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UNDERSTANDING THE MOTIVATIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF TEACHER WHO
CHANGE SCHOOLS

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This work is dedicated to the teachers who give their all to each of their students every day.

You are important.

You are valued.

You make a difference.

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Abstract

Teacher attrition is a challenge that has plagued our public school system for nearly a century. While attrition rates have consistently risen over the past 30 years, the cost of teacher turnover has moved beyond finances, negatively impacting student achievement and disrupting faculty cohesion and collaboration. In an attempt to address the growing concern of teacher retention and attrition, literature has focused on quantifying the factors that impact these areas of concern. This case study examined the motivations and experiences of seven veteran teachers who engaged in voluntary mobility, each choosing to leave the school in which they were heavily invested and move to a new school. In order to more clearly identify the factors that impacted each participants' motivations and experiences, the data were examined through a lens of person-environment fit theory.

Findings for this case study include participants' motivations to move being impacted by person-environment fit at the person-organization, person-group, and person-individual levels of fit, while participants' experiences in their new schools manifested in all levels of person-environment fit, including person-vocation, person-job, person-organization, person-group, and person-individual levels of fit. Further, these levels of fit do not exist in isolation of one another, but rather are deeply integrated and interdependent. However, individuals vary in their expectations of their work environment, which directly impacts their tolerance for stress at each level of fit within that environment.

Keywords: Teacher turnover; Teacher attrition; Teacher retention; Person-Environment Fit Theory

Chapter 1: Introduction

The attrition rate within the teaching profession is alarming; Nationwide, approximately 20% of teachers will leave the profession by the end of their third year of teaching and 50% will leave by the end of their fifth year (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; Grissmer & Kirby, 1997; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Rinke, 2014). Attrition rates have increased so significantly that more teachers will now voluntarily leave the profession rather than remain until retirement (Ingersoll et al., 2014). With the numbers of non-returning teachers continuing to increase (Swars, Meyers, Mays, & Lack, 2009) and a cost ranging nationally from \$2 billion to over \$7 billion per year to replace them (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Muller, Dodd, & Fiala, 2014; Synar & Maiden, 2012), the teacher attrition crisis is placing an already financially strapped system under even more stress.

The state of Oklahoma is facing a more dismal reality. Between 2006 and 2014, approximately 35% of first-year teachers left their school, 29% left their district, and 17% left the profession altogether. Among slightly more experienced teachers, attrition rates continue to rise as well. The rate of teachers leaving the profession has risen from 13% in 2006 to 16% in 2014 for those with 2-3 years of experience. When considering the 17% of first-year teachers leaving the profession after their inaugural year, Oklahoma is losing nearly 30% of its teachers by the end of their third year in the classroom. Additionally, among full-time teachers with ten years of teaching experience, 10% leave the profession altogether each year (Hendricks, 2015). This mass exodus of teachers across the state has resulted in a decrease in the average years of experience of Oklahoma's teachers from 12.8 years in 2006 to 11.4 years in 2014.

The 2018 Oklahoma Supply & Demand Report (Lazarte-Alcala, 2018) described the current situation as a "critical teacher shortage" (p. 31). The report states that the rate of exit attrition in Oklahoma has consistently increased since 2012-13, from a rate of 9.8% to a 2016-17

rate of 11.3%. Compared to a national attrition rate of 7.7% in 2012-13, Oklahoma’s teachers are leaving at a rate nearly 30% higher than the national average. Ultimately this volume of exit attrition amounts to nearly 30,000 teachers in Oklahoma having left the profession in the last six years (Lazarte-Alcala, 2018). (See Table 1.1). With the total number of teachers in Oklahoma at just over 41,000 annually, this indicates that each year the state’s teacher workforce is experiencing more than 25% turnover.

Table 1.1.

Numbers of Oklahoma Public School Teacher Attrition from 2012-13 through 2017-18

School Years	Number of Certified Teachers		
	Transfer Attrition	Exit Attrition	Total Turnover
2012-13 to 2013-14	6,760	5,121	11,881
2013-14 to 2014-15	6,415	4,805	11,220
2014-15 to 2015-16	6,239	4,943	11,182
2015-16 to 2016-17	5,641	5,614	11,255
2016-17 to 2017-18	6,301	5,801	12,102

Note. Turnover is calculated between two consecutive years. Transfer attrition does not include teacher transfers to a school within the same district. Adapted from “Figure 9,” by N. R. Lazarte-Alcala, December 2018, *2018 Oklahoma Educator Supply and Demand Report*, p. 33.

There have been numerous studies exploring the factors that impact teacher attrition (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Glazer, 2018; Ingersoll, 2001; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002; Liu & Meyer, 2005; Nieto, 2003; Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Vagi & Pivovarova, 2016) and leading to an understanding of a complex situation that is impacted by students, administration, colleagues, curriculum, mandates, ethics, and self-efficacy. Workplace characteristics such as administrative support, school organization, and professional culture have all been found to influence one’s decision about their position for the subsequent school year (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011). When faced with an undesirable situation, regardless of the underlying factors, an individual can choose to stay in their current position, move to another

school, or leave the profession (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; McGinnis, Parker, & Graeber, 2004).

While many teachers leave, there are just as many that choose to stay in their current position for the subsequent school year. Existing research examines the experiences of teachers who remain in the classroom and the teacher life cycles that they experience (Day & Gu, 2010; Huberman, 1989). Although their decision to remain in the classroom can be influenced by a multitude of factors, their choice to return to the same situation is evidence of their commitment to stay with the profession for a longer period of time. While the longevity of this commitment to the teaching profession is unknown, it is assumed that for now these individuals maintain some level of value and stability in their current position.

Regardless of their reasons for leaving, teachers that do not return to their current positions for the subsequent school year are referred to as turnover (Macdonald, 1999; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). A distinction is made between teachers who choose to leave the profession altogether and those who leave their current position for a teaching position elsewhere. The first are known as exit attrition or leavers, while the latter are known as transfer attrition (Billingsley, 2004), migration (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008), or movers.

Exit attrition accounts for slightly less than 50% of teacher turnover each year (Ingersoll, 2003). With 17% of new teachers leaving after their first year, and 10% of veteran teachers (with 10 or more years of experience) leaving the profession annually, there is a significant number of classroom teachers exiting the profession each year and seeking new career paths (Blatt, 2016; Hackman & Morath, 2018; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). According to the Labor Department, during the first 10 months of 2018, public school teachers quit at an average rate of 83 per 10,000 a month (Hackman & Morath, 2018). While this is still low compared to “the rate for American workers overall- 231 voluntary departures per 10,000 workers in 2018- it is the

highest rate for public educators since such records began in 2001” (Hackman & Morath, 2018). While once thought of as a lifetime career choice for those entering the teaching profession, this is no longer the case, as is evidenced by the attrition rate in Oklahoma and across the nation.

According to Kersaint, Lewis, Potter, and Meisels (2007), slightly more than 50% of teachers that leave their positions each year move into positions in other schools, districts, or states and are considered transfer attrition. It is important to note that the actual number may be significantly higher, as data collection methods vary by state, and many districts do not include intra-district movers in their data. A portion of the moves within transfer attrition are involuntary and can be attributed to allocation or elimination of positions, typically due to a lack of seniority or tenure, while other moves are voluntary and the result of individuals seeking a position in a different school, district, or state. Regardless, it is important to note that the implications of transfer attrition directly impact millions of children each year and carries a cost to both the losing and receiving schools.

Regardless of the category in which they fall, teacher turnover has far reaching effects. Some turnover is inevitable and can even be considered beneficial if the teachers who are leaving are the least effective (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wycoff, 2013). However, high rates of teacher turnover unfavorably affects students, schools, and districts. Aside from monetary implications, turnover creates adverse conditions that undermine school effectiveness and negatively impacts student performance (Glazer, 2018; Santoro, 2018).

Costs related to teacher turnover are primarily related to recruitment and training. Expenses related to recruitment include advertising and administrative processing, as well as incentives to attract teachers to a specific state, district, or school. Additionally, teachers new to a school and/or district typically require additional training on specific curriculum, resources, procedures, and initiatives. The cost of replacing teachers varies significantly nationwide. An

estimate of the annual cost of teacher turnover in Chicago Public Schools alone is more than \$86 million (Barnes, Crowe & Schaefer, 2007). Nationally, annual costs to replace classroom teachers are estimated to be as high as \$7 billion (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Muller et al., 2014; Synar & Maiden, 2012).

