

Phenomenological Study: Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified Teachers in
North Florida Title I Elementary Schools

DISSERTATION

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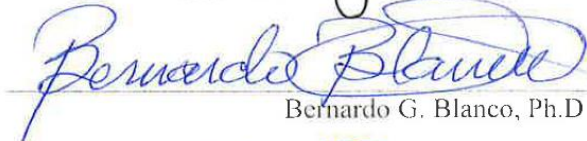
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ABSTRACT

PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN NORTH FLORIDA TITLE I ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by

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Florida Southern College, 2022

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On average, about 50% of teachers leave within the first five years of entering the classroom with the attrition rate for teachers in Title I schools being almost 50% greater than non-Title I schools. Principals know and understand the pressures that cause teachers to leave the profession; however, little research has been done on how to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers. This qualitative phenomenological study was designed to investigate practices of high-performing elementary Title I school principals in their quest to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers. This study explored the purposeful practices of principals to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, as well as the perceptions of their teachers in these practices. Interviews with five principals and eleven teachers from high-performing Title I schools across north Florida served as the basis for this study. Horizontalization of the data was conducted through multiple readings and pulling significant quotes and ideas that provided an understanding of the individual's lived experiences. This study revealed that word of mouth, networking, and requesting interns are three practices principals use to recruit highly qualified teachers. An assessment of retention practices showed that principals strive to create a positive

environment and support teachers in their practice. This study also looked at teachers' perspectives in the practices of principals to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers. Results of the data show that a positive environment was most important, followed by support of teachers in their accepting a position and their decision to stay in a position.

Keywords: teacher attrition, teacher recruitment, teacher retention, Title I, elementary

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DEDICATION

To my husband, the love of my life and my best friend.

Jeremiah 29:11

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

**PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF
HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN NORTH FLORIDA TITLE I
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

Increased teacher attrition has developed into a popular topic, and as a result, studies have focused on why teachers tend to leave the profession. It is well known that many teachers entering the field of education today will not make it to their five-year anniversary (Clark, 2012; Hong, 2012; Ingersoll et al., 2012). This continuous flow of teachers in and out of the classroom, which causes great hardship to students, schools, and districts, must be stopped. Knowing why teachers leave the classroom is essential; however, it may be more critical to know why they stay.

Background of the Problem

Students across the nation have suffered a tragic loss: the loss of a fully certified and highly qualified education professional, a teacher. On average, about 50% of teachers leave within the first five years of entering the profession (Clark, 2012; Hong, 2012; Ingersoll et al., 2012). However, low socioeconomic Title I schools experience teacher turnover rates at twice the rate of high-socioeconomic non-Title I schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ingersoll, 2003; Johnson et al., 2005). Moreover, increased teacher attrition, or the loss of teachers from the profession, can diminish teacher quality, student learning, and the climate and culture of a school (Guarino et al., 2006).

For many years, educational researchers have studied teacher attrition and found that teachers leave for a variety of reasons, including lack of leadership (Hulpia et al., 2011), lack of support (Wynn et al., 2007), poor climate and culture (Jacobson, 2007), lack of resiliency (Tait, 2008), inadequate self-efficacy (Hong, 2012), a low socioeconomic school (Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009), challenging student behavior (Hughes, 2012), workplace stress (Clark, 2012), inadequate decision making involvement (Wynn et al., 2007), teacher accountability (Boyd et al., 2008), inconsistent teacher preparation (Ingersoll et al., 2012), dissatisfaction with salary (Parham & Gordon, 2011), teaching as a temporary career (Ado, 2013), and overall job satisfaction (Perrachione et al., 2008).

Although many solutions have been proposed to combat teacher attrition, the majority of research only addresses the reasons teachers leave the classroom. Very little research focuses on the reasons teachers remain in the profession, particularly in low socioeconomic schools. Principals could benefit from research that fills the knowledge gap on best practices to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers. The objective of this study was to evaluate what actions elementary principals purposefully undertake to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers in lower socioeconomic schools, thereby providing their insight into proven teacher recruitment and retention practices.

Statement of Problem

School principals know and understand the pressures that cause teachers to leave the profession; however, little research has been conducted on recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. Research indicates that about half of teachers leave within the first five years with the attrition rate for teachers in Title I schools being almost 50%

greater than non-Title I schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ingersoll, 2003; Johnson et al., 2005). As highly qualified teachers either leave the profession or transfer to another school, less qualified teachers are left behind (Guin, 2004). This creates a continuous flow of teachers in and out of classrooms negatively affecting the quality of teachers within low socioeconomic schools and, consequently, negatively affecting student education.

Teachers' many reasons for leaving the classroom come from a negative climate and culture, including the socioeconomic status of the school, resulting in teacher shortages significantly entrenched in work environments within schools and districts (Hughes, 2012; Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009). Additionally, teachers who feel unsupported or alone may have a lower sense of efficacy, causing them to be more likely to leave the profession (Hong, 2012; Wynn et al., 2007). Others leave because of stress associated with accountability, student behavior, or inadequate salaries (Boyd et al., 2008; Clark, 2012; Hughes, 2012; Parham & Gordon, 2011). In addition, despite a principal hiring an exceptional teacher, that teacher may not have intentions to make teaching a career, leaving after just two or three years (Brill & McCartney, 2008).

Finally, although support through coaches and mentors may be in place, one integral person plays a very important role in the success of a teacher: the principal (Clark, 2012). The role of the principal is to build relationships, provide support, and offer resources for teachers. Unfortunately, most school leaders do not receive professional development to assist them in providing appropriate support for teachers (Peters & Pearce, 2012). In order for teachers to thrive in the classroom, principals must

understand how to create a work environment that properly prepares teachers for a career in education. This study sought to determine best practices for recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers in Title I elementary schools in north Florida. Results of the study could identify methods beneficial for administrators in recruiting or retaining highly qualified teachers in similar schools.

The study provides significant understanding of practices used by elementary Title I principals to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers. Further research in strategies to retain highly qualified teachers in high poverty schools is needed (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). Similarly, Burkhauser (2016) suggested research should review what practices principals use to retain teachers. This study seeks to close the research gap as it relates to the recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers in lower socioeconomic schools.

Statement of Purpose

As teacher attrition continues to be an issue for the majority of schools, this qualitative phenomenological study explored best practices of elementary principals in the recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers. Studies support that teachers leave their profession at a greater rate than other career professionals. The average annual attrition rate for employees within the private sector is 6% compared to an average of 25% of teachers that leave within their first year, and about 50% that leave within the first five years (Hong, 2012; Minarik et al., 2003). Retirement only accounts for a small portion of teachers leaving, about 14% each year (Ingersoll et al., 2014). The remaining

86% of teachers are leaving for a multitude of reasons. Unfortunately, no matter the reason teachers leave, other facets of education are impacted.

Each year districts hire teachers to replace those who leave. This perpetual revolving door of hiring and losing teachers causes financial burdens on districts, decreases school morale, and lowers student achievement (Sterling & Frazier, 2011). Districts spend valuable funding to send personnel to recruitment fairs and universities around the nation to help fill the void. Even when a district finds suitable candidates, it must still spend additional funds to train new hires in instructional practices, initiatives, and curriculum used within the district. When a teacher leaves a school or district, the knowledge they hold leaves with them. Additionally, the constant flow of teachers in and out of classrooms affects the stability and quality of the teacher workforce (Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009). Many districts put policies in place to help retain teachers, such as induction programs, mentoring, and new teacher orientations, yet these programs are of little value without a supportive professional culture (Birkeland & Feiman-Nemser, 2012).

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the best practices of principals of successful Title I elementary schools to recruit and retain highly qualified educators in north Florida districts. A qualitative phenomenological research approach was chosen, as the purpose of this study was to explore the lived recruitment and retention experiences of principals and teachers. To identify best practices, the study concentrated on administrators at high-performing Title I elementary schools in north Florida who have experience in recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers.

Collection of data took place through semi-structured interviews of principals and their teachers.

Research Questions

Guided by three research questions, the study reviewed principals' and teachers' perceptions of the best methods to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers.

1. What practices do Title I principals of high-performing elementary schools in north Florida use to recruit highly qualified teachers?
2. What practices do Title I principals of high-performing elementary schools in north Florida use to retain highly qualified teachers?
3. What principal practices do Title I teachers perceive to be the most effective in enticing them to accept a position or to stay?

Information obtained from the proven practice of school administrators in retaining teachers in Title I schools can be utilized by other principals to reduce the attrition rate of teachers throughout Florida. However, it is important to share the limitations of this study. This study investigated practices in north Florida Title I elementary schools; therefore, generalizations beyond the scope of this sample must be made with caution. This study relies on the state of Florida's accountability reports for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years to determine which north Florida Title I elementary schools are high-performing (Florida Department of Education, 2019d). Characterization of a teacher as highly qualified relies on the principal, as the researcher will not access teacher performance evaluation data. Additionally, the 2020-2021

COVID-19 safety mandates necessitate social distancing, thus requiring interviews to occur through video conferencing and phone calls when face-to-face interviews are not feasible (Florida Department of Education, 2021).

Delimitations

1. The study included participating districts in north Florida.
2. Interviews were conducted with principals and teachers from elementary schools within north Florida.
3. Schools were selected based on school grades.
4. Participating schools were elementary Title I schools.
5. Time of study: Fall 2020/Winter 2021

Assumptions

The study included the following assumptions:

1. School grades reported by the State of Florida are a reliable and valid measure of school performance.
2. Participants' responses to interview questions were honest and exhaustive.

Definition of Key Terms

The following key terms have been identified for this study:

Free and Reduced Priced Lunch. Students qualify for free meals when the annual income of the household is equal to or below 130% of the federal poverty level. To qualify for reduced price lunch, household annual income must be at or below 185% of the poverty level. For instance, a family of four would need to earn less than \$48,470 per year to qualify for reduced price lunch and \$34,060 for free meals (Food and Nutrition Services, 2020).

Highly Qualified. The State of Florida defines a highly qualified teacher as possessing an acceptable bachelor's or higher degree and a valid Florida Temporary or Professional Certificate (Florida Department of Education, 2015).

High-performing Schools. High-performing schools are schools that maintain a Florida School Grade of an A, out of a 5-level grading system, and continue to increase learning gains or student learning growth from one school year to the next, based on Florida's state assessments.

High Socioeconomic. High socioeconomic status refers to schools whose families tend to earn more than the minimum income level and less than 40% of students qualify for free and reduced price lunch.

Low Socioeconomic. Low socioeconomic status refers to schools whose families, based on their income, and more than 60% of students qualify for free and reduced priced lunch.

Pedagogy. Pedagogy is the knowledge and deep understanding of effective teaching, instructional strategies, and student learning to address learning needs of students (Appova & Taylor, 2020).

Recruitment. Recruitment refers to the methods principals and districts take to attract teachers for employment.

Retention. Retention refers to the methods and practices principals and districts utilize to keep teachers.

Teacher attrition. Teacher attrition is the voluntary or involuntary loss of teachers from the profession. (Guarino et al., 2006).

Title I. Title I schools qualify for additional funding as they serve large populations of families that qualify for government assistance and support programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). In Florida, schools with a poverty rate less than 40% may receive targeted assistance program funds to provide supplemental instructional services to certain students at risk of failing Florida's performance standards. Schools with a poverty rate greater than 40% may also receive assistance through a school-wide program that provides funds to improve instruction for all students across the entire school (Florida Department of Education, 2007).

Theoretical Framework

Principals hire teachers that act as the forefront of education, making teacher hiring and retention an integral part of creating an effective learning environment for students. To mine fully the ethical and practical questions that arise from teacher attrition, the theoretical framework that will serve as the foundation of this study is Shapiro and Stefkovich's Multiple Ethical Paradigms. The ethical paradigm includes Ethic of Care, Ethic of Critique, Ethic of Justice, and Ethic of the Profession (Shapiro & Gross, 2013). The responsibilities of a school leader are to ensure that all students receive quality teaching (Starratt, 2004). In order to fulfill this responsibility, administrators must utilize recruitment and retention practices and policies that allow them to hire highly qualified teachers that will meet the needs of students. The four ethical paradigms allow analysis of this complex and diverse issue as no one solution works for all. These theories interconnect and can be individually characterized as they relate to the recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers.

Ethic of Justice points to equity in education, for employment practices and equal educational opportunities for students (Shapiro & Gross, 2013). Ethic of Justice raises questions about fairness of laws and policies, while supporting due process and the protection of individual rights (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). Teachers enter the classroom through two routes: through a traditional college of education or through alternative certification, both of which must follow state requirements. Principals must follow federal, state and local laws and policies when hiring teachers and teachers must meet the requirements of the position. To allow all students the chance for success, and to increase student achievement growth, an experienced and qualified teacher is required in each classroom.

Ethic of Critique challenges accepted societal norms, encouraging a look at alternatives to everyday practice (Shapiro & Gross, 2013). This ethic pushes principals to look at recruitment and retention practices in hopes of finding appropriate alternatives to ineffective means. With limited funding for salary increases, principals must think outside of traditional methods to encourage high-quality teachers to stay.

Ethic of Care is vital in education for both teachers and administrators as it addresses the needs of students (Shapiro & Gross, 2013). Principals must make a conscious and moral decision to find the best teacher for students. Principals determine the climate and culture of a school, requiring them to seek actively ways to care for and support the needs of teachers and staff.

Finally, the fourth ethical paradigm is Ethic of Profession, which expects both teachers and leaders to adhere to ethical codes (Shapiro & Gross, 2013). Schools should

have ethical leaders and teachers that aspire to provide students with a quality education. To relieve stress on teachers, principals need to provide the curriculum and materials necessary to teach.

Significance of Study

The significance of this study is crucial as it contributes relevant insight and theory into the successful practice of elementary Title I principals to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers. Grissom and Bartanen (2019) suggest further research to find the “strategies through which effective principals influence the retention of high-performing teachers. Such strategies may be particularly helpful to principals in low-achieving and high-poverty schools that have substantial challenges in retaining their most effective teachers” (p. 549). Likewise, to better understand the impact of principals on teacher retention, Burkhauser (2016) recommends asking, “What policies can be implemented to incentivize teachers to stay?” (p.15). A principal’s impact on teacher recruitment and retention cannot be overlooked. By gaining a better understanding of what principals can do to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, a more theoretical understanding of best practices can be established and implemented.

Conclusion

Previous research shows that a large portion of teachers that enter the field leave within a very short time. Even more teachers leave lower socioeconomic schools than their more affluent counterparts (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ingersoll, 2003; Johnson et al., 2005). Principals have a hard time recruiting teachers and more difficulty retaining them. Information presented in this qualitative phenomenological

research study can assist principals of Title I schools in Florida in their efforts to recruit and retain teachers.

This research study is disseminated in five chapters. Chapter One includes the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, significance of the study, definition of terms, theoretical framework, research questions, limitations, delimitations, and the assumptions of the study.

Chapter Two provides a review of the literature, including teacher certification pathways, teacher quality, teacher recruitment and retention, teacher attrition impact on districts and students, factors influencing teacher attrition, and Title I. Chapter Three describes the methodology used for this study, including selection of participants, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis.

Chapter Four presents the study's findings, including descriptive statistics, testing of the research questions, and analysis. Chapter Five includes the summary of the study, a discussion of the findings, implications for practice and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents the rationale for conducting additional research related to the recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers in north Florida elementary Title I schools. As nearly 50% of teachers leave within the first few years of entering the classroom, the ongoing teacher attrition battle is detrimental to the nation as it affects the quality of education that students ultimately receive (Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009). The negative effects on Title I schools, which serve economically disadvantaged student populations, only deepen the significance of this problem. The attrition rate for teachers in Title I schools is 50% higher than non-Title I schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Garcia & Weiss note, “The teacher shortage is real, large and growing and worse than we thought,” (2019d, p.1). When the imbalanced distribution of highly qualified teachers is considered, the shortage of effective, long-term teachers in low socioeconomic schools is even more striking (Garcia & Weiss, 2019c; Lankford et al., 2002).

Vacancies in Title I schools are more likely to be filled with new or less qualified teachers. On average, low socioeconomic schools have more first-year teachers (39.8%) than their higher socioeconomic counterparts (33.8%) (Garcia & Weiss, 2019b). Likewise, Boyd et al. (2008) analyzed teacher qualification distribution based on poverty levels of students and found 25% of students in low socioeconomic schools had a first- or second-year teacher compared to 15% of students in higher socioeconomic schools.

Teachers are the number one influence for higher student achievement: high quality, effective teachers have an overwhelmingly positive influence on student

achievement while ineffective teachers tend to have a negative impact (Hall & Simeral, 2008; Marzano, 2003). Unfortunately, as teacher turnover increases, teacher quality declines, which affects student achievement (Garcia & Weiss, 2019a; Hong, 2012; Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009).

In addition to the likelihood that students in low socioeconomic Title I schools will have a less qualified or brand-new teacher, these high-poverty students score on average about 25 percentage points below low-poverty students, on both state and national tests (Tileston & Darling, 2009). Therefore, students who live in low socioeconomic neighborhoods, and attend the neighborhood school, face long odds for an academically successful school year compared to students in higher-income neighborhoods. Thus, this study sought to examine the relationship of high achieving Title I elementary principals' actions and the impact on recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers.

