated to be hired by another district. After I childrearing, I found it very difficult to get hired again. I am happy with the flexibility and freedom I am allowed to pursue the goals I feel are most profitable for my students.

**What do you think would make you leave the Bridgeport Public Schools?**

If I was offered a comparable job with a classroom (I am on a cart), I would leave in a minute. I am hoping I can hold out until retirement in this moldy, dusty, cramped atmosphere pushing a cart around until I'm 60-something.

:(

Participant E:

1. Personal Info (used to describe the studied population)
   a. Age: 30
   b. Race: Caucasian
   c. Years of experience: 7
1. Overall my teaching experience has been a positive one throughout my years in Bridgeport public school system. When I was a new teacher fresh out of school it was very challenging because I had very little support and resources to work with but I found that the challenge helped me become a better teacher because I was forced to make my own way and figure out what works best. My teaching experience would be enhanced if I had appropriate support, supplies, and a smaller caseload to which I could give the students the individualized attention that they deserve and need.

2. Teachers in Bridgeport make some of the lowest salaries within the state and have some of the most challenging students and positions. Since I began teaching we have had multiple freezes with our contract which has prevented me from making the money that I deserve. I stay in Bridgeport and work with this population by choice but know that I may have to move on at some point to a district where I will be paid more fairly if I have to support more than just myself such as supporting children or family. I feel our salary is unfair when towns that surround us are making such a significant difference in pay.

3. As a special education teacher working with students who are self-contained and have various needs both academically and emotionally I have found that the class sizes are a detriment to my students progress. If special ed. classes and regular education classes had an appropriate amount of students per teacher I feel or district would be doing better because we would be able to better service our students and meet their individual needs. Having large class sizes makes it almost impossible to reach every student on the level in which they deserve and require to make adequate progress.
4. I have no issues with the environment that I have worked in in several schools. I feel that if budget was available to update classrooms in school buildings it would benefit the staff and students however there are more pressing issues that need attention outside of the physical environment such as supplies and extracurricular programs.

5. As someone who grew up in Bridgeport it was important for me to give back to the community. I feel that helping the students of Bridgeport is something that is very important. The children of Bridgeport require skilled, professional, creative, and understanding staff who will work with them and support them with gusto and enthusiasm. I stay with in this district because I feel it is worth the most need is and I want to give all that I can to help this very special population.

6. As I stated previously I would probably only leave Bridgeport public schools if I need to provide for a family on just my salary as I do not make enough money to support myself and others. Until I begin a family or and put in the situation in which I need more money to support a family I plan to stay in Bridgeport.

7.

Participant F:
Personal Info (used to describe the studied population)

a. Age: 58
b. Race: Latino
c. Years of experience: 12 years

Please describe your teaching experience.

I love teaching ESL K-6. ESL students. It is the kind of population I feel a strong passion teaching to. Being Latina and Bilingual give me the opportunity to connect with this population and offer them the support they need to be successful in their academic and personal endeavors. I see my students as a whole human being and not only as students. I feel I thrive in a school environment that share this view with me.

My first year teaching in Bridgeport Public School was the toughest one. I was assigned to a school five days to serve 7th and 8th grade ESL students. I did not have the honest and professional support from my School Administrators. My students teachers didn’t have a collaborative approach but wanted me to take care of my students needs without much input on their academic struggles in the general education classroom. I found the environment very abrasive. Those teachers were always reacting instead of being proactive. It was not a very positive educational environment. During that time my professional growth limited to survive the environment and try to address my students needs with only the support of my ESL coworkers in the school.
The following year I was transferred to two schools, three day in one and two days to other. This time I worked in one school providing services K-6 and in the other K-2. I had around 16 groups between both schools. The Principal were very supportive, professional and shared my teaching visions. Even though I was traveling between two schools, the professional Learning community, more in one school than the other, gave me the best opportunity to grow professionally. My students demonstrated growth that benefited them, their teachers and administrators. I will like to think we were all winners. I believe they understand that ESL students are not only my students but our students.

From my teaching experience, the fact that the district is always changing their initiatives, do not provide enough resources for us to teach (I am not talking about copy paper) and required us to supply Lesson Plans every two weeks is a little burdensome and stressful, especially for me with 18 groups of students. Also, the fact that they evaluate ESL teacher by the same standards than Regular Classroom teacher is also stressful, especially in terms of our students’ learning objectives. We do not serve our students for as long block time as the regular classroom teacher does. I understand they need us to be accountable for our instructions but there should be a better way to evaluate us in a way that it gives us more time to instruct than to gather evidence that show we are teaching.

I have been a strong advocate on choosing teachers and administrators that aligned to what we discussed in our Hiring and Retention Task Force, but I am not sure they followed our recommendations with fidelity due to the shortage of teachers and administrators willing to work for Bridgeport Public Schools.
According to the survey results many teachers stated that they are dissatisfied with the salaries they receive from the Bridgeport Public Schools. Can you please describe your thoughts and feelings on the salary you earn annually?

I think I do not get paid enough for all the responsibilities required for my position, especially when I have to use part of my salary to buy school supplies and resources to teach.

Another facet that came up negatively in the survey results was that of class size, please share your thoughts on this topic.