In addition to the financial costs, student achievement is also affected by teacher turnover. High levels of turnover have been linked to decreased student performance (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). This is likely due to inexperienced, less effective teachers filling classroom vacancies left by exiting teachers (Rivkin et al., 2005). Teachers in their first two years of teaching are less effective simply because they lack experience (NCTAF, 2003). Additionally, new teachers who have entered the profession via alternative routes have little or no teaching experience, no pedagogical preparation, and possibly no formal content preparation (Kersaint et al., 2007). Schools with high teacher turnover often resort to hiring short- and long-term substitute teachers to fill classroom vacancies, exacerbating an already problematic situation (Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005).

In schools with high teacher turnover, there are more inexperienced and less effective teachers than in schools with low turnover. This is particularly harmful in schools that have high percentages of minority students, which consistently see higher rates of teacher turnover than schools with lower percentages of minority students (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2005). When examining factors that impact the academic achievement gap across racial groups, it is important to consider that minority students “are far more likely to face a novice teacher than their white counterparts” (Clotfelter et al., 2005, p. 391).

However, the placement of inexperienced, ineffective teachers is not the only way in which turnover affects student achievement. Teacher turnover can cause disruptions within the school, negatively impacting teacher collaboration, employee morale and work relationships, and

school climate. These disruptions, combined with disruptions in curriculum and instruction, result in lower student achievement on standardized math and reading assessments (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Furthermore, these disruptions create disincentives for keeping experienced teachers in the school (Loeb et al., 2005).

Historically, teacher turnover and classroom vacancies have been addressed through various recruitment strategies and programs. Federally, the primary policy approach to address the increasing need to fill classroom teaching positions has been through recruitment (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Two examples of national programs designed to attract individuals to the teaching profession, thus partially alleviating the increasing teacher shortage, are Teach for America and Troops to Teachers. Established in 1990, Teach for America was designed to attract talented college students to the teaching profession, in which they commit to teach for two-years in a low-income community. As of 2018, Teach for America has 6,797 current corps members teaching in urban and rural schools across the United States, as well as 53,000 alumni. They state, “Approximately 83% of alumni report working in jobs that impact education in low-income communities, with more than 13,500 serving as classroom teachers and 1,120 as principals” (Teach for America, 2018). Troops to Teachers was established in 1993 to encourage active duty service members and veterans to begin new careers as educators and assist them in the process. The Troops for Teachers program provides counseling services, employment facilitation services, and financial assistance to eligible applicants. Additionally, as a result of federal funding, 31 states have received grants that provide “local state education departments and agencies to assist military members, veterans, and Troops to Teachers participants with local counseling and guidance” (Troops to Teachers, 2018).

Furthermore, states and school districts have addressed teacher vacancies through recruitment in various ways. Every state, as well as Washington, D.C., now offers some form of

alternative certification opportunities to college graduates that allow them to begin teaching without formal education training. These programs range from short summer programs that place teachers in classrooms with full responsibility after only a few weeks of training to post-baccalaureate programs that provide mentoring, support, and supervision, along with concurrent, integrated coursework (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002). Additionally, some states and districts have recruited teachers from overseas and/or offered financial incentives related to educational expenses, such as student loan forgiveness, scholarships, tuition reimbursement, and relocation expenses such as moving stipends (Ingersoll & May, 2012).

Specifically, many of Oklahoma's classroom teacher vacancies are being filled with nonaccredited teachers given emergency certifications. Emergency certifications allow individuals to gain employment as teachers prior to completing the education or training requirements necessary to obtain a standard or alternative certification. While some applicants are certified teachers who are looking to add a certification for an additional grade level or subject area, the majority of applicants have no teacher education or teaching experience. Applicants may also be granted more than one certification, leading to a higher number of emergency certificates issued than number of educators holding those certifications. (See Table 1.2). Individuals are allowed to teach for two years with an emergency certification, and may apply for a third year extension if they are actively seeking a standard certification.

During the 2017-18 school year, the state of Oklahoma issued 2,153 Emergency Teaching Certificates to 1,907 educators to fill vacant positions compared to the mere 33 that were issued for the 2011-12 school year (Blatt, 2016). (See Table 1.2). 510 of those Emergency Certificates were in Elementary Education (Grades 1-5), while an additional 318 were in Early Childhood (Grades Pre-kindergarten [PK]- 3) (OKSDE, 2018). This indicates that approximately

half of emergency certified teacher are interacting with students during the years in which their educational foundation is being constructed.

The growing reliance on hiring unaccredited teachers by school districts continues to rise. In the first three months of the 2018-19 school year, the Oklahoma State Board of Education approved 2,153 emergency certifications. As of December 2018, the state board has approved 2,915 emergency certifications for unaccredited teachers for the 2018-19 school year (Eger, 2018). This surpasses the total emergency certificates issued during the entire previous school year (2017-18) by more than 700, or 30%.

Table 1.2.

Emergency Teaching Certificates Issued in Oklahoma

School Year	Number of Educators	Number of Certifications Issued
2011-12	25	33
2012-13	91	109
2013-14	193	247
2014-15	483	572
2015-16	1,034	1,209
2016-17	1,143	1,319
2017-18	1,907	2,153
2018-19	2,852	2,915

In contrast to the attention given to the recruitment of teachers to fill classroom positions, very little policy has focused on the significance of teacher turnover as it relates to classroom vacancies (Ingersoll, 2001). The 2003 National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) urged policy makers to downsize schools, offer federal financial incentives to teach in high-need areas, and increase teacher compensation- all in an effort to decrease teacher turnover. However, despite their recommendations, the rate of teacher turnover has continued to increase

since 2003, resulting in some states' lack of qualified teachers reaching a near state of emergency.

Both exit attrition and transfer attrition create vacancies within individual schools that must be filled. If these vacancies are filled with beginning teachers who typically have high rates of attrition, the turnover cycle most likely will continue or accelerate (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011). Therefore, teacher turnover and retention warrant significant attention from school and district leadership, as well as federal policy makers. "Schools are not simply victims of inexorable demographic trends, and there is a significant role for management of schools in both the genesis of and solution to school staffing problems" (Ingersoll, 2000). Rather than focus on increasing teacher supply, "an alternative solution to school staffing problems...is to decrease the demand for new teachers by decreasing turnover" (Ingersoll, 2000).

Understanding who falls into the categories of teacher turnover and their reasons for exiting or transferring can help school, district, and state administrators target the teachers most at risk for exiting or transferring and provide appropriate in-time support measures as needed (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). Additionally, examining their reasons for leaving or moving for factors that can be impacted and improved with management of schools is imperative. It is anticipated that, by addressing these areas, the attrition rate could decrease and the teacher workforce stabilize.

When studying teacher retention and attrition, educational researchers have primarily emphasized the phenomenon from an economic perspective, such as supply and demand or labor market effect (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). Additional perspectives have included organizational and/or social structures within the workplace (Ingersoll, 2001; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). A relatively small body of research has examined

teacher turnover through the perspective of person-environment fit theory (Grogan & Youngs, 2011; Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Player, Youngs, Perrone, & Grogan, 2017).

Theories of “fit” are well established in research on organizational behavior and have been used to explore how individuals interact with their environment. Likewise, fit theory has been used to examine factors that influence job attraction, satisfaction, retention, and attrition across numerous vocations (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Organizational behavior research indicates that person-job fit, person-organization fit, and person-group fit are reliable predictors of employee satisfaction and retention (Kristof-Brown, Jansen, & Colbert, 2002). Within educational research, person-job fit and person-group fit were both found to be significant predictors of teacher retention, while person-organization fit was not (Grogan & Youngs, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study is to examine the motivations and experiences of teacher movers as they relate to types of teacher fit, and ultimately, teacher retention or attrition. This study focuses on a select group of teachers who are considered to be part of transfer attrition. Each of the participants is a fully certified, veteran teacher who has invested significant resources into their students, teaching, and school community prior to making the decision to voluntarily seek a position in a different school. The accounts of these invested movers can help us understand their motivations for moving, as well as their experiences in their new workplace. Only by hearing directly from teachers about their experiences can educational stakeholders begin to understand the complexities of a teacher’s decision to stay, move, or leave the profession.