The six sections of Chapter Two present literature and research related to the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers in Title I schools. The first section provides an overview of the pathways leading to teacher certification, while the second section includes a detailed description of teacher quality and its importance. The third section distinguishes the difference between recruitment and retention and lays the foundation for the remaining sections. The fourth section not only defines teacher attrition, but also discusses the impact of attrition on districts and students. The fifth section focuses on research related to factors that influence a teacher to leave a school, from leadership to stress and salary. The final section reviews the history of Title I,

examines how the program measures success, discusses what a successful Title I school leadership looks like, and describes the negative impact of teacher attrition on Title I schools.

Teacher Certification

The most recent available data shows that while the total number of conferred bachelor's degrees from United States post-secondary institutions has more than doubled from 839,790 in 1970-71 to 1,956,032 in 2016-17, the number of graduates with a bachelor's degree in education fell from 176,307 in 1970-71 to 85,118 in 2016-17 (U.S. Department of Education, 2018b). It is important to note that only one other field, library science, shares such a significant reduction in degreed graduates (U.S. Department of Education, 2018b).

Traditionally, teachers were graduates of College or School of Education programs throughout the country. Due to teacher shortages during the 1980s, alternative certification programs emerged to attract more candidates to the profession, and now both alternative and traditional pathways are viable entrances to the teaching profession (Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009). In a study comparing 18 alternatively prepared and 18 traditionally prepared teachers, there was no difference found in their scores on state teaching assessments (Johnson et al., 2005). However, significant difference was discovered when their classroom instruction was observed: traditionally trained teachers received higher ratings and were viewed as well prepared than their alternatively trained counterparts, who were viewed as adequately prepared (Johnson et al., 2005).

Additionally, attrition rates are higher for teachers with alternative certifications than for traditionally certified teachers. During the first three years in the profession, teachers who enter through alternative certification programs tend to leave the classroom at nearly twice the rate as teachers graduating from traditional education programs (Johnson et al., 2005).

Florida provides both the Professional Certificate and the Temporary Certificate for educator certification. Florida's highest teacher certification, the Professional Certificate, is valid for five years, renewable, and requires mastery of Florida's General Knowledge Text (FGKT) as well as the Professional Preparation and Education Competence (Florida Department of Education, 2020a).

Mastery of Florida's Professional Preparation Education Competence can be satisfied in several ways: completion of an approved Florida or out-of-state teacher preparation program and a passing score on the Florida Professional Education Test (FPET); completion of an approved Professional Development Certification Program and a passing score on the FPET; completion of an approved Florida Educator Preparation Institute program and a passing FPET score; completion of a master's degree or higher in a science, technology, engineering or mathematics field, certification in 6-12 STEM area, highly effective performance evaluation, and a passing score on the FPET; completion of and passing score on required education courses or Florida College Professional Training Option for Content Majors, teaching experience, professional education competence program, and a passing FPET score; or documentation of valid certificates issued by either a US state or territory, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the

American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence with completion of an approved education competence program, or completion of two full-time college teaching semesters and a passing score on the FPET (Florida Department of Education, 2020c).

Although the non-renewable Temporary Certificate does not require prior teaching experience, it does allow three years to complete all requirements to obtain the Professional Certificate while teaching full-time. Both certifications require at least a bachelor's degree, mastery of an exam related to the requested subject area, and a cleared fingerprint background check (Florida Department of Education, 2020a).

Traditional Pathway

The traditional pathway to teacher certification dates to the early 1900s when programs were created to help prepare teachers to educate the masses pouring into the cities (Ludlow, 2011). This route included a four-year degree program comprised of pedagogy, curriculum instruction, and internships. Education programs also established admissions criteria and built curricula of study with hands-on field experiences (Van Zandt, 2014).

An Elementary Education K-6 degree typically requires more than half of the degree's required credit hours to be in courses related to education, including three or more credit hours of supervised field experience courses, and an internship up to 12 credit hours. Field experience courses provide weekly opportunities for college of education participants to plan and implement subject specific lessons in local classrooms while under the supervision of their mentor teacher as well as college faculty. During the semester-long internship, the college student takes on all classroom responsibilities of the

assigned certified classroom teacher, with support and oversight of their assigned teacher and college (Florida Southern College, 2019; Florida State University, 2019, University of North Florida, 2020).

To qualify for a Professional Florida Educator's Certificate in Florida, graduates of state-approved teacher preparation programs must pass all three areas of the Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) (Florida Department of Education, 2020a). If graduates of state-approved teacher preparation programs do not pass the FTCE, they qualify for a Temporary Certificate, which is valid for three years and allows time for candidates to pass the certification test while teaching (Florida Department of Education, 2020a). Likewise, if the candidate is an education major or minor from a Florida college or university, but did not complete a state-approved teacher preparation program, they can apply for a Temporary Certificate allowing them to teach while completing certification requirements. Florida provides a Statement of Status of Eligibility, which details all remaining requirements to obtain the Professional Certificate (Florida Department of Education, 2020b).

Alternative Pathway

Alternative certification allows content specific post-baccalaureate candidates who did not attend a college or School of Education to teach. Although specific requirements for alternative certification programs vary by state, Florida requires a bachelor's degree, a passing score on Florida certification exams, professional preparation courses, teaching experience, and demonstration of the Florida Educator

Accomplished Practices to obtain a professional teaching certificate (Florida Department of Education, 2019b).

Professional preparation programs for post-baccalaureate candidates must be approved by the state. Currently, Florida has twenty-four state-approved Education Preparation Institute (EPI) programs offered by Florida postsecondary institutions and private providers that serve non-education majors working towards a Professional Florida Educator's Certificate (Florida Department of Education, 2020c).

Teacher Quality

Florida's Department of Education (2015) defines a highly qualified teacher as holding an "acceptable bachelor's or higher degree, and holding a valid Florida Temporary or Professional Certificate" (p. 1). A quality teacher may also be defined as one who possesses the ability to teach standards completely and adequately, allowing learners to reach instructional goals (Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2005).

Furthermore, teacher quality may be defined as "the bundle of personal traits, skills, and understandings an individual brings to teaching, including dispositions to behave in certain ways," and possessing certain attributes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Additionally, attributes that help define teacher quality include strong content knowledge and content pedagogy, understanding and support of their learners, and the ability to organize and adaptively explain ideas to meet student needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The importance of a high-quality teacher in increasing student achievement is well known. In one longitudinal study, students who had effective teachers for three years

in a row scored approximately 45 percentile points higher than students with less effective teachers (Jordan et al., 1997). Another study found teachers with higher quality ratings showed the greatest student proficiency gains, while lower quality rated teachers had the greatest losses in proficiency (Miner, 2005/2006, as cited in Hall & Simeral, 2008). According to Marzano (2003), most teachers are “in the middle of the effectiveness distribution” or within close proximity (p.75). Therefore, only a few teachers fall toward the extreme negative end of the spectrum. A point often overlooked, however, is that ineffective teachers can actually impede student learning (Marzano, 2003). No matter the definition of choice, the “X factor” in providing a good education to students is the quality of the teacher (Hall & Simeral, 2008).

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Teacher recruitment can be defined as the process to provide a suitable number of acceptable teacher applicants (Stronge & Hindman, 2006). Retaining effective teachers in the profession is imperative to resolving the teacher shortage situation (Futernick, 2007). Recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers are paramount to the success of a student, school, and district. Therefore, districts must be intentional in their recruitment and retention methods. States, districts, and schools must use financial resources for recruitment activities to attract additional teachers and replace those who leave the profession (Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009).

Schargel (2019) considers school leadership as key to teacher retention and suggests leadership provide mentoring and support, offer continuous professional development, and recognize staff for their commitment and years of service to “refresh

the staff’ (p. 100). To promote retention of highly qualified teachers, some school districts have organized leadership opportunities and career paths, such as encouraging highly effective teachers to share their knowledge as instructional coaches and mentors with peers, training teachers to lead professional development, and offering teacher advisory roles (Teach Plus, 2015).

To assist in recruitment, the Florida Department of Education’s Bureau of Educator Recruitment, Development and Retention organizes an annual job fair, the Great Florida Teach-In. This job fair allows holders of a Florida Professional Certificate, Florida Temporary Certificate, or a Florida Statement of Eligibility to meet and interview for potential teaching positions with participating districts (Florida Department of Education, 2020d). Individual school districts often offer their own teacher recruitment fair or attend college campus recruitment events. During these events, school-based administrators are able to market their school, interview attendees and even offer positions to qualified candidates.

To encourage retention of teachers, Florida’s Teacher of the Year Program seeks to celebrate and praise distinction in teaching across Florida by engaging district participants in yearlong professional development and collaboration geared towards creating teacher leaders (Florida Department of Education, 2020e). As mandated in Florida Statute section 1012.731 (2019), Florida’s Best and Brightest Award Program was designed as a teacher recruitment tool providing financial incentives to qualifying newly hired classroom teachers that were content experts in mathematics, science, computer science, reading, or civics. The program also provided retention awards for

teachers with a highly effective or effective rating who taught in a school that had shown improvement in student achievement.

Even though recent legislation abolishes Florida's Best and Brightest Award Program, the continued focus is on the recruitment of teachers in Florida. In order to increase the minimum teacher salary and to make Florida more competitive compared to other states, Florida's Governor Ron DeSantis signed House Bill 641, which provides nearly \$500 million for teacher salaries (Office of the Governor, 2020). Additionally, the pay increase will put Florida in the top five states across the nation for average starting teacher salaries (Office of the Governor, 2020).

Teacher Attrition

Unfortunately, the rate of teachers leaving the profession is relatively higher than many other professions (Minarik et al., 2003): "Teacher attrition is similar to that of police officers; and, teaching has higher attrition, perhaps surprisingly, than nursing, and far higher turnover than traditionally highly respected professions, such as law, engineering, architecture and academia," (Ingersoll et al., 2014). Within the first five years of entering the teaching profession, about 50% of teachers leave (Hong, 2012; Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009).

Teacher attrition in Title I schools is even greater, as 50% more teachers leave Title I schools compared to non-Title I schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Additionally, Garcia and Weiss (2019b) discovered that more than one-third of low-socioeconomic schools found it "very difficult" to fill teacher vacancies (p.8).

Consequently, the attrition rate is higher for teachers with alternative certifications than for traditionally certified teachers. During the first three years in the classroom, teachers certified through alternative programs left at nearly double the rates of traditionally certified teachers (Johnson et al., 2005).

The continuous flow of teachers in and out of the classroom creates consequences for all stakeholders. Teacher attrition is a problem that burdens districts and causes decreased student achievement (Sterling & Frazier, 2011; Watson & Olson-Buchanan, 2016).

Impact on Districts

When a teacher leaves a district, a replacement must be found, and the cost can be substantial (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). The economic impact of teacher turnover to districts across the nation is approximately \$7.2 billion dollars a year (Watson & Olson-Buchanan, 2016). Of the estimated 128,436 teachers in the State of Florida in 2000, 7,152 left teaching, costing taxpayers nearly \$78,790,723 dollars (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005).

Increased attrition also affects the workforce stability of schools as well as the quality of teachers (Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009). Exacerbating the situation, the greater the number of teachers leaving a school, including movement within the district, the greater the problem in recruiting high-quality teachers for that school (Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009).

Impact on Students

The growing consensus is that the quality of a student's teachers is one of the most important influences in determining student performance (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Johnson et al., 2005). According to Martinez-Garcia and Slate (2009), the "effects of well-prepared teachers on student achievement can be stronger than the influences of student background factors" (p. 1). In fact, high teacher turnover is directly related to the erosion of teacher quality, which affects student achievement (Garcia & Weiss, 2019a; Hong, 2012; Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009).

Students, especially low socioeconomic status students, suffer the most as teachers leave the profession. Ronfeldt et al. (2011) studied the impact of teacher turnover on student achievement, finding that students in schools with high teacher turnover score lower in English language arts and mathematics, a situation exacerbated in lower-performing schools. Schools with high teacher attrition are often forced to hire less experienced or new teachers who may not be as effective as teachers with more experience. As experienced teachers leave and more inexperienced teachers take their place, students find themselves continuously caught in a cycle that ultimately leads to lower achievement and fewer educational opportunities (Simon & Johnson, 2015).

Factors Influencing Teacher Attrition

Approximately 50% of teachers leave within the first five years, making teacher attrition a problem endemic in the United States (Clark, 2012; Hong, 2012). The U.S. Department of Education's, National Center for Education Statistics' (2014) recently released an exit survey showing 38.4% of teachers left due to personal life factors, 20.5%

chose “other factors,” and 13% listed career factors. Research notes that career factors include job aspects such as salary, discipline problems, poor support, poor student motivation, lack of faculty influence, lack of advancement opportunities, classroom disruptions, and inadequate time (Ingersoll and Smith, 2003). Administrators also influence teachers’ decisions to stay or leave the field. Clark (2012) equates lack of support and high demands from administration, along with anxiety and uncertainty, as very realistic reasons why teachers leave. However, research also supports the importance of a school principal’s role in improving teachers’ opinions of their school, which can influence a teachers’ decisions to stay (Burkhauser, 2016).

Leadership

Leadership, especially at the school level, is a key factor in teacher attrition. Indeed, a teacher’s commitment to stay in the profession is often affected by organizational factors (Hulpia et al., 2011). In other words, school leadership has the ability to create an environment that actively seeks to develop and maintain an inviting school atmosphere.

Minarik et al. (2003), cite the quality of the relationship between personnel and their supervisors as the single most important variable in productivity and commitment. Moreover, the quality of support a teacher receives from school leaders—such as a clearly defined and translated school vision and purposeful, relevant professional development— directly correlates to the commitment of the teacher to the organization (Hulpia et al., 2011). Principals that are visible, give appropriate praise, and allow

teachers leeway in the classroom tend to create a school climate that increases a teacher's willingness to stay (Johnson et al., 2005).

Through surveys and group discussions, one study involving an urban school district in a southeastern state examined 20 principals who were successful in retaining teachers with high achievement scores and significant numbers of students with special needs (Wynn et al., 2007). The district found that these principals considered strong instructional, operational, and strategic leadership to be of equal importance. The principals also believed that critical feedback, direct assistance, peer collaboration opportunities, and shared decision-making were vital for teacher retention (Wynn et al., 2007).

To help curb the high rate of attrition, district and school leaders must change their mindset from believing new teachers are easily replaceable to knowing the significance of hiring and developing well qualified teachers (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2007) stated that school districts often mismanage teachers, which impedes student learning and a teacher's desire to stay. Further recommendations include recruiting highly qualified teachers, training them in appropriate instructional strategies, and continuing to support them through professional learning (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007).

Support

Lack of support from administration is another reason many teachers decide to leave. New teacher attrition rates can be cut in half by implementing high quality,

comprehensive induction and mentoring programs throughout the first years of teaching (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Donder, 2011; Wynn et al., 2007). Gains made in student achievement through increased teacher effectiveness and reduction in teacher turnover due to comprehensive induction programs are also very cost effective (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007).

Mentoring relationships allow new teachers direct access to a veteran educator who can provide cultural information, pedagogy, and advice when needed. This relationship also allows the mentor to encourage and nurture the new teacher through even the toughest times in the classroom (Bobek, 2002). It is essential that newly hired teachers have a solid start with the support needed to thrive in the classroom (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007).

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2007) suggests a comprehensive induction support program must include the following four principles:

1. structuring and expanding teacher knowledge,
2. integrating new teachers into a supportive school culture of consistent professional development,
3. supporting development of the school's teaching community,
4. and promoting a collaborative discourse that supports the school's goals, values and best practices.

Furthermore, the induction program should provide a support system that incorporates the following:

1. a mentor,

2. supportive communication with administration and other teacher leaders,
3. collaborative learning and planning time with peers in the same field,
4. reduced course load and help from other staff members,
5. and participation in a professional learning community (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007)

The most efficient induction programs offer an assortment of support mechanisms, including a mentor from the same grade level or content area, participation in collaborative planning activities, and structured time to collaborate and reflect on best teaching practices (Clark, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Mentoring programs need to include a focus on the development of pedagogy that allows teachers to refine and build their practice so they can consistently and effectively foster student learning and growth (Wynn et al. 2007).

Sterling and Frazier's (2011) study of new science teachers found that 66% will leave the classroom within the first three years. This six-year study used student state achievement scores and science course grades as well as teacher performance metrics measured through surveys, coaches, and mentors to decipher the type of support teachers needed to be successful. The instructional coach provided classroom support and teaching strategies and met with teachers for an average of 96 hours through the first school year, as well as 24 hours during the second year. The teachers were also required to complete a basic science methods course during their first year and an advanced science course during their second year. Findings showed that students whose teachers received the

additional support via coursework, the coach, and mentor scored considerably higher than students of teachers who received little to no support (Sterling & Frazier, 2011).

Feinman-Nemser (2012) concluded that teachers who received at least two years of intensive, ongoing, one-on-one mentoring support tailored to the individual needs of the teacher had noticeably higher student achievement gains than teachers who received no support.

Appropriate support of teachers is important to the retention of teachers (Hughes et al., 2015). Continuous learning-centered professional development that meets the academic and pedagogical needs of teachers, including support from administrators and mentors as they learn to use these new strategies, are proven measures that not only decrease attrition but also increase student achievement.

Climate and Culture (Environment)

A harmonious school environment is of vital significance to retaining teachers (Hughes et al., 2015). In fact, a positive correlation exists between teacher retention and the importance of teachers' collegial collaborations (Johnson et al., 2005). Many teachers who stay in the profession credit a sense of teacher collegiality, strong relationships with peers, and the ability to contribute to school decisions (Jacobson, 2007).