I agree that class size matter more in our school system than any other. Our students are most of them performing below grade level. Our class size do not allow classroom teacher to differentiate, carry on SRBI groups and address classroom behavior effectively. If they cannot lower the size, the teacher should be able to have another teacher in the classroom to be able to share the instructional responsibilities. None of these alternatives will happen as long there is budget issues.

The prompt “Work environment is in good physical condition” came back with strong dissatisfaction amongst the teachers surveyed, how do you feel about the physical environment that you work in?

I agree with the prompt. I worked in classrooms that were not cleaned properly. Some rooms are too cold or too hot. There is not enough storage space in some of the classroom or enough wall space to display students’ work. Some of the walls do not allow paper to stick
on it. Some classrooms do not have smart boards or enough writing surface. Some classroom
have leaking roofs or lack proper ventilation. Some buildings lack of an elevator. I believe
the school district need to make an assessment of these conditions and create a plan to
address it. Again, how much can the District do when they face budget issues. I know ESL
teachers that work with students in Libraries, closet size classroom, al ways.

On the positive side, many teachers responded favorably to prompts about school
culture, shared goals, an atmosphere conducive to learning and the friendliness of other
staff. Please describe to me why you chose to stay in the Bridgeport Public Schools

Working with ESL students K-6 in Bridgeport provide me more personal and
professional satisfaction than working in suburban school district. I feel I can make a
difference working in the Bridgeport Public School than in any other School District.

What do you think would make you leave the Bridgeport Public Schools?

If they transfer me to teach ESL middle or high school students, I will seriously
consider leaving the District. If I get transferred to work with an administrator that
do not appreciate my instructional contribution to the team, do not support me and do
not share my educational values, will be another reason to leave the District. Any
change that depart from what has been a wonderful experience in these past three
years will be a good reason to leave the District in addition to not getting a fair salary
that match my experience, responsibilities or commitment to my students.
# Appendix H

## Themes and Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>SALARY:</th>
<th>CLASS SIZE:</th>
<th>PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT:</th>
<th>WHY YOU STAY:</th>
<th>WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU LEAVE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary issues - surrounding towns</td>
<td>making more</td>
<td>Detriment to student progress</td>
<td>Filthy and neglected</td>
<td>Affection for the kids</td>
<td>Cut funding for salaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair</td>
<td>Can’t differentiate and meet the needs of each student</td>
<td>Poor ventilation in schools</td>
<td>Making a difference/giving back to community</td>
<td>Conditions so bad that unable to teach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpaid</td>
<td>Could be so much more effective with lower class sizes.</td>
<td>Classroom temperature</td>
<td>Co-workers are a positive influence</td>
<td>Money</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have to spend some of your income on school supplies.</td>
<td>Poor physical environment is due to budgetary issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Location closer to home/commute</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Comparable job with a classroom</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Feeling unappreciated</td>
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<td>Transferring to uncomfortable teaching assignment</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Not enough time with family</td>
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</table>
Appendix I:
Administrator Interview

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral study. Your perspective will add valuable insight to my research. Please see below a copy of the consent from the Superintendent to conduct this research.

My study is regarding teacher turnover and retention in urban school districts, specifically Bridgeport Public Schools. I have identified the top five elementary schools in the city with the least amount of teacher turnover as listed in the BOE minutes over a three year period. I have surveyed and interviewed tenured teachers at these schools to gain a clearer understanding of why they stay in our district.

Through the course of data collection it has become clear these teachers are dissatisfied with their salaries, class size and the physical work environment, but enjoy working with the kids and the colleagues in each of their respective schools, which leads them to stay.

- Can you please discuss the challenges that administrators/principals in Bridgeport face with teacher retention?

There are multiple challenges that affect teacher retention in BPS. Few that come to mind are:

1. Surrounding communities offer 10K+ increase in salary.
2. Limited resources for the classroom
3. BPS being a training ground for new teachers via Teach for America and Suburbs
4. Challenging working environment in some schools
5. Stipends for extra-curricular activities to supplement income and bond with students/school.

Teachers who remain in Bridgeport are a special group of individuals. The challenges are many and they face it each year with the hope that kids will be successful from their efforts.

- Have you personally observed an impact on student achievement, related to teacher turnover?

Absolutely
At my school, certified teachers do not come with the high level of technical skills our theme delivers. As a result, professional development is a cost that is lost regularly via attrition and having to start over every two to three years in varied skilled areas.
Students are impacted as they are at times learning with the teacher who may not be able to offer high levels of skilled guidance when complex challenges come in this niche area they are teaching.

- What do you think could be done to help keep teachers in our schools? Is there a way a district such as Bridgeport (with a budget deficit) can retain their staff?
Consider reducing/eliminating unnecessary expenses THAT DO EXIST. Provide all teachers with a welcome package of basic supplies each year to be ready for their classrooms which I try to do. Leverage grant opportunities which give schools the opportunity to be creative in their own ways to sustain growth. In many ways schools are expected to be mirror images of each other from a system view and that traditional mindset holds back progress for those who may have the will to be cage busters creating opportunities that otherwise would not be realized. The outlook from a single solution for all is bleak at best, however, some teachers do not leave….finding teachers with the matched philosophy in education could be a critical difference if the school and district hold firm to progressive philosophy that serves the current needs of society.