Theoretical Framework

Organizational Behavior (OB) has well established roots in the fields of psychology, sociology, and management. While originally bounded in the field of profit-making work organizations (Schneider, 1985), its principals and theories have expanded to organizations outside of the original boundaries, including educational institutions. One prominent theory within OB is that of person-environment fit (P-E). P-E fit theory is based on the premise that “people have an innate need to fit their environments and to seek out environments that match their own characteristics” (van Vianen, 2018, p. 77).

P-E fit is commonly defined as the compatibility between an individual and their environment. In a work context, P-E fit is examined through a range of relationships between the person and another entity. These relationships include person-vocation fit (fit between individual vocational interests and selected vocational characteristics), person-job fit (fit between individual capacities and demands of the job), person-organization fit (fit between individual and organizational values), person-group fit (fit between individual characteristics and those colleagues), and person-individual fit (fit between individual attributes and those of another individual within the workplace, usually a supervisor).

Although frequently debated, there are several predominate perspectives about what constitutes fit, ranging from highly restrictive to broad compatibility. Exact correspondence is the most restrictive perspective and refers to a scenario in which characteristics of person and environment are an exact match (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). These are easily observed by both participants and observers because of the congruence of characteristics. General compatibility refers to the most lenient perspective, in which flexibility exists in the measurement and comparison of person and environment (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). In this

view characteristics can be measured independent of one another, making it more subjective and therefore, more difficult to identify.

Nestled between exact correspondence and general compatibility is the perspective of commensurate compatibility (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). This view of P-E fit acknowledges fit across a range of compatibility and a variety of characteristics. An individual maintains fit so long as the environmental characteristics remain within an acceptable range. This perspective acknowledges that a level of satisfaction is directly related to the range of compatibility, with dissatisfaction and incompatibility reflecting a low P-E fit, while high compatibility and high satisfaction reflecting a strong P-E fit. In alignment with the characteristics of this perspective, commensurate compatibility is the approach used in this study.

Regardless of how one defines compatibility of P-E fit, two mechanisms, supplementary fit and complementary fit, underlie the concept of compatibility (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). This study operationalizes fit of teachers and their environments as supplementary. Supplementary fit is based on compatibility derived from similarity. This type of fit occurs when a person's characteristics are similar to the characteristics of the environment and individuals within that environment and therefore supplement them. Individuals tend to categorize their interactions into those similar or dissimilar to themselves. Through these categorizations, individuals are attracted to others who hold similar attitudes, values, and beliefs (van Vianen, 2017). This tendency to value similarity "is functional because it sustains cooperation, social relationships, certainty, consistency, and control" (van Vianen, 2018, p. 79).

Complementary fit occurs when either the individual or the environment are lacking in a specific area and both are "made whole" by coming together (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). In this case, the needs of both the environment and the individual are met in a reciprocal relationship, reflecting compatibility based on mutual benefit. In a situation in which needs of

one participant (either individual or environment) are met, while the needs of the other participant are not met, the compatibility would be considered a misfit (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011).

In addition to the aforementioned theories of fit, the present study is influenced by Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) theory (Schneider, 1985). One of multiple theories within the realm of P-E fit theory, ASA is one method of analyzing person-organization fit. ASA is unique in that it views organizations as a reflection of the people within them, rather than independent of them. Schneider (1987) argued that organizations attract, select, and retain similar people. He also maintained that individuals who differ from the norm of the organization are a misfit and ultimately leave.

ASA suggests that an organization's characteristics, including values, goals, and attitudes, are influenced by its leader. These characteristics attract individuals with similar values, goals, and attitudes, whom are selected based on their compatibility with the organization's characteristics. This cycle continues as the organization grows, with misfit individuals either conforming or leaving. While homogeneity may result in high levels of satisfaction and retention among employees, growth may be inhibited by a lack of perspectives.

Finally, there are two general approaches to measuring fit: objective fit and subjective fit (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). Objective fit is measured with information from multiple individuals within the same organization. Data to assess personal characteristics are self-reported, but analysis "utilizes a calculation of correspondence between respondent data and information collected from other organizational members" (Grogan & Youngs, 2011, p. 5). While one benefit of this method is collecting information about environmental characteristics from multiple individuals within the organization, it is limited "by the extent to which organizational members agree on the overall climate" (Grogan & Youngs, 2011, p. 5).

Subjective fit acknowledges that “objective reality, whether socially or structurally constructed, is filtered through an individual’s perceptions before they can react to it” (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). As a result, the “objective” environment is somewhat meaningless, with emphasis placed on the individual’s subjective perceptions of their environment. Subjective fit is commonly measured by asking individuals to report his or her personal characteristics, as well as the characteristics he or she perceives in the environment. The present study conceptualizes attrition, attraction, and satisfaction as a reflection of an individual teacher’s subjective fit with their organization (school and/or district), group (coworkers), and individual (administrator).

Research Question

There is a need to better understand the motivations and experiences of teachers who change schools in order to explore ways in which schools and districts can reduce transfer attrition, thus minimizing the stress and strain on our educational system. The purpose of this case study is to investigate the professional experiences of in-service elementary teachers who have recently moved to a new school. This study examines their motivations to move and subsequent experiences.

This case-study aimed to address the following questions:

1. What are the motivations of veteran teachers who voluntarily seek a teaching position in a different school?
2. What are the experiences of these teachers in their new workplace?

Significance of the Study

There has been significant research conducted to understand why teachers may leave the profession. Reasons include a lack of administrative support (Ingersoll, 2000; Kersaint et al., 2007; Liu & Meyer, 2005; Madsen & Hancock, 2002), discipline problems (Ingersoll, 2002; Kersaint et al., 2007), increased focus on accountability and assessment (Darling-Hammond &

Sykes, 2003; Kumashiro, 2009; Tye & O'Brien, 2002), insufficient induction and mentoring (Kelly, 2004), low pay (Ingersoll, 2000; Liu & Meyer, 2005; Stinebrickner, 2001; Tye & O'Brien, 2002), and time with family/family responsibilities (Ingersoll, 2002; Kersaint et al., 2007). There is also a belief that the decision to move or leave is a lengthy process that begins long before teachers finally leave the profession (Lindquist & Nordanger, 2015; Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012).

A recent study was conducted to explore the reasons teachers left Oklahoma and pursued teaching jobs in other locations (Cullen, 2017). Findings indicated a similar complexity, impacted significantly by low teacher pay, feelings of hopelessness in the educational system, and a lack of public support and respect for the profession. Additionally, Ingersoll & Perda (2011) found that teachers who have moved to a new placement may be seeking a more supportive workplace than their previous school or district. Kersaint et al. (2007) suggested that, by studying teacher movers, “recommendations for proactive measures can be made” to provide them with the support needed in their new placements (p. 777). Studies that are in the moment and that can provide insight into the motivation and intent of this vulnerable population are crucial in “guiding intervention strategies while teachers are still on the job” (Kersaint et al., 2007, p. 777).

Definitions of Key Terms:

Teacher turnover: The collective body of teachers whom do not return to their current position for the subsequent school year.

Exit attrition: The phenomenon of teachers whom do not return to their current position as the result of leaving the profession, either temporarily or permanently.

Transfer attrition: The phenomenon of teachers whom do not return to their current position as the result of moving to a different teaching job in another school.

Teacher migration: The phenomenon of teachers whom transfer or move to different teaching jobs in other schools.

Leaver: A teacher that has made the decision to leave the profession (temporarily or permanently) and seek options outside of teaching full-time. This includes those whom resign or retire.

Mover: An individual who moves to another school in the same district (intra-district), another district (inter-district), and/or another locale (e.g. city to suburban), either voluntarily or involuntarily.