Schools that build collegiality for teachers through meaningful collaboration create a more positive school culture (Minarik et al., 2003). Schools should strive to create learning communities in which new and veteran teachers work collectively to improve student achievement and all members share in the responsibility for each other's continued growth and success. Creating such a learning organization requires school

administrators to support continual, deep-rooted collaboration among teachers, principals, and students (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007).

According to Watson and Olson-Buchanan (2016), strengthening job embeddedness, the degree to which an employee bonds to their job and its community socially and emotionally, is a strategy that aids in creating a connection between new educators and the school culture. Given these points, a positive school environment is imperative to recruiting and retaining teachers.

Resiliency

Another factor affecting teacher attrition is resiliency. Hong (2012) defines resilience as "the process of, capacity for or outcome of successful adaptations despite challenging circumstances" (p. 419). Teachers who value their profession and feel fulfilled by their work are more likely to have a strong sense of resilience (Hong, 2012)

Tait (2008) suggests that induction programs should include resilience-building training and activities that teach resilience strategies. To help increase resilience, teachers need professional development as well as positive and productive collegial relationships with others who understand their plight and can offer insight into how to approach various situations (Tait, 2008). In a case study, Tait (2008) followed Mary, a new teacher, through her first year. Mary's students were a mixture of race and ethnicity and, in a low socioeconomic community, with nearly 50% of her students on academic or behavioral individual education plans. The makeup of her classroom was not what she envisioned when she began teaching. Mary had little support at her school as her mentor was not available very often, but despite these challenges, Mary planned to continue teaching.

She also planned to change how she handled classroom management and to become more social with peers. Tait (2008) considered Mary to be quite a resilient teacher as she was able to rebound and learn from some difficult experiences.

Supporting, understanding, and nurturing relationships with peers who understand the struggles new teachers face may increase teacher resiliency (Bobek, 2002). Teachers should discuss resilient responses to difficulties, receive practice through training scenarios, and observe classroom situations that help them to learn how to work through these challenges (Bobek, 2002). By asking questions, listening, and having discussions, school leaders can further build teacher resilience as they shape a caring relationship with teachers (Noddings, 2006). Within these relationships, teachers can build resiliency by cultivating a network of support that enables them to work through the transition into the classroom.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, or a teacher's belief in his or her ability to create a productive learning environment, is an important factor in resiliency (Hong, 2012). Self-efficacy is internal to the teacher and is dependent not only on the teacher's belief in their students' ability to learn but also the ability of the student to learn from the teacher (Silverman & Davis, 2009). When a teacher enters the classroom for the first time, self-efficacy can decline, as they feel unprepared for the task.

Hong (2012) observed perceptions, beliefs, and feelings that influenced teachers' decisions to leave or stay within the teaching profession. The study discerned fourteen teachers with less than five years of teaching experience who had attended the same

secondary science teacher certification program. The teachers taught at different types of schools, from rural to suburban to urban, and grade levels from eighth to eleventh grades. At the time of the study, seven teachers, all female, had already left (leavers) the teaching profession and seven, mostly male, were still teaching (stayers). Two of the leavers left for family-related issues and job dissatisfaction, while the other five left solely due to job dissatisfaction. The leavers acknowledged their lack of self-efficacy in their ability to manage the classroom and student behaviors. Even though the stayers had classroom management challenges, they continued to have a strong belief in their own abilities to work with students. The stayers believed that students are owners of their learning and should take charge of the learning process, while leavers placed importance on the teacher's role and how it influences students. The study found that with the right kind of support and atmosphere, a teacher's resilience can be developed and cultivated.

Administrative support and professional development geared towards preparing teachers and increasing their understanding of student culture positively influences self-efficacy, resulting in a greater chance of retention (Johnson et al., 2005; Hong, 2012).

Low Socioeconomic School

Teacher attrition does not affect all schools equally as it tends to be greater in significantly lower socioeconomic neighborhoods (Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009). As the socioeconomic status of a school declines, the teacher attrition rates of that same school increase. Recruiting teachers in such systems is difficult for school leaders (Hodges et al., 2013). Teachers in high-poverty, urban schools are 50% more likely to leave than in lower poverty schools. These same schools are also more likely to have

teachers less qualified than at other schools (Freedman & Appleman, 2009, Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009).

Freedman and Appleman (2009) conducted a five-year study of secondary English teachers who were in a master's credentialing program designed to show them how to teach in high-poverty, urban settings. The program focused on providing teachers with a theoretical foundation for teaching in urban schools as well as support in instruction and curriculum. During the first year of the program, teachers took pedagogical courses concentrating on urban teaching and second language methods. In the second year, teachers took a research course to support them in writing their master's paper. The goal of the program was to support teacher instruction, build habits of reflection, and help teachers to be leaders in their profession. Of the teachers enrolled in the program, 96% stayed for their second year, showing a marked improvement of the national retention rate of 76%. This retention rate is related to the program's two-year timeline to get through the master's cohort, along with the continued instructional support, curriculum assistance, and biweekly meetings. At the end of the five-year period, 54% were still teaching in the urban environment. Freedman et al. (2009) concluded that establishment of a strong cohort in the early years and involvement in other professional networking groups were paramount to teacher success.

Student Behaviors

Although the desire to help students is why many choose teaching, problems with student discipline and lack of student motivation are contributing factors to teachers leaving the profession (Hughes, 2012). According to Brill and McCartney (2008), student

behavior problems—the second most named reason teachers consider leaving—relates negatively to teacher satisfaction and the teacher’s intention to stay in the teaching profession or at their current school.

Teachers in inner-city schools express an even greater concern, as parental involvement is weak and viewed as a barrier to student learning. This lack of parental involvement leads to students’ increased lack of motivation and achievement, which results in increased classroom management problems for the teachers (Hughes, 2012).

Surveys of education majors indicate that new teachers’ area of greatest concern is feeling they cannot properly manage classroom behavior (Mitchell & Arnold, 2004). Often, new teachers are assigned lower achieving students and students with behavior difficulties since veteran teachers request higher achieving students (Brill & McCartney, 2008). Classroom management requires teachers to maintain a well-balanced classroom, socially and emotionally. When this ability is impaired, students are negatively affected, both academically and emotionally (Aloe et al., 2013).

According to Mitchell and Arnold (2004), attrition of teachers serving emotionally or behaviorally difficult students has reached a critical level in part due to high occupational stress. Teachers of students with emotional or behavioral difficulties tend to have high rates of stress and attrition, with many reporting increased fear of physical and verbal abuse from students and anxiousness about student discipline (Mitchell & Arnold, 2004, p.215).

An early concern for participants in a study by Mee and Haverback (2014) was classroom management. The study examined six graduates of the same middle school

teacher preparation program who were teaching at an urban-area middle school. One hundred percent of the participants experienced frustrations related to classroom management, paperwork administration and curriculum implementation. Considering their desire to teach middle school, five of the six teachers planned to return the following year. Even though classroom management problems for new teachers are not necessarily a consequence of teacher education programs, programs' lack of preparation in working with diverse student populations is a result (Mee & Haverback, 2014).

Workplace Stress

In spite of workplace stress affecting all professions, teaching is a particularly high stress profession that causes teachers to experience emotional burnout (Hong, 2012). According to Clark (2012), being a novice teacher is an “emotional rollercoaster” in which high demands, coupled with anxiety and uncertainty, are a very realistic reason that teachers leave before they really begin. Not usually trained in how to handle the stress and demands of the whole job, new teachers learn this once they are immersed in the field.

Many teachers teach out of field due to a lack of certification in their subject area. This lack of expertise can increase stress as they are underprepared for the subject area they are responsible for teaching. Other teachers are required to teach a variety of courses, a situation that increases the stress of preparing several lessons for the same day. Worrying over lesson plans and trying to stay a step ahead of students can cause teachers to leave the profession (Johnson et al., 2005).

Decision Making Involvement

A point often overlooked in attrition is teacher involvement in making school and student related decisions. Minarik et al., (2003) cited the quality of the relationship between personnel and their supervisors as the single most important variable in productivity and commitment. According to Wynn et al., (2007), schools that foster a supportive climate through collaboration and teacher input in decision making correlated to a greater commitment to teaching and a first-year teacher's intent to remain in the profession.

Teacher Accountability

Standardized assessments measure student learning and hold both school districts and teachers accountable in the name of school improvement, making testing a concern for all stakeholders (Ingersoll et al., 2016). According to a study by Boyd, et, al. (2008), teachers indicated they felt pressured to ensure their students performed well on state tests. Moreover, they felt they lost their autonomy and professional creativity with the shift in focus from teaching to ensuring that students passed a state assessment. Ryan et al.'s (2017) study of state assessment accountability and its relationship to teacher stress, burnout, and retention concluded that all facets of test-based accountability influenced a teacher's decision to leave the profession.

Ingersoll et al. (2016) reviewed the national Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) for the 2003-2004 school year and the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) for the 2004-2005 school year. The data showed two results: "1. Some steps in school accountability were strongly related to teacher turnover, and some were not. 2. The impact of

accountability strongly depended on teacher working conditions in their school” (Ingersoll et al., 2016, p. 46). School performance itself affected teacher attrition. The better a school performed, the less teacher movement occurred. The worse a school performed, the higher the teacher attrition. Ingersoll et al. (2016) also found that rewards given to better performing schools did little to improve teacher retention at those schools; however, lower performing schools that had sanctions applied to them saw their retention problems worsen.

Section 1012.34(3)(a)(1) (2019), F.S., requires at least one-third of a teacher’s performance evaluation be calculated based on instructional practice, which is conducted through observations based on the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices adopted by the State Board of Education. The state uses the Value-Added Model (VAM) to measure specific impact on performance outcomes, such as the influence of a teacher on student growth (Florida Department of Education, 2020f). The Value-Added Model “predicts the standardized test score performance that each student would have obtained with the average teacher and then compares the average performance of a given teacher’s students to the average of the predicted scores” (Walsh & Isenberg, 2015, p.53). The difference between the two scores is credited to teachers as their value added to the performance of the student (Walsh & Isenberg, 2015).

Section 1012.34(2)(e), F.S., also requires that evaluation systems for instructional personnel and school administrators differentiate among four levels of performance:

1. Highly effective
2. Effective

3. Needs improvement or, for instructional personnel in the first three years of employment who need improvement, developing
4. Unsatisfactory

As of the 2015-2016 school year, State Board Rule 6A-5.0411, F.A.C., standardized the VAM measures used as part of educator evaluations, including how districts interpret them, by creating a common measurement and method for organizing that measurement into “four performance-level categories that mirror the ones used for the overall evaluation” (Florida Department of Education, 2016). The performance-level standard Value-Added Models are as follows:

- Highly Effective: VAM score is positive and both the 68% and 95% confidence intervals are entirely positive
- Effective: VAM score is not classified as Highly Effective, Needs Improvement, or Unsatisfactory.
- Needs Improvement: VAM score and the 68% confidence are negative, but the 95% confidence interval includes 0.
- Unsatisfactory: VAM score is negative and both the 68% and 95% confidence intervals are entirely negative (Florida Department of Education, 2016).

For the 2015-2016 school-based performance evaluation, fewer than 2% of all educators in Florida received less than an effective rating, while 15% of educator evaluations were either not reported or not conducted (Florida Department of Education, 2016). In comparison, the 2015-16 ratings showed 44% of teachers received highly effective final evaluations, while only 19% of teachers had similarly classified VAM

scores. In fact, “there were more than 62 times more teachers with unsatisfactory VAM scores” as there were those who received an unsatisfactory final evaluation rating (Florida Department of Education, 2016). The overall findings consistently show that the higher the performance evaluation rating, the “higher the average VAM score” (Florida Department of Education, 2016).

Teachers do not mind being held accountable for student growth and effective instruction; rather, their concern is with the accountability model being used (Vernaza, 2012; Tucker, 2015). Teachers believe their own classroom assessments are more informative about their instruction than standardized state testing (Vernaza, 2012). Vernaza (2012) found that Florida third-grade teachers prefer a contingency-based accountability in which the state assessment performance results would be contingent upon multiple factors, including “accountability for others; personal student factors beyond the teacher’s control; and students’ level of academic performance upon entering third grade” (p. 5).

Teacher Preparation

As previously noted, teacher preparation programs and courses lay the groundwork for teachers as they enter the profession. Unfortunately, many do not exit these programs fully ready for the classroom. According to Ado (2013), novice teachers need to be prepared to expect “challenges and questions to arise out of the intersections between the school context, their practice, and their expectations about teaching” and must be able to learn from these interactions instead of feeling overpowered by them (p.148).

Ingersoll et al. (2012) found that new mathematics and science teachers left at a higher rate in their first year than other teachers. Science and mathematics teacher retention reflected their formal education and preparation programs. About 42% of new math teachers and 68 % of new science teachers have non-education degrees, instead entering teaching through alternative certification programs. However, teachers who had taken courses that taught teaching methods, strategies, and theories were far less likely to leave (Ingersoll et al., 2012).

Districts count on colleges and teacher preparation programs to provide them with highly trained teachers who have the academic and pedagogical skills necessary to ensure success in the classroom (Donder, 2011). However, even teachers who attend traditional education programs are often underprepared for what truly awaits them at the door to the classroom. These programs tend to do little to guide teachers through their first years in the profession long enough to develop the knowledge, skills, and practices necessary to affect student learning (Van Zandt, 2014).

Salary

Along with the many reasons listed heretofore, the lack of compensation equivalent to the education level required of teachers negatively influences teacher attrition. According to Parham and Gordon (2011), we must pay teachers as professionals if we want them to remain in the profession. In order to remain competitive in hiring and retaining qualified teachers, districts need to make teacher salary schedules a priority (Gutierrez, 2015). Gutierrez (2015) describes salary schedules as having “steps that represent years of teaching experience/longevity and levels that represent educational

credits and degrees achieved” (p.20). As they move through the schedule levels based on educational degrees and years of service, teachers have the ability to receive salary increases. With higher salaries, districts could potentially attract and retain more qualified teachers.

Temporary Career

Not all who enter the teaching profession plan to remain through to retirement; indeed, some only plan to stay for the short term, which adds to the revolving door of the teaching profession. With the inception of public schools in the late 1800s came the perception that teaching was a low status, temporary career appropriate for women prior to their true profession of raising a family (Brill & McCarney, 2008, Ingersoll, 2003). For men, teaching was the first step to a more respectable position in the future (Ingersoll, 2003). Teaching is still considered for many a temporary career or a stepping-stone to the career that they really want. Women might work until they have children and then, once the children are of school age, will return to the classroom. These temporary career seekers account for a portion of the high attrition rates in education.

In a study by Ado (2013), Nia, a social studies teacher, never thought of education as her long-term career. Citing dissatisfaction with the learning expectations of the school, lack of support, demands from administration, and the challenge of effectively teaching to the diverse needs of students, Nia left the classroom at the end of her second year to attend law school. Even though Nia only planned to teach for a few years, she might have stayed if she felt the system was working and if she knew she was going to be effective.

Some teachers enter and exit the classroom as they deem appropriate. Gilbert (2011) studied two science teachers who both left teaching to follow other career paths. Chris had a master's degree in teaching science. He taught biology for almost five years when he decided to apply to medical school. He attended medical school for one year, and then returned to the classroom for a one-year reprieve from the stresses of medical school. Chris never viewed education as a permanent career path, only as a means of rejuvenating his love for intellectualism, as he did not see teaching as intellectually stimulating. The other subject of Gilbert's (2011) study, Carolina, left the classroom after three years to pursue a master's degree in science education and then to attend medical school. She also returned to the classroom from time to time when she felt she needed a reflective break. For Carolina, education was her alternative plan until she was able to go back to college for her real career path.

Brill and McCartney (2008) concluded that certain characteristics were associated with those who intend to stay permanently in education. For instance, older, more experienced teachers with ties to the community are more beneficial to retention than teachers with more advanced degrees and qualifications. According to Hughes (2012), evidence suggests that teachers with higher ability scores on national assessments such as the American College Test (ACT), the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), or other college entrance exams are more likely to leave teaching within the first five years as opposed to those within the lower quartile of scores.

Job Satisfaction

Any one of the previously discussed reasons related to teacher attrition can affect job satisfaction. In fact, both intrinsic and extrinsic variables influence job satisfaction (Perrachione et al., 2008). Poor work experiences, including lack of student interest and parent support, as well as lack of professional autonomy increase a teacher's perceptions of job dissatisfaction (Perrachione et al., 2008). When a teacher experiences job dissatisfaction, student success decreases, and teachers are less eager to continue teaching. In contrast, teachers that experience higher levels of job satisfaction tend to stay in the profession while teachers in the special education field often experience lower job satisfaction than their general education counterparts (Viel-Ruma et al., 2010). Additionally, employees with high job satisfaction are more likely to endorse their employers and tell others (Van Hoya, 2014).

Perrachione et al. (2008) examined the correlation between job satisfaction and demographic characteristics. Research findings show that age, gender, marital status, grade level taught, and educational level are positively related to job satisfaction. Older, more experienced teachers tend to have less satisfaction than their younger, less experienced colleagues do, male teachers are inclined to be less satisfied than female teachers, and married women are more satisfied than both unmarried women and men. Furthermore, elementary teachers tend to be more satisfied with teaching than secondary teachers.

Additionally, those who were able to collaborate with peers received recognition from school leaders, served in leadership roles, and experienced productive professional

development were decidedly more satisfied with their teaching roles than those who had not had such experiences (Perrachione et al., 2008).

Title I

At any given time, over half of the United States student population receives Title I funding. Federal funding through Title I provides financial support to schools that serve a large number of students from low-income families and helps all children meet state academic standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). Currently, Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) receive allocated funds through four grants based on poverty estimates and state education costs: Basic Grants, Concentration Grants, Targeted Grants, and Education Finance Incentive Grants. Basic Grants accounted for 43% or roughly \$6.5 billion of distributed Title I funds in Fiscal Year 2015. Concentration Grants, accounting for \$1.3 billion in Fiscal Year 2015, provide additional funding to LEAs eligible for the Basic Grant that have extremely large populations of low socioeconomic and disadvantaged. With approximately \$3.3 billion allocated in Fiscal Year 2015, Targeted Grants allow additional funding for LEAs eligible for Basic and Concentration Grants based on a data weighing system that provides proportional funding to populations with the greatest number of low socioeconomic and disadvantaged students. Education Finance Incentive Grants (EFIG) are distributed based on “state equity and effort in funding public education” (U.S. Department of Education, 2016a). The EFIG for Fiscal Year 2015 was \$3.3 billion of the total allocation. (U.S. Department of Education, 2016a; U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

For the 2015-16 school year, nearly 54,000 of the over 98,000 public schools across the United States used Title I funds. In Florida, more than 2,950 public schools out of 4,322 were Title I in the 2015-16 school year (U.S. Department of Education, 2018a).

History, Creation, and Mission

In 1965, President Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), due in part to pressures from the civil rights movement and religious education struggles. This Education Act allowed him to provide funding to schools by making it part of his “War on Poverty” (Schugurensky, 2001, para.1). Three years earlier, in 1964, Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel outlined three options in a memo to help provide funds for schools. One option would provide general aid to all public schools but could create backlash from Catholic schools. Another option suggested providing aid to both public and private schools, which the National Education Association and various members of the Democratic Party would strenuously oppose due to federal dollars funding private or religious schools. The final choice directly linked the aid to the child’s economic status, a more acceptable option for all parties (Schugurensky, 2001).

According to President Johnson, this bill strengthened “state and local agencies which bear the burden and the challenge of better education” (Johnson, 1965, para.16). As the first federal education bill to exact funding for public education along with federal policy designed to support students in low socioeconomic areas, it was an important step towards helping all children in America (Forte, 2010). The Act’s purpose was to equalize the achievement gap between children from low socioeconomic homes and students in

more prosperous areas. Through Title I, billions of dollars a year were promised to schools, with the majority of funds distributed to traditionally low-income schools.

The ESEA is renewable every five years and has continued to be renewed, usually with a handful of revisions, amendments, and name changes. Not until 1988 did the focus change from “financial regulations to student achievement” (The Social Welfare History Project, n.d, para. 10.). The plan was to increase school improvement through classroom instruction, advanced skills, and greater parental involvement. Up to this point, states were required to use different achievement tests for lower-socioeconomic schools compared to schools in higher economic status areas (Forte, 2010).

In 1994, ESEA was revamped to combine resources with state and local entities to include all students. The Improving America’s Schools Act required states to establish common standards in both math and reading for third grade and up. In at least three grade levels, the states were required to align the standards with statewide assessments for accountability (Forte, 2010). To receive federal funding, the required percentage of lower socioeconomic students to qualify for aid was reduced from 75% to 50% (The Social Welfare History Project, n.d.).

In 2001, President Bush renewed ESEA, calling it the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Touting high-quality education for all students, reauthorization with increased regulation and accountability was passed with bipartisan support. Increased accountability applied to both schools and teachers based on students’ ability to perform on certain standardized tests. NCLB expanded the measurement of math, language arts, and reading standards to include all grades 3 through 8, with at least one in grades 10

through 12 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Science standards and assessments were also required for three grade levels, one each in elementary, middle, and high school (Forte, 2010). The assessment data was then sorted based on specific demographics such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, English proficiency, and race. Schools also had to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or face the “punitive measures that would be taken” if they failed to do so (The Social Welfare History Project, n.d., para. 12).

Another component of NCLB allowed more flexibility in the way that federal education funds were dispersed and used by government entities that successfully met accountability. The only stipulation was that they had to follow Elementary and Secondary Education Act guidelines for use of funds (Husband & Hunt, 2015).

Additionally, if a school was failing, students in that school had options they had not had before. These options included attending another school that was meeting the requirements, whether a public school or charter school. Supplemental education services were also provided through state approved groups to help tutor students if the school qualified (Husband & Hunt, 2015).

One final component was the requirement that “all school improvement plans, professional development, and assistance for low-performing schools and all Title I instruction be based” on scientifically proven research-based instructional strategies (Husband & Hunt, 2015, p. 215). Consequently, all instructional methods used in the classroom had to be supported by quantitative research studies.

Congress did not renew NCLB in 2007, when it was originally scheduled, as it was deemed “unworkable for schools and educators” due to its rigid requirements (U.S.

Department of Education, 2017, para. 4). The U.S. Department of Education presented Race to the Top (RttT) in 2009 as a “federal grant competition program, created to support ambitious state-led education reform agendas, including improving low-achieving schools” (Childs & Russell, 2016, p. 237). The creation of RttT was in response to the Department of Education receiving \$4.35 billion dollars in earmarked funds from President Obama’s Stimulus Bill, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Truth in American Education, 2017; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). RttT allowed states to increase local control efforts of school improvement by providing additional funding to those that provided well drawn out plans for moving students forward (Childs & Russell, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Eligibility to partake in grant monies required states to agree to implement federal policies, such as student performance-based teacher evaluations, data systems to track student growth, turnaround of lowest achieving schools, and preferable adoption of the Common Core State Standards (Klein, 2014). In 2010, the first year of implementation, twelve states, including Florida, shared part of \$400 billion dollars. The RttT incentive program continued through July of 2015, utilizing various strategies to share funding to districts and states that were willing to meet the requirements.

After several years of debate regarding the future of education, Congress finally passed reauthorization of NCLB in 2015 (McGuinn, 2016). President Obama signed the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which created the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA continues to focus on students in need, high

academic standards, statewide annual assessments, increased support for preschool programs, and an expectation of accountability (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

With ESSA, many decisions moved from the federal to the state level. For example, states may now adopt their own high academic standards that meet the requirement to prepare students for college and career (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The federal government also mandates that standards have at least three levels of achievement and that all standards apply to all students in a public school (Mandlawitz, 2016).

The ESSA assessment provision also requires annual assessments in math and reading or language arts for grades 3-8 as well as at least one other time between 9th and 12th grade. Moreover, science must be assessed “not less than once during grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12” (Mandlawitz, 2016, Academic Assessments section, para. 1). Like NCLB, data must be broken down into the four subgroups: English-learners, students with disabilities, racial and ethnic groups, and economically disadvantaged (The Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools, 2015). Even though ESSA requires states to measure student achievement or growth based on grade level and graduation rates, states are free to include other measures of their choice to evaluate how well schools and districts are performing (The Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools, 2015).

Since enacted, the Title I portion of the education mandate has never faltered from its purpose to provide a “fair, equitable, and high-quality education” to all children in the United States (Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, p. 8). The current Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 expired September 30, 2020, the end of the federal fiscal year;

however, funding continued through the 2020-2021 school year with no definitive plan for renewal.

Measurement of Success

Using provisions outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act, Florida measures school success and calculates school grades that provide an understandable measure for the public to distinguish individual school performance. Grades of A, B, C, D, or F, with A considered the highest possible rating, are based on student performance on yearly state assessments. To receive a grade, schools must have sufficient data for and test at least 95% of students in each eligible component. Florida defines sufficient data as having at least ten students in that component. The 2018-19 school grade calculation “may include up to eleven components,” based on “four achievement components, four learning gains components, a middle school acceleration component, as well as components for graduation rate and college and career acceleration,” with each component worth a maximum of 100 points (Florida Department of Education, 2019a. p. 2).

As indicated in Table 1, results of the 2019 state assessment for over 1,600 Florida elementary non-Title I schools show that 70% achieved an A rating, 21% received a B, 9% a C, and no schools received a D or F grade. The number of elementary schools receiving an A increased by ten percentage points, while those earning a B decreased by 5%. Likewise, schools rated a C decreased by 3% and those rated a D by 100% (Florida Department of Education, 2019d).

As shown in Table 1, in 2019, nearly 16% of Florida’s elementary Title I schools achieved the status of an A school, 29% were a B, 46% a C, 9% a D, and less than 1% were an F. This status was a marked improvement from 2018, as schools receiving an A or a B increased by more than 17% with those receiving a C decreased by nearly 11%, a D by 37% and an F by over 100% (Florida Department of Education, 2019d).

Table 1

Comparison of Title I vs non-Title I School Grades for 2018 and 2019

School Grade	Title I		non-Title I	
	2018	2019	2018	2019
A	151	182	289	333
B	273	345	124	102
C	593	537	56	43
D	136	100	3	0
F	20	8	0	0

Note. Adapted from Florida Department of Education (2019d). Florida school grades-2019.

Both Title I and non-Title I schools have improved significantly; however, the gap between Title I and non-Title I schools continues to grow. In 2019, the gap between the number of Title I schools and non-Title I schools receiving an A widened from a 47% to a 54% difference (Florida Department of Education, 2019c).

High-performing Title I Schools

Schools that continuously receive an A rating are deemed successful or high performing. High-performing Title I schools have similar traits, including freedom of the

principal to hire the best fitting teachers, free use of their budget, and liberty to select school-appropriate curriculum (Carter, 2000). Principals of high-performing schools also create goals and visions for achievement (Carter, 2000; National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP, n.d). Furthermore, high-performing schools work to improve teacher quality, continuously review student data, hold students to high expectations, and involve parents (Carter, 2000; NAESP, n.d.).

The Colorado Department of Education analyzed high achieving Title I schools in Colorado and found three common practices: leadership, school culture, and best first instruction (Boland et al., 2012). The study reviewed common practices of Title I schools that had their lowest performing students achieve high growth. All schools exhibited high leadership standards, not only by the principal but also across the school, and school schedules and classroom instruction were purposefully planned to optimize learning. Furthermore, schools consistently worked together, each taking ownership of student success.

The success of a Title I school is just as dependent upon having highly qualified leadership as it is upon highly qualified teachers. According to Louis et al. (2010), no school has ever improved the achievement of its students without high-quality leadership. In fact, effective school leadership is second only to the influence of classroom instruction on student achievement (Louis et al., 2010).

Title I Student and Teacher Populations

It is important to point out that due to a growingly diverse population, Title I schools serve more than just economically disadvantaged students, especially as

culturally and linguistically diverse populations continue to rise. An average of 88% of Florida's Title I elementary students qualify as low socioeconomic, with more than 70% listed as minority students (Florida Department of Education, 2019d).

The term culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) is often used to describe students whose families do not use English as their primary language, are Hispanic and/or African American (Kaylor & Flores, 2007). CLD students are also identified by a wide range of terms including English Language Learners (ELL), Second Language Learners (SLL), Limited English Proficient (LEP), English Learner (EL), and English as a Second Language (ESL/ESOL) (Webster & Lu, 2012).

In addition, as the majority of teachers in CLD schools are middle class, White, and residing outside of the community in which they teach, a growing number of students do not share the home language, culture, or experiences of the teachers within their schools (Kaylor & Flores, 2007; Li, 2013). Even though the diversity of teachers has grown in recent years, "every state has a higher percentage of students of color than teachers of color" (U.S. Department of Education, 2016b, p.2). As the number of CLD students in Title I schools grows, the diversity gap between the student population versus the teacher population will increase as well.

Impact of Attrition on Title I Schools

As previously indicated, more than half of teachers who enter the profession will leave within the first five years. In a lower socioeconomic setting, such as a Title I school, the number of teachers leaving is greater compared to non-Title I schools (Ingersoll, 2004; Johnson, 2006; Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009). Omenn Strunk and

Robinson (2006) found that the “racial composition of the schools has a stronger and more significant power to predict the likelihood of the average teacher leaving a given school,” indicating that teachers are more likely to leave a school as the number of minority students increases (p. 86). Students in Title I schools are also more likely to have a teacher who is “inexperienced, uncertified, poorly educated, and under-performing” (Carey, 2004, p.8). In addition, many of these teachers exhibit “most or all” of these “qualities all at the same time,” which can greatly affect student achievement (Carey, 2004, p.8).

In the 2015-16 school year, nearly 68% of Florida’s public schools were eligible for Title I funding (U.S. Department of Education, 2018b). Therefore, over 50% of students attend a high poverty school that qualifies for federal assistance. To put it another way, the impact of teacher attrition on Title I schools is detrimental to students as nearly half of all students within Florida attend a school that has a higher-than-average chance of losing rather than keeping a teacher.

Summary

Title I schools face a challenge in not only recruiting but also in retaining highly qualified teachers. Stacked against them is that nearly 50% of teachers leave within their first five years of teaching (Hong, 2012; Ingersoll, 2004). This is true no matter the pathway to the classroom, either through the historically traditional college of education programs or alternative certification methods (Johnson et al., 2005). Researchers have found that teachers leave for a multitude of reasons, including lack of leadership (Hulpia et al., 2011), lack of support (Wynn et al., 2007), poor climate and culture (Jacobson,

2007), resiliency (Tait, 2008), inadequate self-efficacy (Hong, 2012), a low socioeconomic school (Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009), challenging student behavior (Hughes, 2012), workplace stress (Clark, 2012), inadequate decision making involvement (Wynn et al., 2007), teacher accountability (Boyd et al., 2008), inconsistent teacher preparation (Ingersoll et al., 2012), dissatisfaction with salary (Parham & Gordon, 2011), choosing teaching as a temporary career (Ado, 2013), and overall job satisfaction (Perrachione et al., 2008).

Knowing why teachers leave is helpful; however, further research must be conducted to determine what principals are doing to encourage teachers to stay (Burkhauser, 2016; Grisson and Bartanen, 2019). By gaining a better understanding of what principals can do to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, a more theoretical understanding of best practices can be established and implemented.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Since the purpose of this study was to explore the lived recruitment and retention experiences of principals and teachers, a qualitative phenomenological research method was chosen. While quantitative research identifies performance measures and trends, qualitative research explores behavior patterns by allowing people to explain their experiences and reactions to those experiences (Creswell, 2013; Hoy & Adams, 2016).

The methodology used to test the research questions is shared in this chapter. The chapter will present information regarding the selection of participants, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Rationale for the Methodology Selected

Phenomenology as a form of qualitative research is rooted in a philosophy developed by Edmund Husserl in the early 1900s (Giorgi, 2010). However, Moustakas, who stated “research should focus on the wholeness of experience and a search for essences of experiences” is considered the founder (p. 1). The overall purpose of a phenomenological study is to exemplify the significance, structure, and aspect of lived experiences of people around a certain phenomenon (Simon & Goes, 2011; Van Manen, 2017).

Description of the Methodological Approach

Using the interview process for data collection, this phenomenological study describes the phenomena from both the principal’s and the teacher’s perspective (Bevan, 2014; Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The phenomenological research design was specifically

selected as this approach allows the researcher to see directly through the participant's eyes, permitting a deeper dive into the experience of teacher recruitment and retention (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008).

Participants and Sampling

This qualitative phenomenological study strives to answer research questions using the experiences of successful elementary Title I principals and highly qualified teachers in north Florida (See Appendix E and Appendix F). The study explored the policies and practices principals purposefully put in place to encourage teachers to accept a position and to stay.

Study Participants

This phenomenological study was conducted using criterion sampling of high performing, Title I elementary schools in north Florida. State-issued grades, based on state assessments, determined school performance. Using the most recent assessment data available, consideration for this study includes schools that possess an A grade at the end of the 2018-19 school year and an A or B grade at the end of the 2017-18 school year. Of the 34 counties in north Florida, 31 have Title I elementary schools, and 18 have Title I elementary schools that meet the study's criteria. Through emails and phone calls to district instructional or research supervisors, permission to conduct the study was first sought from each of the 18 districts (See Appendix B). Once authorization was obtained from a district, permission was then sought from each principal and teacher by phone or email (See Appendix C). For the selection of teacher participants, consenting principals provided names of teachers who are highly qualified, as defined by the state, and who

received a highly effective performance evaluation for the 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20 school years (see Appendix D).

Rationale for Selecting Participants for the Study

Prior research in teacher recruitment and retention in high poverty schools often analyzes the reasons teachers abandon the profession. Even though this information may disclose the most frequent reasons teachers leave, it does not examine what principals do to encourage teachers to stay. Deeper exploration of this complex topic is needed to better understand what works.

Context

This study was conducted at high-performing elementary Title I schools in north Florida. The study included elementary schools that possessed an A grade at the end of the 2018-19 school year and an A or B grade at the end of the 2017-18 school year.

Rationale for Selecting the Research Sites

North Florida elementary Title I schools were the focus of this study as this was a qualitative study with only one researcher. The sampling group covered a large geographical area of Florida, which met the requirements of validity and reliability for the study.