Stayer: An individual that has made the decision to stay in their current role and setting for the subsequent school year. These teachers have determined that their current role and setting is, at a minimum, tolerable for one more year.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The public school system in the United States is charged with providing a high-quality education to every student in Kindergarten through Grade 12. In order to accomplish this tremendous task, there must be an ample supply of skillful, trained individuals who are willing to serve as teachers (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). Unfortunately, the supply of qualified teachers who choose to continue in the profession is dwindling, with attrition rates consistently rising over the past 40 years (Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005).

The purpose of this study was to closely examine a group of teachers who have recently contributed to the teacher attrition statistics. This study explored the reasons those teachers chose to leave their schools and examined their experiences in their new schools. The research questions that guided this study are as follows: What are the motivations of veteran teachers who voluntarily seek a teaching position in a different school? What are the experiences of these teachers in their new workplace? Understanding these experiences may provide insight into strategies that may be effective in reducing teacher turnover due to transfer attrition.

This literature review consists of six major sections. The purpose of the first section is to examine teacher turnover from a historical perspective. The second section examines existing research on teacher turnover in order to clearly define the issue, including both exit attrition and transfer attrition. The third section considers determinants of attrition within three categories: teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and workplace characteristics. The fourth section examines the theoretical framework (person-environment fit) for this study. The final two sections identify the gaps in existing literature and outline the conceptual framework that guides this study.

History of Teacher Turnover

Teacher turnover is a challenge that has existed since the beginning of the public school system in the United States. Lortie (2002) explains that “the burgeoning schools of the nineteenth century faced the problem of recruiting thousands of teachers each year- they developed a system of remuneration that would attract new members and paid little attention to those who already taught” (p. 83). High rates of teacher turnover continued into the twentieth century, amplified by teacher organizations that have demanded higher salaries for beginning teachers, rather than increased salaries for experienced teachers (Lortie, 2002). “A beginning teacher knows what he will earn and can see that long service brings limited reward” (Lortie, 2002, p. 84).

Some of the earliest documentation of rates of teacher turnover emerges from the 1920s. Teacher turnover was first identified in 1924 by the National Education Association (NEA) in their memo, *The Problem of Teacher Tenure*. At that time, they reported a national teacher turnover rate of 16%. Similarly, Whitney (1930) describes an annual teacher turnover rate in Colorado of approximately 11% during the mid-1920s. He explains that 75% of vacancies within the state are filled with teachers without any teaching experience, and that despite the best efforts of school districts, there were nearly 100 unfilled classroom vacancies.

During the 1940s, prior to the end of World War II, there was a considerable teacher shortage across the United States. While this may have been impacted by demands for increased teacher preparation, this was also the result of poor standing of teachers in relation to the public at large (Lortie, 2002). Consequently, the teaching profession was not attractive enough to entice the number of individuals necessary to fulfill the growing demands of public school enrollments (Maul, 1965). While there was a significant increase of teachers that joined the profession in the early 1950s due to the end of the war, the numbers had decreased again by 1955.

As the result of concern over a significant teacher shortage during the 1940s, the NEA began to collect and report national teacher data. Beginning in 1949, the NEA Research Division issued an annual report entitled *Teacher Supply and Demand in the Public Schools*. These reports were intended to document and increase awareness of rates and trends in teacher supply, demand, and turnover. Specifically, they sought to “explore the sources of supply of qualified candidates to teach in the elementary schools... to measure the demand for teachers in [this] area... and to discover the extent to which the elementary school teaching corps of the nation is professionally prepared” (NEA, 1953, p. 3-4). Their findings were grim. With regards to the supply of elementary teachers, the report stated, “disregarding the steadily expanding need for new elementary school teachers there is grave doubt that even replacement demands can be met” (p. 5). The report also acknowledged the complexity of teacher turnover, involving both exit attrition and transfer attrition. While the reports were able to present valuable information and data on the supply and demand to teachers over the twenty years that they were published, their impact on change was slow to emerge.

Teacher turnover studies in the late 1950s focused primarily on describing teacher shortages around the country and the challenges involved in finding teachers to replace those that left or to fill newly formed classes. For example, Lichtenberger (1958) reported that the state of Nebraska had a turnover rate that year of 34%. In his 1957 report, McGuinn indicated that slightly more than 40% of school board presidents nationwide named teacher turnover as the most serious problem their school district faced.

Unfortunately, these trends of instability within the teacher workforce continued over the next decade. Mason (1961) surveyed beginning teachers and found that only 29% of male and 16% of females anticipated uninterrupted teaching careers. Of the females surveyed, 65% planned on leaving the classroom within the first five years, while 84% projected that they would

leave the profession before they reached retirement. Of the men included in the survey, Mason found that the majority of male teachers had no intention of making a career of classroom teaching. 71% indicated that they intended on leaving the profession, offering “pay, salary, and standard of living” as reasons why they would leave (Mason, 1961).

Costa (1972) described teachers in Alaska during the 1959-60 school year being surveyed to determine their intentions for the next school year. Nearly 300 teachers did not return the subsequent school year, resulting in a statewide turnover rate of just over 34%. Similarly, in 1963, the Oregon Education Association released a bulletin stating that 17% of teachers employed during the 1961-62 school year did not return the following year. Despite these dismal findings, Maul (1965) stated, “I am led to believe that a turning-point will soon be reached in teacher supply and demand” (p. 432). Maul’s prediction was, in fact, correct.

Perhaps as a result of multiple recruitment initiatives such as scholarships and loans for college teacher preparation programs, Urban Teacher Corps initiatives, and the creation of Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) programs across the country, the NEA declared an official end to the national teacher shortage in the early 1970s. In agreement with this action, Graybeal (1974), in his analysis of the 1973 NEA Research Report, *Teacher Supply and Demand in Public Schools*, reported a national teacher turnover rate of 8.5%. Notably, the percent of teachers remaining in the same school system for consecutive years increased from 80.5% in 1965-66 to 86.9% in 1972-73 (p. 205). Likewise, the percent of teachers who had taught in a different school system the preceding year decreased from 6.9% in 1965-66 to 3.6% in 1972-73 (Graybeal, 1974, p. 205). Both of these trends indicate a decrease in the rate of teacher turnover during the mid 1960s to early 1970s. While teacher turnover rates were relatively low overall, several content areas were reported to be in low supply of qualified teachers at the time, including mathematics, science, industrial arts, and trade-technical subjects (Graybeal, 1974, p. 204).

A decade later, in 1983, the National Commission of Excellent Education released their report titled, *A Nation at Risk*. This alarming commentary focused national attention on the state of the nation's schools. The report claimed that among other things, teachers were inadequately prepared to teach, the professional lives of teachers were undesirable, and not enough individuals were being attracted to the profession, particularly in key fields such as science and mathematics (National Commission on Excellent Education, 1983). In response to *A Nation at Risk*, a series of reforms intended to improve education were implemented, targeting schools, students, and teachers (Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009). It was during this same period that research studies shifted focus towards understanding the reasons teachers were leaving the profession and how various incentives affected teacher turnover.

Educational researchers warned of an imminent teacher shortage. Darling-Hammond (1985) predicted that a severe teacher shortage would occur within the next ten years. Explanations for the anticipated shortage varied. Arguments included increasing numbers of teachers reaching retirement, while others blamed an inability to retain teachers within the profession. In an effort to better understand the issue of teacher turnover, Grissmer & Kirby (1997) examined longitudinal teacher data in Indiana to determine that teachers' decisions to stay in the profession were based on working conditions and salary. They also found that teachers that would leave the profession were more likely to do so in the first five years.

As the 1990s approached, politicians and educational leaders began to focus on improving teacher quality. In 1994, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) was established to "ensure the preparation of excellent teaching" (Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009). Their initial report, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future* (1996), addressed previous efforts at school reform and made suggestions for improvement.

On the whole, the school reform movement has ignored the obvious: What teachers know and can do makes the crucial difference in what children learn... Rather than proclamations, schools need policies and working environments that attract the best people to teaching, provide them superb preparation, hone their skills and commitment in the early years, and keep them in the profession by rewarding them for their knowledge, skills, and good work (NCTAF, 1996, p. 5).

While all three basic premises focus on the value of teachers and set the tone for the report, the second clearly acknowledged concerns regarding teacher turnover: “Recruiting, preparing, and retaining good teachers is the central strategy for improving our schools” (NCTAF, 1996, p. 6).