Sampling Procedures

The population of the study included principals and teachers of selected north Florida Title I schools. Of the principals that agreed to participate in the study, a sample of the five principals whose school met the above criteria and who had the lowest attrition rate was selected for the interview process. Random sampling of the list of

highly qualified teachers provided by the principal provides an unbiased representation of the teacher population and equal opportunity of being chosen as part of the sampling process (Creswell, 2013). Using Microsoft Excel's random sampling function, at least two teachers were randomly selected from the pool of teachers provided by the principal. If a selected teacher or principal was not willing to participate, additional participants were selected using the same selection process. If a principal agreed to participate but their teachers did not, the next principal meeting the criteria was contacted for participation. Principals and teachers were initially contacted by email and asked if they were willing to participate. The study and the purpose of their selection was described in detail. Subjects participated in interview sessions, lasting from twenty minutes to one hour, through their chosen venue. Transcripts of each interview were sent to participants to check for accuracy. No mental or physical harm befell the participants as the researcher collected data through interviews.

Instrumentation

Phenomenological research requires a structured interview process that supports a thorough investigation (Bevan, 2014; Van Manen, 2017). Even though the structure is up to the researcher, interviews should include three main domains: contextualization, apprehending the phenomenon, and clarifying the phenomenon (Bevan, 2014). Contextual questions provide an avenue for participants to describe their life experiences, which are both relevant to the study and the tools that allow the researcher to build rapport (Bevan, 2014). For the researcher, building background knowledge of the participant provides a better understanding of the participant's perspective. Next, the

researcher should “apprehend the phenomenon,” in other words, turn the focus on the “experience the researcher is interested in” (Bevin, 2014, p.140). In this phase, the researcher uses more “descriptive and structural questions” to explore the focus of the study (Bevin, 2014, p.141). Using both descriptive and structural questions serves to deepen the narrative contributed by participants, as the researcher is able to clarify their own interpretation of what is shared. Finally, clarification of the phenomenon is achieved through imaginative variation, which is accomplished by examining the transcribed interview data (Bevin, 2014). Reduction or the analysis of the narrative data to interpret a consistent and common theme adds to the dependability of the research process (Adams & Van Manen, 2017; Bevin, 2014; Seidman, 2013; Simon & Goes, 2011). According to Bevin (2014), this approach to the phenomenological interview process “enables a researcher to demonstrate consistency, dependability, credibility, and trustworthiness, which is essential for the quality of research” (p.143).

Using the research questions of this phenomenological study as a baseline, interview questions were designed and developed by the researcher. When developing the interview questions, the intent was to use both contextual and descriptive to elicit answers related to the recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers in elementary Title I schools. Contextual questions are open-ended, except four that require specific answers to understand better the participant’s background. All descriptive questions are open-ended, except for two 5-point Likert scale questions for principals to self-measure their ability to recruit and retain teachers (1 = extremely poor, 5 = extremely strong) (Likert, 1932).

The initial instruments in this study are semi-structured, open-ended questions to build rapport and to allow participants to answer freely the questions (Creswell, 2013; Seidman, 2013). During the interview, participant responses determined follow up questions (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative Data Collection Instruments

Using this study's research questions as the foundation, contextual and detailed interview questions were developed by the researcher. Furthermore, interview questions underwent a thorough review from committee members and other qualified professionals.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What practices do Title I principals of high-performing elementary schools in north Florida use to recruit highly qualified teachers?
2. What practices do Title I principals of high-performing elementary schools in north Florida use to retain highly qualified teachers?
3. What principal practices do Title I teachers perceive to be the most effective in enticing them to accept a position or to stay?

Contextual questions for both the principal and the teacher include the following:

1. How long have you been in education?
2. Why did you enter into the field of education?
3. How many schools/districts have you worked in? What were your roles?
4. Have you ever worked at a Title I school before? Have you ever worked at a non-Title I school before? (If they worked at a non-Title I school, do they notice any differences?)

5. As a leader/teacher, what unique traits do you bring to a Title I school?
6. At this time, where do you see yourself in 5 years?
7. Are you bilingual or bicultural?
8. What is the diversity of the student population of your school/classroom?
9. How would you define highly qualified as it relates to teachers?

The descriptive questions for the principal include:

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being extremely poor and 5 being extremely strong, what would you rate as your ability to recruit teachers? Why did you choose that rating?
2. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being extremely poor and 5 being extremely strong, what would you rate as your ability to retain teachers? Why did you choose that rating?
3. What was the attrition rate of your school for 2018-19? 2019-20?
4. Has the attrition rate of your school changed since you have served as principal? Explain.
5. What practices have you put in place that help you in recruiting teachers?
6. What are the implications of these practices on other aspects of the school?
7. What practices have you put in place that help you in retaining teachers?
8. Do you use the same practices to recruit or retain all teachers?
9. How would you describe the environment of your school?
10. What strategies were used to obtain this environment?
11. What struggles did you face in creating this environment?

12. Do you have any plans to adjust your recruitment or retention practices in the future? Why or why not? If so, would you care to share your plan?

Descriptive questions for the teacher include:

1. What impact did your principal have on your decision to accept a position?
2. What impact does your principal have on your decision to stay?
3. How would you describe the environment of your school?
4. Are there any other factors that impact on your intention to join/stay?
5. Are there any factors that might impact your intention to leave?
6. In your opinion, what recommendations might you suggest to a principal in the recruitment and retention of teachers?

Procedures

Participation in this study was voluntary. Each district's administration provided permission to collect data from their schools. Participants were contacted by email and then phone as a means of introduction. All participants were fully informed of the purpose of this study and provided with the interview questions in advance, as well as the methods for data collection and reporting. Participants chose the time and method for each interview. Prior to the start of the interview, participants signed informed consent forms.

Recruitment

A minimum of three school districts, five principals, and ten teachers was needed to ensure reliability of the study (Fusch et al., 2018). Recruitment of participants occurred through email to each qualifying district. Once permission was obtained from the district,

the principal was contacted through email to request their participation. Principals informed the teachers of the potential for the researcher to contact them by email to request their participation in the study. Collection of data occurred between February and May of 2021.

Data Collection Procedure

All interviews, except for three, were conducted via phone or electronic virtual meeting as per the preference of the participant. Three, including one principal and two teacher interviews, were in person. All interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed using Google's Speech-to-Text feature.

Each participant's identity was concealed during the research process. Without the assurance of privacy, participants may not freely respond to questions. Methods of teacher retention hold potential ethical implications for principals, teachers, districts, students, and employees. Therefore, all identifying information has been excluded from published data and replaced with pseudonyms to protect participants. To maintain confidentiality of the collected data, interview recordings and transcripts were saved on a password-protected computer. Upon completion of the research study, all associated documents will be deleted.

Processes to Ensure Valid/Dependable and Reliable/Credible Results

As the focus of a phenomenological study is the narrative of the phenomenon, and the narrative is the data, validation of the data must be done using procedures that provide plausibility and understanding of the phenomenon (Pereira, 2012; Simon & Goes, 2011). Additionally, qualitative researchers often use triangulation of multiple sources of data

for validation and reliability of a study (Fusch et al., 2018). Creswell (2013) suggests, “when qualitative researchers locate evidence to document a code or theme in different sources of data, they are triangulating information and providing validity to their findings” (p. 251).

Denzin is recognized for the development of four types of triangulation: triangulation of data, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and methodological triangulation, which allow researchers to establish validity of social or qualitative research (Denzin, 1971; Flick, 2004; Fusch et al., 2018). Triangulation of data examines commonalities in data from the same event, though from different people, at different times, and in different places. Investigator triangulation requires more than one researcher to explore the same phenomenon (Flick, 2004; Fusch et al., 2018). Multiple researchers allow differing views and a wider lens to examine the data. Theory triangulation implores multiple theories when reviewing the data. Many lenses, including alternative views, and even letting “the raw data speak to the researcher to ascertain a new theory,” are used in a theory triangulation method (Fusch et al., 2018, p. 22). Methodological triangulation, which is often confused with triangulation of data, is broken down into two types: between method and within method. The between method is often used in mixed-method studies as triangulation occurs when comparing both the quantitative and qualitative data (Flick, 2004; Fusch et al., 2018). Within method includes using multiple data resources, such as multiple interviews, focus groups, or observations (Flick, 2004; Fusch et al., 2018).

Data Analysis Procedures

For the purpose of this study, data source triangulation was used, as it provides triangulation across time, space, and personal interactions—including comparison of multiple perspectives and points of view—to look at a phenomenon allowing for verification of research quality (Fusch et al., 2018; Patton, 1999; Stake, 1995). Therefore, data triangulation occurred through principal and teacher interviews throughout several schools in north Florida (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008).

For this study, interviews have been digitally recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were read and reviewed to identify key concepts and ideas. Analysis of the data followed guidelines set forth by Seidman (2013). Additionally, the inductive approach was utilized to condense the raw data to establish links in the patterns and themes connecting research objectives to summary findings (Thomas, 2006). First, the horizontalization process was used to review the data, then marked and grouped for points of interest (Creswell, 2013). Next excerpts were categorized into themes and coded, looking for connections among the interviews and reviewed literature. Finally, interpretation and making sense of the data transpired (Creswell, 2013; Seidman, 2013).

To preserve validity, the researcher refrained from using personal experience during the theming process, allowing reflection only on the described experience of the participants (Bevin, 2014). The researcher was cognizant of this requirement and made sure to enter this step with an open mind. To ensure proper interpretation of participant views and comments, participants reviewed and validated the researcher's data interpretations (Creswell, 2013; Simon & Goes, 2011). Once data and themes were

interpreted, the information was reviewed for connections between the interviews and literature (Seidman, 2013). Data was then represented through charts and narration (Creswell, 2013).

Summary

This chapter reiterated the purpose of this research and presented the research questions. The participants were randomly selected from the criterion sampling of high-performing elementary Title I schools in north Florida. The selection of the participant sample was discussed and the instrument was presented, including the interview questions. The data collection and analysis procedures, as well as ethical considerations were also discussed in this chapter. Results of the data analysis are presented in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This study explored phenomena related to the practices of principals of successful Title I elementary schools in their effort to recruit and retain highly qualified educators in north Florida districts. As the attrition rate for teachers in Title I schools is almost 50% greater than non-Title I schools, the increased attrition rates for teachers in Title I schools have harmed teacher quality and student learning within these low socioeconomic schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Clark, 2012; Hong, 2012; Ingersoll, 2003; Ingersoll, Merrill & May, 2012; Johnson et al., 2005). This study examined the intentional practices of principals to recruit and retain teachers. This study also explored teachers' perceptions of their principals' intentional practices to recruit and retain teachers. The following research questions directed the study:

1. What practices do Title I principals of high-performing elementary schools in north Florida use to recruit highly qualified teachers?
2. What practices do Title I principals of high-performing elementary schools in north Florida use to retain highly qualified teachers?
3. What principal practices do Title I teachers perceive to be the most effective in enticing them to accept a position or to stay?

Data Collection

Research data was collected through interviews. With the research questions as the foundation, the researcher developed the interview questions. Interview questions also underwent a thorough review from committee members and other qualified professionals. Using both descriptive and structural questions, the researcher gained a deeper

understanding of the participant and the meaning of their responses. Interviews were then transcribed using Google's Speech-to-Text feature and analyzed for themes and commonalities as necessary to investigate phenomenological studies. (See Appendix A).

Principal interviews occurred between February 2021 and May 2021. Teacher interviews ran concurrently until May 2021. Interviews with both principals and teachers lasted from 25 to 60 minutes each. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all interviews except four were conducted by phone or video calls. Four interviews, including two principal and two teacher interviews, were in person.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed using Google's Speech-to-Text. One interview per participant with no follow-up interview was completed. During the interview, if a participant's answer was not clear, they were asked to explain or expand on their answer. Clarification and verification of the initial interviews were completed by email correspondence. The transcripts were sent to the participants for review. One teacher returned their transcript with clarification edits.

Data Analysis

The researcher read the transcripts and reviewed the recordings several times, waiting up to one week in between reviews to identify key concepts and ideas. Using Seidman's (2013) data analysis guidelines, the data reduction occurred by pulling out key passages and placing them with the research question they addressed. Following Seidman's (2013) procedures for coding, descriptive words were highlighted on each response and then grouped into categories. The researcher also incorporated inductive reasoning of the raw data to establish clear links between the research objectives and the

summary findings (Thomas, 2006). Once individual principal interviews were studied for themes, all principal interviews were compared with each other. Likewise, individual teacher interviews were studied for themes and then compared with each other. Themes were derived directly from phrases used by participant responses to the descriptive questions (Thomas, 2006). The researcher examined all interviews for connections to practices and strategies discovered during the literature review process.

Description of Participants

The participants of this study were elementary principals and teachers who met the following criteria:

1. The school was within north Florida's geographical location
2. The participant's school were a Title I elementary school
3. Using Florida's state-issued grades, the participant's school had an A grade at the end of the 2018-19 school year and an A or a B grade at the end of the 2017-18 school year.
4. The principal participants had a low teacher attrition rate.
5. The randomly selected teacher participants were highly qualified, as defined by the state, and who received a highly effective performance evaluation for the 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20 school years.

Of the 34 north Florida school districts, eighteen met the study's criteria. The researcher contacted all eighteen school districts about participation in this research study, and six agreed to allow their schools to participate. As Table 2 shows, six districts,

five principals, and eleven teachers agreed to participate in this study. The researcher made multiple attempts to contact districts through emails and phone calls to district-level administration (See Appendix B). Additionally, the researcher contacted principals through numerous emails and phone calls (See Appendix C). Once the principal's interview concluded, the principal provided a list of four or more teachers who met the criteria. Random sampling of the list of highly qualified teachers provided by the principal carried an equal opportunity of being chosen as part of the sampling process (Creswell, 2013). Three teachers were then randomly selected from the list provided by the principal with Microsoft Excel's random sampling function. All names provided by the principal were placed in an Excel spreadsheet, and then the random sampling function was used to pull the first three names. The researcher sent a request for participation to the selected teachers through their school district email (see Appendix D). The researcher chose an additional name from the principal's list if the researcher received no response within three days or if the answer was no.

Table 2

Description of Participants

Participants	Agreed	Declined	No Response	Total
Districts	6	4	8	18
Principals	5	3	6	14
Teachers	11	1	8	20

Note. This table provides a dissection of all potential participants.

The five principals interviewed had a combined 27 years as the principal at their current school. Each principal involved in the study had a minimum of four years of

experience in the position overall. Three principals were from large school districts and two were from small school districts. Interviews occurred between February 2021 and May 2021; each principal interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

The eleven teachers interviewed had a combined 175 years in education. The majority of teachers, 55%, only taught in one district. The other 45% taught in two districts. Additionally, 36% of the participating teachers have always taught at their current school, 27% taught at two schools, and 36% taught at three or more schools. Six out of the eleven (55%) teachers have experience at both Title I and non-Title I schools, while the remaining five have always taught in a Title I school. Interviews occurred between February 2021 and May 2021; each teacher interview lasted between 25 and 40 minutes

All schools had a high percentage of free and reduced lunch families, with the lowest rate of 77.6% at Principal A's school and 98.5% at Principal B's school. Additionally, the percentage of minority students varied considerably from a low of 8.9% to a high of 52.7%. Every school had a state grade of an A for 2019. For 2018, 40% of the schools had an A grade, and 60% had a B rating. The demographics for each school are shown in Table 3.

Table 3*School Demographics and State Issued School Grades*

Demographic	Principal A	Principal B	Principal C	Principal D	Principal E
Free/Reduced Lunch Percent	77.6%	98.5%	86.9%	94.7%	91.4%
Minority Percent	35.2%	52.7%	20%	34.8%	8.9%
State Grade 2018	A	B	B	A	B
State Grade 2019	A	A	A	A	A
District Size	Large	Large	Small	Small	Large

Note. This table provides demographic information for each principal's school.

All participants were gracious with their time and passionate with their responses. Each participant willingly shared experiences and insight to assist other schools and districts.

Findings

Research Question 1: What practices do Title I principals of high-performing elementary schools in north Florida use to recruit highly qualified teachers?

Principals answered nine interview questions to their recruitment of highly qualified teachers. One central recruitment theme was emphasized by all of the principals in the study: word of mouth. All principals inform their staff of teacher vacancies so they can assist in informing possible candidates. Principal A tells staff of upcoming vacancies, so “they spread the word to other teachers.” In a similar manner to Principal A, Principal

B spreads the word of vacancies through school employees. “Word of mouth through currently employed teachers” is vital to Principal C, as the teachers feel responsible for finding someone they know will be the right fit.

Networking outside of the immediate school was another recurring theme. According to Principal A, “what was a [teacher hiring] pool is now a splash puddle.” Unfortunately, principals used to have a large pool of teachers to choose from; now, that is not the case. Therefore, Principal A will reach out to teachers that they personally know to determine whether they are happy at their current school. Principals also reach out to community members, other schools, and other districts to recruit teachers. Principal E reaches out to other principals, as they “may have someone they do not plan to keep, but [that] teacher may work well for me.” Furthermore, when Principal E is contacted throughout the school year about future openings, they “invite [the potential candidate] to take a tour of the school.” A tour allows the prospective candidate to understand the school’s location, climate, and culture and witness the school in action. This method also allows the principal to get to know the teacher and showcase the positive aspects of the school.