According to the 1999-00 Schools and Staffing Survey and the 2000-01 Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS), both conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), 7.4% of all teachers left teaching, while another 7.7% moved to a different school, resulting in a combined total attrition of 15.1%. In his analysis of Schools and Staffing Survey data, Ingersoll (2001) argued that retirees were not at the forefront of the teacher shortage, but rather, teachers leaving the profession prior to reaching retirement were the most significant factor in the teacher shortage. Moreover, high levels of teacher turnover are indicative of deep organizational issues and instability (Ingersoll, 2001). Major factors related to high rates of teacher turnover included salary and student discipline, with student discipline being a pervasive factor which influenced teacher turnover across all types of schools: high poverty, low poverty, urban, rural, large, and small (Ingersoll, 2001).

The 2003 NCTAF report, *No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children*, once again named teacher turnover a national crisis and identified it as the real issue at the core of school staffing problems. “We are losing teachers faster than we can replace them” (NCTAF, 2003, p. 22). Likewise, the NCTAF (2003) indicated that teacher retention should be a top

priority. “Our inability to support high quality teaching in many of our schools is driven not by too few teachers entering, but by too many leaving” (NCTAF, 2003, p. 8). Ingersoll (2003) indicated that traditional policy programs focused on teacher recruitment would not solve the staffing problems faced by America’s schools. “Recruiting more teachers will not solve the teacher crisis if 40 to 50% of such teachers then leave within five years” (Ingersoll, 2002a, p. 17). Rather, they must “address the organizational sources of low teacher retention” (Martinez-Garcia & Slate, 2009, p. 8).

The 2007 NCTAF policy brief, *The High Cost of Teacher Turnover*, estimated that the annual cost of teacher turnover in the United States is over \$7.3 billion. Labeled as “a growing teacher dropout problem” (p. 1), NCTAF’s findings indicated that teacher turnover had grown by 50% in the previous 15 years, with a national turnover average residing at 16.8%. The NCTAF (2007) also reaffirmed that teacher turnover rates are highest in high-poverty, high-minority, and low-performing schools.

Perda (2013) utilized national longitudinal data to document cumulative rates of attrition among beginning teachers. He found that by their fifth year of teaching, more than 41% of all beginning teachers had left the profession. Perda (2013) also noted that over the course of two decades, from 1988 to 2008, the rates of leaving for first-year teachers had increased by 34%. Together with a significantly larger teaching force in 2008 than in 1998, the actual numbers of first-year teachers that attrite has rocketed, from 6,000 teachers in 1987-88 to 25,000 teachers in 2007-08. When asked to identify their reasons for leaving, 45% of the teachers who left in 2008-09 indicated dissatisfaction with school and work conditions, such as student behavior, classroom resources, and school leadership (Perda, 2013).

In 2014, the NCES released the results from the 2012-13 TFS. Included in their findings were staggering numbers related to teacher turnover. The TFS (2014) stated that national

turnover rates continued to hover at 16%, the same as five years prior (see Table 2.1). Exit attrition, or leavers, accounted for 50% of total turnover, while transfer attrition, or movers, accounted for the other 50%. Within the category of transfer attrition, 59% represented intradistrict transfer, while 38% represented interdistrict transfers. TFS (2014) findings also claimed that 30% of movers did so involuntarily. Finally, of those who left the teaching profession, greater than 50% indicated that both their working conditions and workload were better in their new position than in teaching.

Table 2.1.

National Turnover Percentages of Public School Teachers from 1988-89 through 2012-13

School Year	Percentage		
	Movers	Leavers	Total Turnover
1988-89	7.9	5.6	13.5
1991-92	7.3	5.1	12.4
1994-95	7.2	6.6	13.8
2000-01	7.7	7.4	15.1
2004-05	8.1	8.4	16.5
2008-09	7.6	8.0	15.6
2012-13	8.1	7.7	15.8

Note. Adapted from “Table 1: Number and percentage distribution of public school teacher stayers, movers, and leavers: 1988-89 through 2012-13,” by National Center for Educational Statistics, May 2014, *2012-13 Teacher Follow-up Survey*.

Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey (2014), once again, brought to light the disparity in teacher turnover. “The flow of teachers out of schools is not equally distributed across states, regions, and school districts. The largest variations in teacher turnover by location, however, are those between different schools, even within the same district” (Ingersoll et al., 2014, p. 23). Data from 2004-05 illustrated that 45% of all teacher turnover took place in just one quarter of America’s public schools. Once again, high-poverty, high-minority, low-achieving schools have the highest rates of teacher turnover (Ingersoll et al., 2014).

Teacher Turnover

When examining why teachers do not return to their position as a classroom teacher it is important to recognize that there are numerous factors that impact their decision. Ultimately, their departure can be categorized into one of two categories: *wastage* or *turnover*. Some individuals exit the profession due to *natural causes*, such as retirement, maternal leave, resignation, temporary leave, or career interruption. Teachers that leave their positions for reasons within this category are commonly indicated by the term *wastage* (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). There is a significant body of research that examines the motivations and experiences of teachers who fall within the category of wastage, however the purpose of this literature review is to examine the body of research that aims to understand teachers that fall into the second category, commonly known as *turnover*.

Teachers that, by *personal choice*, do not return to their current positions for the subsequent school year are referred to as *turnover* (Macdonald, 1999; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). A further distinction within teacher turnover is made between teachers who choose to leave the profession altogether, known as *exit attrition*, and those who leave their current position for a teaching position elsewhere, known as *transfer attrition* (Billingsley, 2004), *teacher migration* (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008), or *movers* (NCES, 2014).

Exit Attrition

The organizations and individuals charged with staffing public school classrooms have an important and challenging job. While recruitment of new teachers is important, attention must also be paid to retention and attrition of the teachers already employed (Schuck, Aubusson, Buchanan, & Russell, 2012). While once thought of as a lifetime career choice for those entering the teaching profession, this is no longer the case. Attrition rates have increased to the point that

more teachers leave the classroom voluntarily than remain until they are eligible for retirement (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014).

Globally, retention and attrition statistics are concerning. China has experienced increased exit attrition over the past four decades (Changying, 2007). In the United Kingdom, approximately 25% of teachers who have qualified since 2011 have already left the profession (Savage, 2017). Australia reports similar figures, with attrition rates of new teachers at 24% within their first five years (Angus, Olney, & Ainley, 2007) and up to 45% within the first ten years of their career (Australian Education Union, 2006). Norway and Spain report 30 to 40 per cent of teachers exiting within their first five years; while Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands report approximately 50% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007; Purcell, Elias, Davies, & Wilton, 2005; Smithers & Robinson, 2003).

In the United States, approximately 20 to 30% of teachers will leave the profession by the end of their third year of teaching, and 50% will leave by the end of their fifth year (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Boe, 2008; Grissmer & Kirby, 1997; Ingersoll et al., 2014; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Rinke, 2014). Thus, the first few years of teaching are referred to as the “survival period” (Day & Gu, 2010; Huberman, 1989) during which new teachers find themselves questioning their ability to meet the demands of the profession (Huberman, 1989). While attrition rates decrease after this survival period, teachers continue to leave the classroom at rates high enough to create a workforce that is increasingly unstable (Ingersoll et al., 2014). According to the Labor Department, during the first 10 months of 2018, public school teachers quit at an average rate of 83 per 10,000 a month (Hackman & Morath, 2018). While this is still low compared to “the rate for American workers overall- 231 voluntary departures per 10,000 workers in 2018- it is the highest rate for public educators since such records began in 2001” (Hackman & Morath, 2018, para. 4).

Transfer Attrition

According to Kersaint, Lewis, Potter, and Meisels (2007), slightly more than 50% of teachers that leave their positions each year move into positions in other schools, districts, or states and are considered transfer attrition. It is important to note that the actual number may be significantly higher, as data collection methods vary by state, and many districts do not include intradistrict movers in their data. A portion of the moves within transfer attrition are involuntary and can be attributed to allocation or elimination of positions, typically due to a lack of seniority or tenure, while other moves are voluntary and the result of individuals seeking a position in a different school, district, or state.

An analysis of the 2012-13 TFS data found that 58.8% of movers transferred to another school within their district and 38.2% moved to a school in another district (NCES, 2014). This distribution has shifted slightly since the 2000-01 TFS, which found that 45% of movers transferred to another school within their district, while 53% moved to a school in a different district (NCES, 2005). Elfers, Plecki, & Knapp (2006) suggest that high rates of intradistrict movement “indicates that certain school characteristics may motivate teachers to move or leave their jobs” (p. 99).

Determinants of Attrition

There have been numerous studies exploring the factors that influence teacher attrition (e.g. Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Glazer, 2018; Ingersoll, 2001; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002; Liu & Meyer, 2005; Nieto, 2003; Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Vagi & Pivovarova, 2016). Existing studies have focused on teacher characteristics such as demographics (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, & Weber, 1997; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), pathways into teaching (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002), academic background (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005), effectiveness (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, &

Wyckoff, 2008), and feelings of self-efficacy (Chapman & Hatcheson, 1982; Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). Additional studies have focused on school characteristics such as student demographics, average class size, expenditures, or poverty levels (e.g. Mont & Rees, 1996; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Other studies have examined the connection between teacher attrition and workplace characteristics such as student behavior, administrative support, classroom autonomy, teaching conditions, school organization, and professional culture (e.g., Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011; DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2005; Tye & O'Brien, 2002). The following section examines existing research as it relates to three categories: teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and workplace characteristics.

Teacher Characteristics

Much of the extant research on teacher attrition clearly describes the characteristics of teachers who leave the profession. These characteristics can be grouped into six areas including demographics, family roles and responsibilities, pathways into teaching, academic background, effectiveness, and feelings of self-efficacy. Each of these six areas are described in detail in the following section.

Demographics. While early research documented higher rates of departure among women than men, current research indicates that this pattern has changed in recent years (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). Currently, exit attrition is highest among males and secondary (middle and high school) teachers (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014; Boyd et al., 2005). These findings are not the same across all studies. Chapman & Hatcheson (1982) found that differences between individuals who left the profession and those who remained were not explained by differences in sex, race, age, or where they attended college.

Several studies indicate that overall, minorities have lower attrition rates from teaching than Whites (Guarino et al., 2006), with Hispanics having the lowest rates of attrition (Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Kirby, Berends, & Naftel, 1999). While this information is interesting, there is little speculation on the reasoning behind these findings (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). Additionally, these findings do not align with those of the 2012-2013 TFS (NCES, 2014), which indicated that Black and Hispanic teachers had an attrition rate of slightly more than 20%, including both movers and leavers, while White teachers had an overall attrition rate of 15%. Ingersoll et al. (2014) suggested that the minority teachers depart from school at significantly higher rates than white teachers, and that those rates have steadily increased over the last two decades.

Although we know that teachers in their first five years of teaching are more likely to attrite, due to the variation of ages in which individuals enter the profession, it is difficult to clearly identify at which age individuals are more likely to attrite from the teaching profession. The 2012-13 TFS (NCES, 2014) indicated that teachers under the age of 30 account for 40% of movers and 25% of leavers, while teachers over the age of 50 account for less than 20% of movers and 50% of leavers. Likewise, when controlled for other variables, Player et al. (2017) found that teachers over the age of 50 were much more likely to leave the profession than younger teachers, which is likely due to retirement. However, teachers over the age of 50 were no more likely to switch schools than their younger peers.

Previous research has found that years of service consistently correlate with attrition rates. Teachers in the early stages of their careers are more likely to leave teaching than those who have more years invested in their careers. Kirby & Grissmer (1991) associated this trend with human capital theory which implies that a teacher in the early stages of their career has accumulated less specific capital than a teacher who has been in the classroom for longer. As a result, teachers in the early stages of their careers are more likely to see that the costs of staying

in the classroom outweigh the benefits. This was confirmed by Ingersoll (2003), who estimated that 45% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years of being in the classroom.

Regardless of the correlation between early career teachers and attrition rates, research has clearly maintained that there is not a simple linear relationship between attrition rates and years of service. Rather, when examining attrition rates as related to years of service, a U-shaped distribution emerges (Borman & Dowling, 2008). A significant influence on this upward curve later in a career is due to retirement. Nevertheless, there are unique factors that impact the decision to leave the profession during the later stages of one's career than those who leave early in their career, such as caring for an aging parent or a grandchild (Borman & Dowling 2008).

Nationally, the greatest rates of attrition are seen in the content areas of science and mathematics (Ingersoll, 2002b). Many teachers in these fields receive their certification via alternative routes, having received degrees in their field of study, rather than in education (Ingersoll, 2002a). About half of all math and science teachers who depart the profession indicate either job dissatisfaction or the desire to pursue another job (Ingersoll, 2000). High attrition rates within these areas are primarily due to the content preparation and the availability of well-paying positions in fields outside of education. (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014; Kersaint et al., 2007; Ingersoll, 2000).

Special Education also has higher rates of attrition than most areas. The 2012-13 TFS indicated that nearly 20% of special education teachers either moved schools or left the profession (NCES, 2014). When coupled with approximately 10% of special educators who transfer to general education each year, the numbers are alarming. Kersaint et al. (2007) theorize that one significant reason for these departures is the emotional stress involved in teaching special education. Williams & Dikes (2015) confirmed that special education teachers report high levels of both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Coupled with low levels of

personal accomplishment, special education teachers experience burnout at higher rates and more quickly than their general education peers, likely contributing to their higher rates of turnover (Mitchell & Arnold, 2004; Williams & Dikes, 2015).

Family roles and responsibilities. In their 2007 study, Kersaint et al. examined the factors that influenced teachers in Florida whom had either left the profession or remained. They identified six factors that influenced teachers' decision in staying or leaving. These factors include administrative support, financial benefits, paperwork/assessment, family responsibilities, joy of teaching, and time with family. Kersaint et al. (2007) found that time with family plays an important role in teachers who decide to leave the profession, indicating that teachers "may leave the profession in order to spend more time with their families" (p.782). This was particularly true for female, elementary school teachers with 20 or more years of experience, as well as individuals from high performing schools and/or schools with low socioeconomic status. The same study also indicated that family responsibility is of high importance among teachers who leave.

Wayne (2000) noted that teachers are more likely to leave their job for family and personal reasons than job dissatisfaction. Wayne also maintained that teachers who have children are more likely to leave the profession than those who do not have children, although there is evidence that indicates that many of these individuals return to teaching at some point. Similarly, Kirby and Grissmer (1991) indicated that the decision to enter and remain in the classroom is dependent on life cycle factors related to an individual's family status or change in family status, such as marriage, having a child, divorce, or caring for an ill family member.

Pathways into teaching. There are many pathways into teaching aside from the traditional four-year undergraduate program, including alternative certifications for individuals who already have a bachelor's degree, Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) programs, emergency

certifications, etc. These programs offer a wide variety of opportunities for those individuals who did not select or enact becoming a teacher as their first or early career. The unique characteristics of these teachers influence their rates of turnover. Older entrants to teaching, ages 30 to 45, are more likely to stay in the classroom (Donaldson, 2012; Kirby & Grissmer, 1999). Likewise, individuals with prior experiences in schools who later transition into teaching have more long-lasting careers (Clewell & Villegas, 2001).

Darling-Hammond, Chung, and Frelow (2002) aimed to understand how various pathways into the teaching profession impact teachers' feeling of preparation, as well as their likelihood to remain in the profession. While their results "underestimate the relationship between preparation and retention in teaching because the sample does not represent those who have already left the system during their first years of teaching", they do indicate a notable difference among teachers sense of preparedness and their plans to stay in the profession (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002, p.294). 82% of teachers who felt they were poorly prepared for the profession indicated that they would continue to teach *as long as [they] were able*, compared to 90% of teachers who felt they were well prepared for the profession. 13% of teachers who felt they were poorly prepared indicated they would stay in teaching *until something better [came] along*, compared to 8% of teachers who felt well prepared. Finally, 5% of teachers who felt they were poorly prepared to teach indicated that they would leave the profession *as soon as possible*, compared to 2% of teachers who felt well prepared.