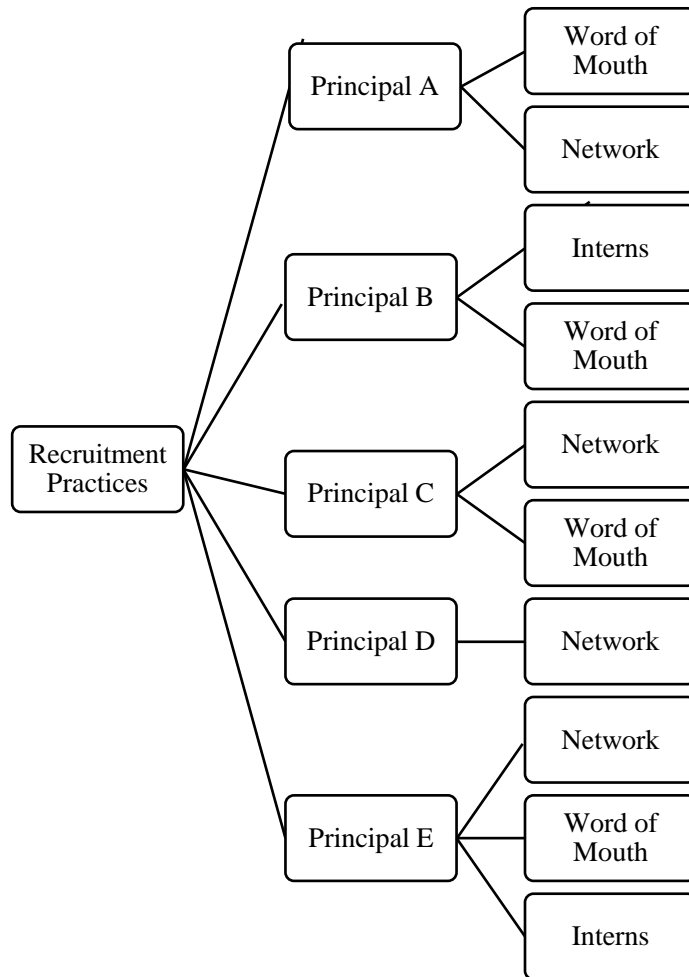
The third theme related to the recruitment of teachers was the intentional request for the district to send schools college interns. Recruitment from interns is one of the top strategies that Principal B uses to recruit teachers because they “learn [about teaching] small groups and classroom management that works [for this school].” When Principal B has a “good intern” and expects a position to open up in the future, they “start talking to them while they are here [at our school].” Knowing the recruitment issues less

competitive salaries cause, Principal C strives to obtain interns for their school by reaching out to nearby universities and small colleges, as teachers “can go to other districts and make more money.” In like manner, Principal E requests as many interns as possible to be placed at their school and suggests placing interns with “the strongest teachers to help them be well trained.”

Three out of the five principals stated that they had attended recruitment trips and job fairs over the years. Unfortunately, these fairs had brought little to no success. Principal C and Principal D were both able to hire one teacher from a job fair. Principal A stated they had had minimal success in attending recruitment trips. Figure 1 illustrates the multiple ways principals recruit teachers.

Figure 1

Practices to Recruit Highly Qualified Teachers



Note. This figure illustrates how principals recruit teachers.

Research Question 2: What practices do Title I principals of high-performing elementary schools in north Florida use to retain highly qualified teachers?

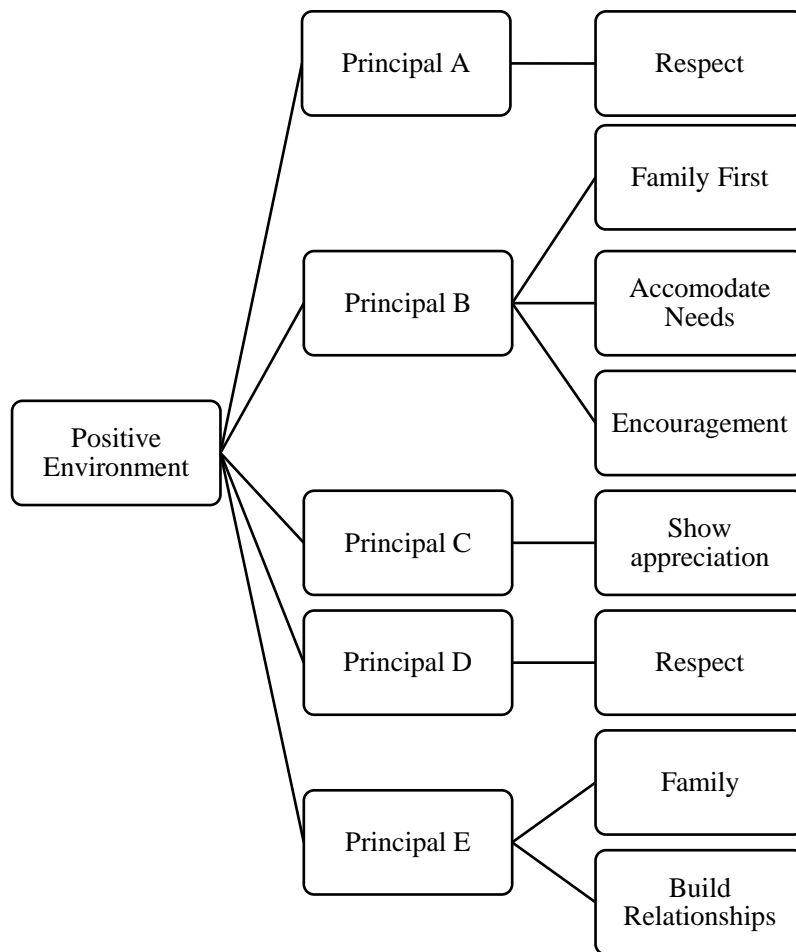
Principals responded to nine questions related to their retention practices of highly qualified teachers. Two themes emerged related to the retention of highly qualified teachers: positive school environment and support of teachers. All of the principals relayed the importance of creating a positive school environment. When asked to describe the environment of their schools, two used one word – family. Other words used included nurturing, happy, friendly, fun, and structured. Since teachers are on a tight schedule, Principal A uses an open-door policy that allows teachers to knock if the door happens to be closed. Principal B stated that they "put people over products." Continuing, they said that if a staff member needs to leave a little early for an appointment, "let them go, don't make them put in a leave form for those few minutes."

Principal B anonymously sends "encouraging notes" to teachers through the school's networked printer system as a simple, inexpensive gesture. The teachers do not "know who sent it, but they love it." Moreover, if a teacher states they plan to leave the school, Principal B asks them "if there is anything [they] can do to help them stay." With the desire to let teachers know they are appreciated and not alone, morale boosters, which include snack items and small acts of appreciation, are used by Principal C to help foster a positive environment. Principal D suggests treating teachers well and fairly, and providing lunch on required professional development days has helped create a positive school environment. Principal E makes a point to "check on them often and build relationships." To express appreciation and show teachers they care, Principal E

occasionally walks through the halls with a cart of goodies for the teachers. Displayed in Figure 2 are practices related to creating a positive environment to retain highly qualified teachers.

Figure 2

Practices to Retain Highly Qualified Teachers – Theme: Positive Environment.



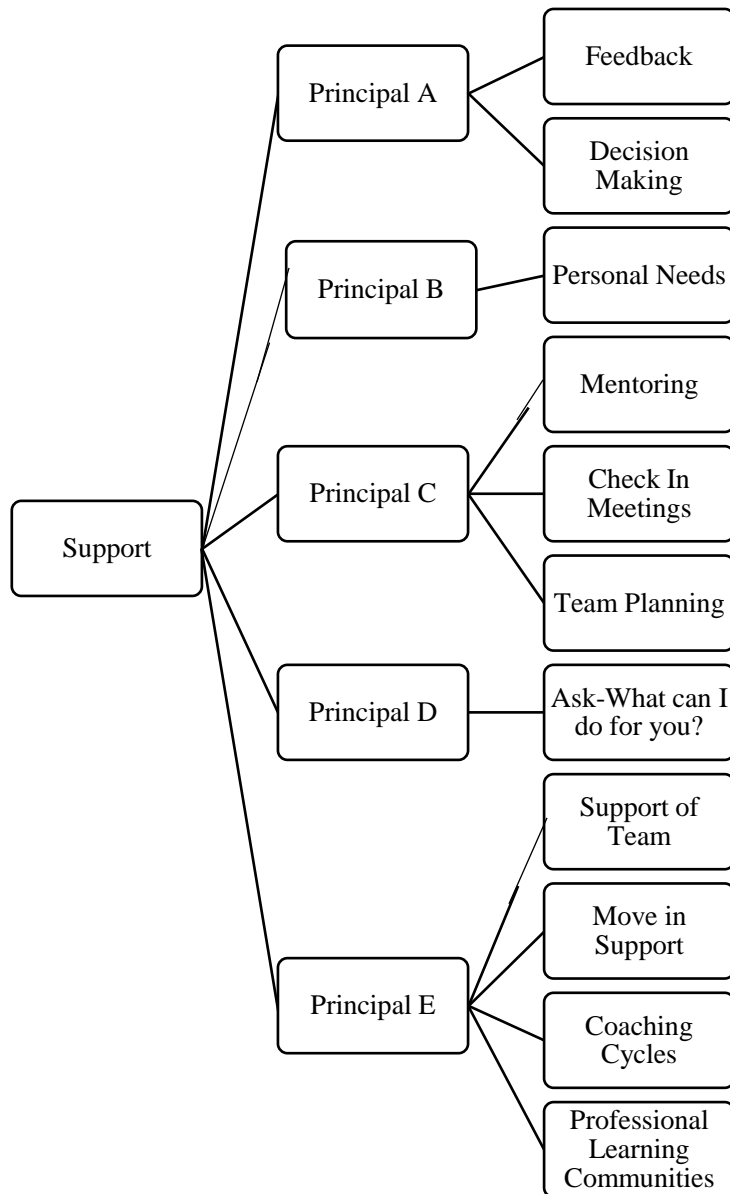
Note: This figure illustrates retention practices principals use to create a positive environment.

The second major theme, supporting teachers, was equally significant for the principals. Principal C supports newly hired teachers through a mentoring program for the first year. Mentors and new hires are purposefully paired by matching personalities, family types, such as single with single, married with married, and the experienced teacher's availability. Mentors and teachers work together on instructional and classroom management strategies. Principal C provides additional peer support through "How are you?" meetings or informal gatherings whose sole purpose is to encourage collaboration among the teachers to help build relationships. To carry over this support, grade level and subject-based planning occurs as a team throughout the school. Principal C's school district also provides paid summer training in curriculum and classroom management. For all new teachers to Principal E's school, the administration supports teachers as soon as they walk through the door by helping them move into their classroom and providing a welcome basket of snacks and office supplies. Furthermore, Principal E provides teachers instructional support through non-evaluative observations, modeling, coaching conversations, and constructive feedback. Principal B meets the needs of teachers by allowing them to leave a few minutes early for an appointment or other personal reasons. According to Principal B, one of the best ways to support teachers is to "work with them, as long as everything is done, to offset other [needs by] doing what you can do." In conjunction with providing instructional feedback to teachers, Principal A involves teachers in the school's decision-making process by seeking their input. Principal D takes care of their teachers by directly asking teachers what they need from the administration

to support them and their students. Practices related to the support of teachers to retain highly qualified teachers are displayed in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Practices to Retain Highly Qualified Teachers – Theme: Support.



Note. This figure illustrates retention practices principals use to provide support to teachers.

Research Question 3: What principal practices do Title I teachers perceive to be the most effective in enticing them to accept a position or to stay?

Teacher participants answered six questions related to the recruitment and retention practices of their principals. Research Question 3 was to explore what principals specifically do that successfully encourages teachers to take a position and stay. Eleven teachers were asked questions related to the principal's impact on their decision to accept a position at their school. As shown in Table 4, teachers overwhelmingly indicated that a positive school environment was the main reason for accepting a teaching position at a school. After taking time off to care for family members, Teacher 1 wanted to return to the family-type atmosphere of a particular school, so they "waited a year to be able to come back when the principal had a position." Teacher 3 stated that "[Our] school atmosphere, which starts with the principal, is like a big family." One principal's open-door policy prompted Teacher 4 to take a position at their school. Even though Teacher 9 had accepted a position elsewhere, they accepted the position afforded them by their current principal because the school was "familiar and comfortable." Teacher 11 accepted a position due to the principal's deep, real-life interview questions and friendly attitude, which included a specific description of what the principal was looking for in a teacher. Additionally, Teacher 11 stated that the principal is honest, has high expectations, and "you know where you stand with [them]."

A second theme was that the position was the only one that a principal offered to the teacher. Teacher 7 did not want to be anywhere else and was offered a job during their internship at the school. Teacher 8 had taken time off to be with their family and

was asked directly by the principal if they would return. Teacher 8 accepted the position with the caveat that they teach on the same grade level as their children, even though they would not have them as students.

Support was another theme that occurred throughout the data. Lacking support from administration in another district, Teacher 3 accepted a position due to offering “lots of support” and the principal’s reputation for having a “teacher’s back.” Teacher 4 had experienced several principals; the one that hired them “was a big impact as they supported [the teacher].”

A minor theme, being an acquaintance of the principal, was shared as the reason for some taking a teaching position. Teacher 1 had previously worked for and knew their principal before seeking a position at their school. Teacher 2 was a lifelong friend with the principal and “eager for a new role” when offered their current position. According to Teacher 10, while on family medical leave, they accepted a position when a principal who knew them through their spouse contacted Teacher 10 and offered them a teaching position.

Table 4

Practices to Recruit Highly Qualified Teachers – Why Teachers Accepted a Position

Participant	Positive Environment	Offered a Position	Support	Acquaintance of Principal
Teacher 1	Family			Knew principal
Teacher 2				Longtime Friend
Teacher 3	Family		Provides support	
Teacher 4	Open-door Policy		Supported me	
Teacher 5		One job that was offered		
Teacher 6	Encouraging			
Teacher 7		Offered position during internship		
Teacher 8		Principal asked me to come back		
Teacher 9	Comfortable		Supportive	
Teacher 10		Called me		Knew my spouse
Teacher 11	Friendly			

Note. This table organizes the reasons teachers accepted a position at their school into themes.

In addition to exploring what principals do to influence a teacher's decision to accept a position, Research Question 3 also explored what principals specifically do that successfully encourages teachers to stay. The teachers asked about the principal's impact on their decision to accept a position were also asked about the influence the principal

had on their decision to remain at their school. As presented in Table 5, all responses from teachers regarding their reasons for staying at a school fell into two major themes: environment and support.

For Teacher 1, their principal's "family first" attitude was a fundamental reason for remaining at their school. Additionally, the principal openly trusts the teachers to do what is best for the students and fully supports the staff in meeting the high expectations required of the principal. Teacher 3 appreciates the "big family" school atmosphere that "starts with the principal." According to Teacher 5, they "have earned a level of trust with [their principal, and] feel valued and heard." Furthermore, Teacher 5's principal "takes it to another level, impact[ing] my decision to stay" by not only "care[ing] about [me], but help[ing] solve problems [with student behavior and instructional concerns], and [is] invested in [the] students." For Teacher 7, support from the principal is most important. According to Teacher 7, their principal visits classrooms weekly to "check on teachers and students." When conducting formal observations, Teacher 7's principal provides "positive, constructive feedback with research-based suggestions that [can be used]." Teacher 11 states that one reason they stay at their school is their principal's moral support and providing what is needed to make students successful. When Teacher 11 faced the possibility of being transferred due to the school's decreased student population, their principal "advocated for [them]," which allowed Teacher 11 to remain at that school. The principal's support through advocacy and making an ongoing effort to "encourage" teachers and make teachers "feel valued" are additional reasons that Teacher 11 stays.

Table 5*Practices to Recruit Highly Qualified Teachers – Why Teachers Stay in a Position*

Participant	Environment	Support
Teacher 1	Family First Trust	Support in meeting expectations Does not micromanage
Teacher 2	Principal trusts I know my job	
Teacher 3	We are a big family	
Teacher 4	We are a big family Principal listens to teachers	Provides guidance and support
Teacher 5	Level of trust I feel valued	Solves problems
Teacher 6	Their encouragement I feel valued	
Teacher 7		Supportive administration Positive constructive feedback
Teacher 8	Trusts us Teach the way we need to	
Teacher 9		Supportive of teachers Has teachers back
Teacher 10	Believes in me Makes me enthusiastic about teaching	Offers opportunity to grow Leadership roles
Teacher 11	Feel valued	Supportive

Note. This table organizes the reasons teachers remain in a position at their school into themes.

Summary

This qualitative phenomenological study codified the principals and teachers' lived recruitment and retention experiences to identify common themes communicated by criteria selected principals and teachers. The study examined practices used by principals

of successful Title I elementary schools to recruit and retain highly qualified educators in north Florida districts. Interviews were conducted and transcribed. The researcher analyzed transcripts to ascertain practices that could assist administrators with recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers for lower socioeconomic elementary schools. The analysis synthesized the practices used by principals to recruit and the strategies to retain teachers once hired. The study also reviewed why highly qualified teachers accepted a position and why they choose to remain at that school.