Teachers from early entry programs, such as Teach for America (TFA) are more likely to attrite than are teachers from traditional teacher preparation programs (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2006). Teach for America aims to close racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps by placing talented college graduates in low-income urban and rural schools across the United States. If selected, corps members receive five weeks of formal preparation

prior to their placement in a high-poverty school to fulfill their two-year commitment of service. According to Donaldson & Johnson (2011), once they have fulfilled their two-year commitment, approximately two-thirds of TFA teachers continue as public school teachers. However, more than half leave their initial placements in high-poverty schools after two years, and by their fourth year, less than 15% remain in the school in which they were initially placed. Finally, by their fifth year, only 27.8% of TFA teachers are still teaching (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011).

Academic background. Kelly & Northrop (2015) aimed to understand how college selectivity impacted teacher attrition rates in early career teachers. Using data from the Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Survey (BTLS) over the course of three years, they examined rates of teacher attrition as they related to the selectivity of the colleges from which teachers attained their degree. Kelly & Northrop (2015) ascertain that graduates from highly selective schools have an 85% greater likelihood of leaving the profession than less selective graduates in the first three years of teaching. Similarly, highly selective graduates are also more likely to transfer schools than less selective graduates. These findings align with Podgursky, Monroe, & Watson (2004), whom found attrition rates of teachers with undergraduate degrees from highly selective universities to be 50% higher than graduates from less selective universities.

Boyd et al. (2005) found that teachers with higher test scores were more likely to attrite, as well as those who graduated from competitive undergraduate institutions. Similarly, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff (2002) found that teacher movers and leavers in New York had stronger qualifications than those who remained and were half as likely to have failed their first attempt at the New York teacher certification exams.

Player et al. (2017) found that teachers with a master's degree were more likely to move to a new school but were "no more likely nor less likely to exit the profession than teachers without a master's degree" (p.336). When considered with other factors, this propensity to leave

may be related to Lankford et al. (2002) findings that “more qualified teachers seize opportunities to leave difficult working conditions and move to more appealing environments” (p. 55). Likewise, Boyd et al. (2005) states that “more qualified teachers are much more sensitive to the attributes of schools with low-performing students than are less qualified teachers” (p. 15), and therefore are more likely to seek a transfer to a school with higher-performing students.

A recent study in Oklahoma (Lazarte Alcala, 2018) tracked cumulative attrition rates of new teachers for five years. When disaggregated by type of certification, the results show significant differences in attrition. For beginning teachers entering the workforce in 2012-13, the five-year cumulative attrition rate of all new teachers across the state was 53.9%. Yet when examined by type of certification, a vastly different picture emerges. Teachers with a Paraprofessional certificate (which requires a bachelor’s degree in any field, a minimum of one-year of experience as a paraprofessional in a public school, and the passing of three state competency exams) had the highest five-year retention rates at 69.12%. Teachers with a Standard certificate (which requires graduation from an accredited, higher education teacher education program and the passing of three state competency exams) had a five-year retention rate of 58.48%, which is slightly higher than the state average. However, the retention rates of teachers with Provisional, Emergency or Other certifications were significantly lower than the state average, at 38.82%, 38.24%, and 14.77% respectively. Additional data is illustrated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2.

Cumulative Percentage of Retention of 2012-13 Beginning Educators in Oklahoma by Type of Certification

Type of Certificate	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
All	84.08	72.72	65.60	59.82	53.90
Standard	84.54	75.09	69.12	64.11	58.48
Multiple Certificates	83.47	75.79	70.78	66.61	60.43

Table 2.2. (cont.)*Cumulative Percentage of Retention of 2012-13 Beginning Educators in Oklahoma by Type of Certification*

Type of Certificate	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Alternative	86.36	77.56	70.38	62.84	57.99
Provisional	80.07	62.79	54.26	46.20	38.82
Emergency	76.47	67.65	64.71	58.82	38.24
License	83.33	83.33	83.33	50.00	33.33
Paraprofessional	97.06	89.71	76.47	72.06	69.12
Other	87.50	50.57	25.57	18.75	14.77

Note. Adapted from “Demand: Appendix J,” by N.R. Lazarte Alcalá, December 2018, *2018 Oklahoma Educator Supply and Demand Appendices*, p. 32-33.

Effectiveness. Boyd et al. (2008) considered “whether and how the effectiveness of teachers differs by their retention status” by examining data collected from New York City schools over a five-year span (p. 2). Their results indicated two dominant trends among novice teachers. First, in their first two years of teaching, teachers of low-achieving students were more likely to leave their current school than teachers of high-achieving students. Second, teachers who were “less effective in raising student achievement” were more likely to leave their current school than their more effective peers, in both low and high-achieving schools (p.8). The same results were found across all content areas and grade levels. It is important to note, however, that the majority of less effective teachers moved to low-performing schools. In contrast, more effective teachers who transferred, did so to higher performing schools, further benefitting higher performing students and broadening the achievement gap between students in high and low performing schools.

Feelings of self-efficacy. Burke et al. (2013) found that the most influential factor identified by beginning teachers in their decision to remain in the profession was “student involvement”, described as the “extent to which you engage your students” (p. 265). This aligns

with existing literature that explores the motivations of those entering the teaching profession, including the desire “to make a difference in the lives of their...students” (p. 265). Individuals who find that their visions of what teaching would be like do not match the reality of their experiences are more likely to leave the profession (Rinke, 2013).

Chapman & Hutcheson (1982) examined the “skills, abilities, and values related to teacher attrition” (p. 96). They found that those who remained in the profession rated themselves highly in skill areas that are valued among teachers, including explaining, supervising, and organizing.

School Characteristics

Similar to that of teacher characteristics, existing research has sought to understand the schools that experience high rates of teacher turnover. As a result, we have a clear picture of these schools and their characteristics, including student demographics, class size, school organization and schedule, and expenditures. Each of these four areas are described in detail in the following section.

Demographics. Within the public school sector, attrition is higher in small schools than in large schools (Kersaint et al., 2007). Furthermore, attrition rates are higher in urban schools than in suburban schools, while rural schools have the lowest attrition rates (Kersaint et al., 2007; Lankford et al., 2002).

Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner (2007) utilized a competing-risk model in their analysis of turnover among elementary teachers in Georgia. They found that teachers tend to move from schools with higher percentages of minority students to schools with lower percentages of minority students via both interdistrict and intradistrict transfers, as well as moving from public school to private school. Moreover, schools with higher percentages of minority students have significantly higher rates of teacher turnover than schools with lower

percentages of minority students (Scafidi et al., 2007). Consistent with these findings, Boyd et al. (2011) found that teachers are more likely to leave schools with a higher proportion of Black and Hispanic students. However, once controlled for school context factors, this finding no longer held true. This can be interpreted to mean that teachers that teach in schools with strong administrator support, positive staff relations, and a safe environment that is conducive to learning are not influenced by the proportion of Black and Hispanic students in their decision to stay or leave their school.

Teachers leave high poverty schools at rates twice as high as low poverty schools (Kersaint et al., 2007). What is deemed as an “annual, asymmetric reshuffling” (Ingersoll & Perda, 2011, p. 588), teachers migrate from schools with low socioeconomic status (SES) and high minority students to schools with higher SES students, many in search of more favorable working conditions (Rinke, 2013). This disturbing trend leaves students in high-poverty and high-minority schools with less access to qualified teachers (Borman & Dowling, 2008).

Class size. Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak (2005) found that the presence of very large classes (greater than 32 students) had a significant impact on teacher turnover within a school. These findings reiterate those of Kirby, Berends, & Naftel (1999), that indicated that larger class sizes are associated with attrition.

School organization and schedule. Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak (2005) identified that schools that run on a multitrack schedule have higher levels of teacher turnover than schools who operate on a traditional school calendar. They ascertain that this is the result of overcrowded conditions and undesirable schedules that include longer days, more condensed schedules, and typically year-round schedules, which may or may not align with the schooling schedules of the teachers’ own children. Additionally, teaching in a school that operates a

multitrack schedule typically requires teachers to break down and set-up their classroom multiple times within a single school year (Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005).