Results from the first research question revealed word of mouth as the central theme for the recruitment of highly qualified teachers, with networking and hosting college interns as two minor themes. In analyzing research question two, two themes prevailed: positive school environment and support of teachers. Likewise, two major themes of research question three, which focused on teacher perceptions, were a positive school environment and the support of teachers. One minor theme for research question three was the teacher's previous acquaintance with the principal. Discussion of the results as they relate to the literature will be shared in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Chapter four presented the results and analysis of the data. Chapter five summarizes this phenomenological study, and provides discussion of the findings, implications for practice, recommendations for further research, and conclusions. The purpose of chapter five is to expand upon the concepts that were studied, including a further understanding of their possible influence on educational leadership practice, and to offer suggestions for further research in improving teacher attrition.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore the best practices of principals of successful Title I elementary schools to combat teacher attrition by analyzing what principals intentionally do to recruit and retain teachers. Additionally, this study examined teachers' perception of principals' practices for recruitment and retention of teachers.

On average, about 50% of teachers leave the classroom within the first five years of entering the profession, whereas low socioeconomic schools experience teacher turnover rates at twice this rate (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Clark, 2012; Hong, 2012; Ingersoll, 2003; Ingersoll, Merrill & May, 2012; Johnson et al., 2005). Currently, most research only addresses the reasons teachers leave the classroom and not the reasons they remain.

High quality, effective teachers are the number one classroom factor for higher student achievement (Hall & Simeral, 2008; Marzano, 2003). Moreover, students who attend lower socioeconomic schools are more likely to have a less qualified or first-year

teacher (Tileston & Darling, 2009). Increased teacher attrition adversely effects teacher quality; therefore, negatively affecting student growth (Garcia & Weiss, 2019a).

The study was conducted using a data source triangulation approach for validation and reliability, which triangulates data across time, space, and multiple perspectives (Fusch et al., 2018; Patton, 1999; Stake, 1995). Triangulation of data occurred through interviews with five elementary Title I principals and 11 elementary Title I teachers across north Florida (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The interviews focused on the recruitment and retention practices of elementary principals and their teachers' perspectives on these practices.

The Multiple Ethical Paradigms used as the lens for this study and developed by Shapiro and Stefkovich includes Ethic of Care, Ethic of Critique, Ethic of Justice, and Ethic of the Profession (Shapiro & Gross, 2013; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). Ethic of Justice speaks to equity in education employment practices, including the fairness of recruitment and retention efforts. Ethic of Critique pushes principals to look outside the norm to find alternatives to their recruitment and retention practices. Addressing the needs of teachers, including decisions in finding the best fit for the position, falls within Ethic of Care. Finally, Ethic of Profession requires teachers and principals to be ethically sound and adhere to the professional codes.

Horizontalization of the data was done through multiple readings and pulling significant quotes and ideas that provide an understanding of the individual's lived experiences (Creswell, 2013). Key passages were placed with the appropriate research question, while descriptive words were highlighted and grouped into categories

(Seidman, 2013). Links between research objectives and findings were found through inductive reasoning of the raw data (Thomas, 2006). Themes from both principal and teacher interviews were derived directly from phrases used by participant responses to the descriptive questions (Thomas, 2006).

Research Questions

The following questions informed the research:

1. What practices do Title I principals of high-performing elementary schools in north Florida use to recruit highly qualified teachers?
2. What practices do Title I principals of high-performing elementary schools in north Florida use to retain highly qualified teachers?
3. What principal practices do Title I teachers perceive to be the most effective in enticing them to accept a position or to stay?

Key Findings and Conclusions

Previous researchers examined the reasons teachers leave the education profession. The goal of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine the best practices of elementary Title I principals to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers. The results associated with Research Question One were word of mouth as the central theme associated with practices principals use to recruit highly qualified teachers, with networking and hosting college interns as two minor themes. The overarching themes of practices principals use to retain highly qualified teachers (Research Question 2) were positive school environment and support of teachers. Research Question Three, which centered on teacher perceptions of principal practices to recruit and retain teachers, found

two central themes of positive school environment and the support of teachers. One minor theme for research question three was the teacher's previous acquaintance with the principal.

This section now discusses the findings in association with the broader body of literature.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1: What practices do Title I principals of high-performing elementary schools in north Florida use to recruit highly qualified teachers?

The findings from research question one indicate three themes related to efforts of principals to recruit teachers: word of mouth, networking, and requesting interns. Four out of five principals specifically mentioned word of mouth as one of their recruitment strategies. Likewise, four out of five principals shared their networking strategies with colleagues within the same district and neighboring districts. They also commented on their efforts to reach out to local colleges and universities for a list of students that would soon graduate with an education degree. Two explicitly detailed their efforts to host college of education interns so they could see the teacher in action. Principals often commented that the number of applicants per open position had greatly decreased, causing them to rely on other methods of recruitment. Though not considered a theme, three principals referred to their efforts to attend job fairs. Two were able to hire one teacher, and one had no success at all. The following comments were made during the discussion related to this research question:

- "I use word of mouth through currently employed teachers."

- “Teachers that are just beginning, I will have conversations with them and invite them to intern or do hours at my school.”
- “I use teachers and the community to help recruit. I reach out to other principals that may have someone they do not plan to keep, but those teachers may work well for me.”
- “When we have a good intern, we start talking to them while they are here if we have a position that we know is coming up.”
- “When I have an opening, I use word of mouth. Colleges do not produce teachers as much as they used to. I now have to look for qualified applicants, they do not just show up. I recently had to find a teacher for a vacant position, fortunately, through word of mouth, I found someone who was moving to the area with [their] new [spouse].”
- “I try to get as many interns placed at my school as possible, I place them with the strongest teachers to help them be well trained.”

As discussed in the literature review, teacher shortages have remained an issue for years. They are worse in lower socioeconomic schools compared to more affluent schools (Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009). These same schools are also more likely to have teachers less qualified than at other schools (Freedman and Appleman, 2009, Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009). Recruiting teachers in high-poverty schools is difficult for principals (Hodges et al., 2013). Nevertheless, the ability to implement policies and create an atmosphere that attracts potential candidates lies directly with the principal

(Minarik et al., 2003). The five principals in this study have had to be creative in finding ways to attract highly qualified teachers to their schools.

Four of the five principals explicitly mentioned word of mouth as their go-to recruitment method. As a recruitment source, word of mouth is defined as an informal personal communication, separate from the organization's employment activities, about job openings (Van Hoya, 2014). Van Hoya (2014) states that employees satisfied with their workplace are more likely to endorse their employer. Even though job satisfaction results from both intrinsic and extrinsic variables, a teacher who has a higher level of job satisfaction is more likely to stay in the profession (Perrachione et al., 2008). Likewise, the highly satisfied teacher is more likely to share job openings for their school with other teachers than a teacher dissatisfied with the school.

Principals also discussed networking strategies they use to recruit teachers. These principals reach out to other districts, schools, and teachers to find out about possible candidates. Potential candidates range from someone new to the community to teachers that might be dissatisfied with their current teaching position. A teacher may not work well with one principal yet will work well with another principal. Research supports the influence of a principal's role in shaping teachers' opinions of their school, potentially influencing a teacher's decision to stay (Burkhauser, 2016; Clark, 2012).

Several principals intentionally request college interns as the opportunity not only allows the principal to vet the prospective teacher but also lets the principal showcase their school. Principals expect graduates of college education programs to be highly trained teachers who have the academic and pedagogical skills necessary to succeed in

the classroom (Donder, 2011). College of Education programs require supervised field experience courses and an internship up to 12 credit hours. Field experience courses afford weekly opportunities for college students to plan and implement lessons in local schools while under the supervision of an experienced teacher and the college. The intern takes on all classroom responsibilities of the assigned certified classroom teacher, with support and oversight of their assigned teacher and college, during the semester-long internship (Florida Southern College, 2019; Florida State University, 2019, University of North Florida, 2020). Unfortunately, the availability of interns has decreased over the years. The number of graduates with a bachelor's degree in education fell from 176,307 in 1970-71 to 85,118 in 2016-17, even though the number of conferred bachelor's degrees has more than doubled (U.S. Department of Education, 2018b).

Planned teacher recruitment activities by districts and the state take place yearly. The State of Florida promotes recruitment through the Great Florida Teach-In and salary increases (Florida Department of Education, 2020d; Office of the Governor, 2020). Local districts often have recruitment fairs or attend hiring fairs sponsored by colleges. However, as principals in the study indicated, hiring fairs are not always successful, and schools still have issues obtaining applicants for open positions.

Conclusion

The data in this study supports previous findings that principals have a direct influence and role in attracting potential candidates (Burkhauser, 2016; Clark, 2012; Minarik et al., 2003; Perrachione et al., 2008). Results from research question one suggest the best practices for principals to recruit teachers are through word of mouth by

letting faculty and staff know about open positions so they can inform others, networking with other schools and districts, and requesting intern candidates from colleges.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2: What practices do Title I principals of high-performing elementary schools in north Florida use to retain highly qualified teachers?

Research question two's findings revealed a positive school environment and the support of teachers as important themes in the retention of teachers. All five shared some aspect of creating a positive environment to retain teachers. All five also shared the ways they provide support in an effort to retain highly qualified teachers. The following comments were made by principals regarding their retention strategies:

- “We care about our teachers and staff. You must put people over product and the day I forget that I can go to the restroom whenever I want is the day that I need to quit. Don’t think that you’re above doing anything [for the teachers].”
- “Treat [teachers] well, treat them fairly. On professional development days, I cater lunch.”
- “I know how much they expect from their students and they know I have high expectations for them [as teachers]. I find out what I need to do to help them.”
- “We have a paid mentoring program for the first year. They are required to meet once per week. That teacher knows that what has been learned as a large group will then be broken down and explained by the mentor.”
- “We try to be helpful and look out for each other. We celebrate birthdays, weddings, and babies.”

- “I try to do the best I can to get input and feedback from teachers. Ensuring that their voices are heard when decisions are made. For instance, right now I’m working on assignments for next year. I put a survey out each year [asking teachers their top three placement choices for next year]. They [teachers] know that I’m working to get them one of their top two choices.”

The literature review revealed that principals are the number one influence in teacher retention and have the ability to create a school environment so inviting that teachers will not want to leave. Indeed, a positive school environment is directly related to teacher retention, and this environment is created by the principal (Hughes et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2005; Minarik et al., 2003; Watson & Olson, 2016). Moreover, the single most important variable in commitment to an organization is the relationship between personnel and their supervisors (Minarik et al., 2003). Schargel (2019) asserted that principals are key to teacher retention and must provide support, professional development, and consistently recognize staff for their commitment and successes. Johnson et al. (2005) acknowledged that principals who are visible, provide praise, and allow teachers’ autonomy are more likely to retain their teachers.

In fact, a positive correlation exists between teacher retention and the importance of teachers’ collegial collaborations (Johnson et al., 2005). Many teachers who stay in the profession credit a sense of teacher collegiality, strong relationships with peers, and the ability to contribute to school decisions (Jacobson, 2007).

The quality of support provided by principals for teachers is an added component in teacher retention (Hulpia et al., 2011). The National Commission on Teaching and

America's Future (2007) recommends that principals hire highly qualified teachers, train them in the proper instructional strategies for that school, and continue to support them through professional learning. Research suggests using mentors from the same grade level or content area and induction programs that provide collaborative conversations, lesson planning, professional development, and best teaching practices (Clark, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007).

Principals specifically mentioned constructive feedback, peer collaboration, and including teachers in decision making in this study. Wynn et al. (2007) examined principals who successfully retained highly qualified teachers and determined critical feedback, assistance, peer collaboration, and shared decision-making were vital for teacher retention.

Conclusion

Data from this study supports the need for a positive school environment and administrator support of teachers. Results from research question two suggest the best practices for principals to retain teachers are through a positive school environment and support of the teacher.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3: What principal practices do Title I teachers perceive to be the most effective in enticing them to accept a position or to stay?

Research question three explored what successful principals do to encourage teachers to take a position and stay. Eleven teachers were asked questions related to the

principal's impact on their decision to accept a position at their school. Six of the eleven teachers indicated that a positive school environment was the main reason for accepting a teaching position at a school. Four teachers stated they accepted a position from a principal because it was the only one offered them. Three indicated that the principal offered support for the teacher. Another three stated that they accepted a position because they were an acquaintance of the principal.

The eleven teachers were also asked questions related to the principal's impact on their decision to remain at their school. Nine of the eleven teachers indicated that a positive school environment was one reason they remain. Seven teachers stated they remain due to the support received from their principal.

The following comments were made by teachers regarding recruitment and retention strategies of principals:

- “When I interviewed here, I was impressed with the principal's questions. They were more than surface questions, [they] wanted to know what I brought to the table.”
- “My principal was supportive. I had accepted a position elsewhere, but this one was offered [and] this school was familiar and comfortable.”
- “[I took this position because they] were encouraging.”
- “This was the one job that was offered.”
- “[My principal] was a big impact [on my taking this position] as they supported me and hand an open-door policy.”

- “My principal provided lots of support and has teachers’ backs. My old district was not like that.”
- “[They] offered me a position during my internship. I didn’t want to be anywhere else.”
- “[They] listened to what I had to say and stated directly what [they] were looking for.”
- “I was at this school before [this principal] came to this school. I left for a few years to care for my children and my parents. When I wanted to return, there wasn’t an opening here. I waited a year to be able to come back when [this principal] had a position for me.”
- “This [school] is like a big family.”
- “[My principal] is family first. This means our family as well as our work family.”
- “My principal trusts that I know how to do my job and [they] are not a micromanager.”
- “The school atmosphere, which starts with the principal, is like a big family.”
- “Principals set the tone. We are like a big family.”
- “My principal listens to teachers, provides guidance and support.”
- “I have earned a level of trust with [my principal], I feel valued and heard. [They] care about me and [help] me solve problems.”
- [The principal’s] encouragement [and] saying that they see you are doing well.”

- “[My principal] is supportive, visits classrooms several times a week to check on teachers and students. [The principal] provides positive constructive feedback and suggestions that I can use.”
- “[My principal] encourage[s] us in PLC’s (Professional Learning Committee) every week.”
- “[My principal] offers opportunity to grow [through] leadership roles.”
- “[The principal] is good at letting us teach the way we want to and need to teach as long as we’re doing well. [The principal] is a great leader and trusts us.”

As the literature review confirms, recruiting highly qualified teachers in lower socioeconomic schools is difficult for school leaders. Teachers in high-poverty schools are 50% more likely to leave than more affluent schools and teachers. Additionally, high-poverty schools are more likely to have teachers that are less qualified than other schools (Freedman and Appleman, 2009, Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009). However, the ability to formulate an environment that appeals to potential candidates and promotes retention of current teachers lies with the principal (Minarik et al., 2003).

Teachers often leave the profession or do not accept a position at a school because of a negative school environment or lack of support from administration. If a school has a poor environment, word will get out to other teachers and districts. Key statements related to positive environment shared by teacher participants included feeling comfortable, family atmosphere, encouraging, and open-door policy. When principals provide teachers praise, autonomy and are visible to the staff, they promote a positive school environment that increases teachers’ desire to stay (Johnson et al., 2005;

Perrachione et al., 2008). Likewise, support from school administration along with professional development geared towards preparing teachers and developing their awareness of student culture positively results in a greater chance of teacher retention (Johnson et al., 2005; Hong, 2012).

Teacher participants shared various types of support they received from principals, including principals having the teachers back, help with student behavior, instructional feedback and guidance, problem solving, autonomy, and opportunities to grow. The quality of support provided by the principal, including a clearly defined school vision and relevant professional development, directly correlates to a teacher's desire to accept a position and stay (Hulpia et al., 2011). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2007) recommends schools hire highly qualified teachers, train them in relevant instructional practices, and maintain support through professional learning.

When principals provide assistance with poor student behavior, teachers feel supported. Student behavior problems were the second most named reason for teachers leaving the profession, according to a study by Brill and McCartney (2008). Brill and McCartney (2008) found that continuous poor student behavior significantly influenced a teacher's intention to stay in the profession or at their current school.

Support through instructional feedback and guidance can help reduce stress related to district and state assessments. Ryan et al.'s (2017) study found that stress and burnout due to assessment accountability were directly related to a teacher's decision to leave the profession. Support provided by a principal through professional development

and training can significantly affect a teacher's desire to stay (Hulpia et al., 2011).

Additionally, Tait (2008) suggests that to retain teachers, administrators need to provide professional development and support building relationships with peers who can offer insight into how to approach various situations.

When principals support teachers in their quest for professional growth and decision-making, teachers are more likely to remain at that school. According to Wynn et al., (2007), schools that cultivate a supportive environment through teacher input in decision-making are directly related to a teacher's intent to remain in the profession.

Finally, it is important to note that even though competitive salaries are essential to the recruitment and retention of teachers (Parham & Gordon. 2011; Gutierrez, 2015), only one teacher stated they would leave if their income became an issue.

Conclusion

The data in this study reinforce previous findings that principals play a role in attracting highly qualified teachers and retaining them (Burkhauser, 2016; Clark, 2012; Minarik et al., 2003; Perrachione et al., 2008). Results from research question three suggest that teachers are more likely to accept a position at a school with a positive environment. Some teachers will take a position because it was offered. Furthermore, some teachers will accept a position based on a principal sharing how they support teachers. Finally, some teachers accept a position because they are an acquaintance of the principal.

Research question three found that a positive school environment was key in retaining highly qualified teachers. Direct support of teachers by the principal was also found to be important in the retention of teachers.

Findings Related to Theoretical Framework

This qualitative phenomenological study used Shaprio's work regarding the Multiple Ethical Paradigm as the lens to influence the interpretation of the data. The researcher used each of the paradigm's four components: Ethic of Critique, Ethic of Justice, Ethic of Care, and Ethic of Profession.

Ethic of Critique supports principals using new and innovative ways to recruit teachers, as the traditional hiring pool is not working (Shapiro & Gross, 2013). Previously, principals had more qualified applicants than positions; currently, principals tend to have less qualified applicants than positions. Principals have had to think creatively to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers. For instance, when Principal B has an intern they believe will be a good fit for their school, they talk to them about future openings while they are at their. Additionally, many principals specifically mentioned their use of word of mouth through current staff and the community to reach potential candidates.

As indicated by Ethic of Justice, although adjusting how they recruit teachers, principals must still follow all government regulations when hiring teachers (Shaprio & Gross, 2013). New hires still go through each district's vetting process before they are allowed an offer of employment. Likewise, even though no two teachers are the same, principals must maintain equitability in their retention practices, as evidenced in this

study when Principal E said they reach out to other principals in their district when they have a teacher they do not plan to renew for the following year yet may be a good fit for their school.

Additionally, Ethic of Care addresses the necessity for principals to find the best teacher possible to meet the needs of the school and students (Shaprio & Gross, 2013). Hall and Simeral (2008) and Marzano (2003) concluded that the number one classroom factor that promotes higher student achievement is a high-quality, effective teacher. In their recruitment search, principals need to hire highly qualified teachers to best support student-learning growth. Principals should cultivate a caring relationship with teachers by listening and having meaningful conversations to increase the likelihood of retaining the teacher (Noddings, 2006). As indicated by Principal B, they “put people over products” as part of their family-first goal of caring for staff. Likewise, Principal D stated that they make sure to take care of teachers by providing lunch on professional development days.

When actively recruiting, no matter the method used, principals must maintain an Ethic of Profession by adhering to all personal and professional ethical codes to ensure solid professional judgment in hiring the right candidate (Shapiro & Gross, 2013). This ethic is evidenced in the study when Principal C shared their mentoring program for teachers and how the program, including check-in meetings with the principal, is built to support teachers in the classroom.

Limitations

This phenomenological study focused on recruitment and retention practices at high-performing north Florida Title I elementary schools; therefore, generalizations

beyond the scope of this sample must be made with caution. Additionally, this study relied on the state of Florida's accountability reports for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years to determine which north Florida Title I elementary schools were high-performing. As this study collected data through personal interviews during the 2020-2021 school year, COVID-19 safety mandates restricted most interviews to video conferencing and phone calls. COVID-19 also limited the participation of districts, principals, and teachers.

Educational Implications

The impact of increased teacher attrition is well known, as about 50% of teachers leave within the first five years of entering the classroom, and teachers in lower socioeconomic schools are twice as likely to leave (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Clark, 2012; Hong, 2012; Ingersoll, 2003; Ingersoll, Merrill & May, 2012; Johnson et al., 2005). Moreover, lower socioeconomic schools are more likely to have less qualified teachers than more affluent schools (Freedman and Appleman, 2009, Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009). As highly qualified teachers leave the classroom, less qualified teachers are left behind, negatively affecting student learning (Guarino et al., 2006; Guin, 2004; Marzano, 2003; Jordan et al., 1997).

School districts struggle to find highly qualified teachers to fill open positions, much less in low socioeconomic, Title I schools. The findings of this phenomenological study have far-reaching implications for many districts and principals of Title I schools in Florida. This information may guide a district in their professional development for and support of principals. Administrator professional development might include strategies

for building positive school environments and various ways to support teachers.

Principals can also use these results to improve their recruitment and retention practices.

This study found that principals of successful elementary Title I schools used several practices to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers. This study indicates that word of mouth, networking, and requesting interns resulted in the successful hire of highly qualified teachers. Likewise, this study discovered that principals should create a positive environment and provide support to retain highly qualified teachers.

Recommendations for Further Research

The study aimed to investigate strategies used by successful elementary Title I teachers to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers in north Florida. Data was collected through interviews of both principals and teachers, data was reviewed, and many significant findings resulted. Though significant, further research is recommended.

This study concentrated solely on north Florida; further research into this subject could include expanding to other geographical areas of Florida. Recruitment and retention issues are rampant across the state. Additional research into other highly successful elementary Title I schools practices could divulge other beneficial recruitment and retention practices.

This study focused on elementary Title I schools. Though not prevalent in Florida, further research might include secondary Title I schools. This information could support schools that fit this criterion.

More affluent schools tend to have fewer issues with recruitment and retention. Even though they do not necessarily have the same student population, further research

into their attrition strategies might shed some light on additional ways to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers.

Conclusion

This phenomenological study aimed to investigate recruitment and retention strategies used by successful elementary Title I principals in north Florida. This study revealed that word of mouth, networking, and requesting interns are three practices principals use to recruit highly qualified teachers. A further assessment of retention practices showed that successful principals strive to create a positive environment and support teachers in their practice. Principals actively build a positive environment through respect, family-first focus, encouragement, and building relationships. To support teachers, principals include teachers in decision making, meet their needs, and offer them constructive feedback, team planning, and mentoring, to name a few.

This study also looked at teachers' perspectives in the practices of principals to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers. Results of the data show that a positive environment was most important in their accepting a position and their decision to stay in a position. Teachers mentioned family first, open-door policy, encouraging, trust, and value as part of a positive environment. Additionally, support of the teacher through guidance, feedback, student behavior, and teacher growth was another important factor in accepting a position and remaining.

The literature review indicates that principals have a difficult time hiring and retaining highly qualified teachers. This study provides proven strategies of principals to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers in elementary Title I schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research Question Correlation to Interview Questions

Research Questions		
1. What practices do Title I principals of high-performing elementary schools in north Florida use to recruit highly qualified teachers?	2. What practices do Title I principals of high-performing elementary schools in north Florida use to retain highly qualified teachers?	3. What principal practices do Title I teachers perceive to be the most effective in enticing them to accept a position or to stay?
		
Interview Question Alignment		
<p>On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being extremely poor and 5 being extremely strong, what would you rate as your ability to recruit teachers? Why did you choose that rating?</p> <p>What was the attrition rate of your school for 2018-19? 2019-20?</p> <p>What practices have you put in place that help you in recruiting teachers?</p> <p>What are the implications of these practices on other aspects of the school?</p> <p>Do you use the same practices to recruit or retain all teachers?</p> <p>How would you describe the environment of your school?</p> <p>What strategies were used to obtain this environment?</p> <p>What struggles did you face in creating this environment?</p> <p>Do you have any plans to adjust your recruitment or retention practices in the future? Why or why not? If so, would you care to share your plan?</p>	<p>On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being extremely poor and 5 being extremely strong, what would you rate as your ability to retain teachers? Why did you choose that rating?</p> <p>What was the attrition rate of your school for 2018-19? 2019-20?</p> <p>Has the attrition rate of your school changed since you have served as principal? Explain.</p> <p>What practices have you put in place that help you in retaining teachers?</p> <p>Do you use the same practices to recruit or retain all teachers?</p> <p>How would you describe the environment of your school?</p> <p>What strategies were used to obtain this environment?</p> <p>What struggles did you face in creating this environment?</p> <p>Do you have any plans to adjust your recruitment or retention practices in the future? Why or why not? If so, would you care to share your plan?</p>	<p>What impact did your principal have on your decision to accept a position?</p> <p>What impact does your principal have on your decision to stay?</p> <p>How would you describe the environment of your school?</p> <p>Are there any other factors that impact on your intention to join/stay?</p> <p>Are there any factors that might impact your intention to leave?</p> <p>In your opinion, what recommendations might you suggest to a principal in the recruitment and retention of teachers?</p>

Appendix B: Email to District Administration Requesting Participation

Ms. _____

My name is Cynthia Johnson, I am a doctoral student at Florida Southern College. When you have a moment, I'd like to discuss my research study with you. I have received approval from Florida Southern College's Institutional Review Board and my dissertation committee to conduct my research. I am now asking for your permission to include your district in this study.

The following is a quick description of the study:

Title of the research study: A Phenomenological Study of Principal Practice for Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified Teachers in High-performing North Florida Title I Elementary Schools

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore the best practices of principals of successful Title I elementary schools to recruit and retain highly qualified educators in north Florida districts.

Why was _____ County District Schools chosen: Three of your elementary Title I schools, _____ Elementary, _____ Elementary, and _____ Elementary, received Florida's grade of an A or a B for 2018 and an A for 2019. This study will interview participating principals to find out their practices for recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. The study will also interview a few teachers from the school to find out what principal practices have had the greatest influence on them. Please note that not all 4 schools need to participate in order for your district to be part of the study.

What _____ County District Schools will provide for the study: _____ County will provide access to principals and teachers to answer interview questions related to the principal's recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers. Once data is collected, identifying information will be withheld and replaced with a pseudonym. The principal's and teacher's identity will be kept confidential. No student information will be required or used.

What _____ County principals and teachers will be asked in the study: The principal will be asked to answer questions related to their recruitment and retention practices and results. Teachers will be asked to answer questions related to their experience and perception of the principal's recruitment and retention practices. All interviews will be conducted through online video chat or phone. Only the study investigator has access to the interview data.

Risks and Benefits: There are no risks associated with this study. Information obtained from the proven practice of school administrators in retaining teachers in Title I schools can be utilized by other principals to reduce the attrition rate of teachers throughout Florida.

Compensation: None

Timeframe: Winter/Spring 2021. Preferably beginning soon and ending before May 1st.
This allows for an initial interview and follow-up conversations.

I look forward to sharing this work with you.

Thank you,

Attachments: Interview Questions

Appendix C: Email to Principals Requesting Participation

Mr. _____,

As Ms. _____ stated in her email yesterday, I am a doctoral student at Florida Southern College. You are being invited to participate in this research study because you are the principal of a high-performing Title I elementary school in north Florida. The purpose of the study is to explore the best practices of principals of successful Title I Elementary schools to recruit and retain highly qualified educators in north Florida districts.

As part of this study, you will be asked to allow me to interview you regarding your practices in recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. You may be contacted for follow-up questions or to verify your statements. The interview will last from 30 to 45 minutes and can take place via the phone or an online video format. I will adjust to fit your schedule.

You will also be asked to provide a list of a few highly qualified teachers that would be willing to share their perceptions of the most effective principal practices to recruit and retain teachers. From this list, 2 to 3 teachers will be randomly selected and asked to participate. Their interviews will last about 20 to 30 minutes.

You will not be paid for taking part in this study. However, your assistance will help many administrators in their efforts to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers for their schools and districts.

Your identity will be kept confidential as pseudonyms will be used for all participants. Your privacy and research records will be kept confidential to the extent of the law.

The results of this study may be published. However, only group results will be reported. The published results will not include your name or any other information that would personally identify you or your school in any way. You will not be given individual results obtained during this study.

Your decision to take part in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Feel free to review the attached interview questions and the consent form before responding. Let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

Attachments: Interview Questions
Consent Form

Appendix D: Email to Teachers Requesting Participation

Ms. ____

My name is Cynthia Johnson, I am a doctoral student at Florida Southern College. I received approval from the ____ School District and your principal, ____, to conduct my research within your school. I am now seeking your permission to include you in this study. This study is actually broken into two parts. The first part - the interview of the principal. The second part - the interview of several teachers at the principal's school.

A few weeks ago, I spoke with Ms. ____, about her experience as a principal in the recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers. She then provided a list of teachers; I randomly selected three to ask their willingness to participate in the second part of the study. I would be truly grateful for your participation in this study. The insight that you can provide regarding your recruitment and retention efforts as a teacher in a high-performing Title I school would be priceless. The 30-minute interview could be done over the phone, in person, or via online video chat.

The following is a quick description of the study:

Title of the research study: A Phenomenological Study of Principal Practice for Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified Teachers in High-performing North Florida Title I Elementary Schools

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore the best practices of principals of successful Title I elementary schools to recruit and retain highly qualified educators in northeast Florida districts.

Why was ____ School District chosen: Your elementary Title I school, __ Elementary School, received Florida's grade of a B for 2018 and an A for 2019. This study will interview the principal to find out their practices for recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. The study will also interview a few teachers from the school to find out what principal practices have had the greatest influence on them.

What ____ School District will provide for the study: __ County will provide access to principals and teachers to answer interview questions related to the principal's recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers. Once data is collected, identifying information will be withheld and replaced with a pseudonym. The principal's and teacher's identity will be kept confidential. No student information will be required or used.

What ____ County principals and teachers will be asked in the study: The principal will be asked to answer questions related to their recruitment and retention practices and results. Teachers will be asked to answer questions related to their experience and

perception of the principal's recruitment and retention practices. All interviews will be conducted through online video chat or phone. Only the study investigator has access to the interview data.

Risks and Benefits: There are no risks associated with this study. Information obtained from the proven practice of school administrators in retaining teachers in Title I schools can be utilized by other principals to reduce the attrition rate of teachers throughout Florida.

Compensation: None

Timeframe: Winter/Spring 2021. Preferably beginning soon and ending before May 1st. This allows for an initial interview and follow-up conversations.

I have included the agreement form and interview questions for your consideration.

Feel free to call me anytime at ----- to learn more.

If you choose not to participate, that will be perfectly fine. I just ask that you please let me know.

Thank you,

Attachments: Interview Questions
Consent Form

Appendix E: Adult Informed Consent Form (Principal)

Project Title: A Phenomenological Study of Principal Practice for Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified Teachers in High-performing North Florida Title I Elementary Schools

Principal Investigator: Cynthia Johnson

Phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx

E-mail: cynthia.johnson777@gmail.com

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Derrel Bryan

Department: School of Education

I am a doctoral student at Florida Southern College. You are being invited to participate in a research study because you are the principal of a high-performing Title I elementary school in north Florida. The purpose of the study is to explore the best practices of principals of successful Title I elementary schools to recruit and retain highly qualified educators in north Florida districts.

As part of this study, you will be asked to allow Cynthia Johnson to interview you regarding your practices in recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. You may be contacted for follow-up questions or to verify your statements. In all, it may take you up to two hours to complete the study.

You will also be asked to provide a list of a few teachers that would be willing to share their perceptions of the most effective principal practices to recruit and retain teachers.

You will not be paid for taking part in this study. However, your assistance will help many administrators in their efforts to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers for their schools and districts.

There are no anticipated risks to you. Your identity will be kept confidential as pseudonyms will be used for all participants. All data will be stored in a secured file on the principal investigator's computer. Your privacy and research records will be kept confidential to the extent of the law. Authorized research personnel, employees of the Department of Health and Human Services, and the FSC Human Subjects Institutional Review Board may inspect the records from this research project. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential.

The results of this study may be published. However, only group results will be reported. Pseudonyms for all participants and schools will be used to maintain confidentiality. The published results will not include your name or any other information that would

personally identify you in any way. You will not be given individual results obtained during this study.

Your decision to take part in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions about this study, contact the Primary Investigator at the phone number or e-mail at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as an individual taking part in a research study, you may contact the Chair of the Florida Southern College Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at fscirb@flsouthern.edu or the Office of the Provost (863-680-4124).

I have read this Consent Form and agree to participate in this study. I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. I understand that I *will not* receive payment for my participation. Additionally, I understand that this form will be renewed annually for research projects lasting longer than one year.

Name of Participant (please print) _____

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Signature of Investigator or Witness _____ Date _____

Appendix F: Adult Informed Consent Form (Teacher)

Project Title: A Phenomenological Study of Principal Practice for Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified Teachers in High-performing North Florida Title I Elementary Schools

Principal Investigator: Cynthia Johnson

Phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx

E-mail: cynthia.johnson777@gmail.com

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Derrel Bryan

Department: School of Education

I am a doctoral student at Florida Southern College. You are being invited to participate in a research study because you are a highly qualified teacher of a high-performing Title I elementary school in north Florida. The purpose of the study is to explore the best practices of principals of successful Title I elementary schools to recruit and retain highly qualified educators in north Florida districts.

As part of this study, you will be asked to allow Cynthia Johnson to interview you regarding effective principal practices in recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. You may be contacted for follow-up questions or to verify your statements. In all, it may take you up to two hours to complete the study.

You will not be paid for taking part in this study. However, your assistance will help many administrators in their efforts to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers for their schools and districts.

There are no anticipated risks to you. Your identity will be kept confidential as pseudonyms will be used for all participants. All data will be stored in a secured file on the principal investigator's computer. Your privacy and research records will be kept confidential to the extent of the law. Authorized research personnel, employees of the Department of Health and Human Services, and the FSC Human Subjects Institutional Review Board may inspect the records from this research project. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential.

The results of this study may be published. However, only group results will be reported. Pseudonyms for all participants and schools will be used to maintain confidentiality. The published results will not include your name or any other information that would personally identify you in any way. You will not be given individual results obtained during this study.

Your decision to take part in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions about this study, contact the Primary Investigator at the phone number or e-mail at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as an individual taking part in a research study, you may contact the Chair of the Florida Southern College Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at fscirb@flsouthern.edu or the Office of the Provost (863-680-4124).

I have read this Consent Form and agree to participate in this study. I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. I understand that I *will not* receive payment for my participation. Additionally, I understand that this form will be renewed annually for research projects lasting longer than one year.

Name of Participant (please print) _____

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Signature of Investigator or Witness _____ Date _____