Expenditures. No discussion of teacher turnover would be complete without including teacher salary as a factor. A 2015 study conducted by the NCES found that 20% of all teachers who began teaching in the 2007-08 school year and whose salaries were less than \$40,000 left the field within five years to pursue an occupation outside of education. This number decreased to 11% for teachers in the same category whose salaries were greater than \$40,000. Of even greater concern are the 57% of elementary teachers nationwide that indicated in 2015-16 that they were not satisfied with their teaching salary (NCES, 2018). These same teachers stated that not only is their enthusiasm for teaching decreasing, but that “the stress and disappointments involved in teaching aren’t really worth it” (p. 2). They also indicated that they contemplate moving to another school and/or would leave the profession for a higher paying job (NCES, 2018).

Salary may also play a part in transfer attrition, although this is limited to teachers transferring to schools outside of their current district, as salary schedules typically do not vary within districts. When asked what districts should do differently to attract high-quality teachers, 25% of teachers indicated that they should improve pay and benefits (Will, 2018). Be that as it may, when asked what kept teachers in their current jobs, only 17% cited salary, with more teachers indicating that school leadership and school climate are the most important factors in deciding to stay in their school. This indicates a potential incongruence with what teachers say they will leave for, and what factors they actually leave for, at least with regards to salary. Perhaps this is an indication that lower salaries can be compensated for with positive workplace characteristics. This conjecture is supported by the results of the 2015-16 National Teacher and Principal Survey (NCES, 2018) in which the percentage of teachers who indicated that they were

satisfied with their workplace conditions were not affected by their level of satisfaction with their current salary.

Workplace Characteristics

Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak (2005) indicate that the strongest predictor of teacher turnover is how a teacher perceives their workplace characteristics. Existing research has examined how workplace characteristics, such as administrative support, student behavior, classroom autonomy, teaching conditions, school organization, and professional culture, impact teacher turnover (e.g., Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011; DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2005; Tye & O'Brien, 2002). While each of these factors can be examined individually, with some having greater impact on individual teachers than others, it is likely that these factors do not function in isolation of one another. Furthermore, Kukla-Acevedo (2009) states that workplace characteristics are “driven by administrator behavior” (p. 443), which provides additional evidence of the interconnectivity of these factors. Boyd et al. (2011) states, “Not surprisingly, schools with more positive working conditions on one dimension also tend to have more positive working conditions [in] other dimensions” (p. 318).

Of note is that teachers' perceptions of their working conditions are influenced by their overall positive or negative outlook that they have at that particular time (Boyd et al., 2011). Perceptions of working conditions have also been linked to teacher satisfaction (Boyd et al., 2011). Teachers who report more positive working conditions also report greater satisfaction with teaching, while those who report less satisfaction report less than desirable working conditions. This holds true when comparing teachers within the same school (Boyd et al., 2011). While this is not surprising, it serves as a reminder that an individual's perceptions are their own reality.

Administrative support. There is a substantial body of research that has examined the effects of school administrators on school operations, most of which directly involve or impact teachers. Therefore, it is not surprising that teachers' perceptions of their administration are important. While administrators influence many characteristics of the school workplace, administrative support and its impact on teacher attrition is deserving of its own examination.

Administrative support, as defined by Boyd et al. (2011), is "the extent to which principals and other school leaders make teachers' work easier and help them to improve their teaching" (p.307). A lack of administrative support plays an important role in teacher attrition (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). 51% of movers indicated that poor administrative support was a reason of dissatisfaction in their previous workplace, while 32% of leavers indicated it as a factor of their dissatisfaction (Ingersoll, 2000). Likewise, referred to as "executive support", Burke et al. (2013, p.265) argues that support provided by school leaders strongly impacts a teacher's decision to remain in the profession.

Kersaint et al. (2007) also found that a lack of administrative support plays a role in teachers' decision to leave the profession. The same study also indicated that within teachers leaving the profession, administrative support was found to be of greater importance to males than females, and African-Americans and Whites than Hispanics. High school teachers considered administrative support to be significantly more important than elementary teachers (Kersaint et al., 2007).

Elfers, Plecki, & Knapp (2006) examined the movers within one state system in an effort to determine teachers' most important considerations in deciding to stay at their current school or move. They found that the most common reason for leaving a school was the lack of administrative support in dealing with parent and students. Similarly, Luekens, Lyter, & Fox (2004) utilized data from the 2000-01 TFS to calculate the most important reasons that teachers

indicated for moving schools. The two most important reasons, as indicated by 40% of movers, were opportunity for a better teaching assignment (content area or grade level) and dissatisfaction with administrative support at their previous school.

Boyd et al. (2011) examined the impact of six factors of workplace characteristics on the retention of teachers in New York City Public School. They found that school administrative leadership was the only characteristic that significantly predicted teacher retention after controlling for other school and teacher characteristics. This measure was indicated by teachers' responses to survey items about whether the school administration was supportive, the school administration was perceived as evaluating teachers fairly, an effective school discipline policy was in place and utilized consistently, and the school administration included the faculty in decision making processes. Similarly, Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo (2009) conducted a study to examine the effect of principal leadership on teacher retention in Chicago. Their findings reported that teachers were more likely to stay in schools wherein they trusted their school administrators, viewed them as strong leaders, and were included in the school decision making process.

Ladd (2011) utilized the results of a statewide teacher survey in North Carolina to explore the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their working conditions and their departure rates from their schools. The survey examined working conditions by asking teachers about the quality of school leadership, professional development opportunities, opportunities for collaboration, facilities and resources, and growth and leadership opportunities for teachers. Ladd analyzed survey items designed to measure the quality of school leadership, including whether the teachers viewed the administrator(s) as supportive with student discipline and classroom instruction, as well as if they were perceived to be fair with the evaluation process, included teachers in decision making, upheld high expectations of both students and teachers,

and were trustworthy. Ladd found that the quality of school leadership was the highest predictor of teacher departure rates of any other working conditions variables. Additionally, she found that the quality of school leadership had a stronger effect on teacher attrition than the school characteristics of percentage of free or reduced lunch prices or the percentage of students of racial minorities.

Player, Youngs, Perrone, & Grogan (2017) analyzed data from the 2012-13 TFS to determine how leadership and person-job fit are associated with teacher turnover. Their findings indicated that teachers who reported strong school administrator leadership were less likely to leave their school. This is consistent with findings that indicate that teachers who have positive perceptions of their school administrators are significantly more likely to stay in their school than those whom have negative perceptions of school administrators (Boyd et al, 2011).

Student behavior and safety. Prior research has demonstrated that student discipline problems are a persistent and prevalent source of both stress and job dissatisfaction that leads to both exit and transfer attrition (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). 22% of movers and 24% of leavers stated that discipline and behavior issues were a reason for their decision (Ingersoll, 2000). According to Kelly & Northrop (2015), “the most important organizational determinant of attrition is the behavioral climate of the school; teachers are much more likely to leave a school with disruptive, inattentive, or hostile students” (p.630). Their findings align with those of previous research (Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Kelly, 2004). Teachers also indicate low levels of student engagement and lack of motivation as factors that influence their decision to leave a school (Tye & O’Brien, 2002).

School safety refers to “school conditions that affect the physical and psychological well-being of students and teachers” (Boyd et al., 2011, p.308). Safety concerns range from classroom misconduct to violent behavior and/or criminal activity that may result in arrest. Not

surprisingly, schools that struggle to maintain a safe school environment have higher levels of teacher turnover.

Professional culture. While school culture has been defined in many ways, and undoubtedly impacts the interactions within a building, professional culture focuses on the culture of adults within a building. The professional relationships of the faculty and staff within a school have tremendous influence on the student experience within that building. Professional culture includes both recognition and appreciation, as well as self-reflection, collaboration, honest communication, and high expectations for the quality of instruction and student performance. Additionally, professional culture reflects safety in trying new things, which includes a vulnerability among colleagues. Finally, professional culture includes transparency and legitimacy in the decision-making process within a school (RBT, 2015). A strong professional culture is “crucial to making schools attractive workplaces” (Saphier & King, 1985, p. 74).

Administrative behavior heavily influences professional culture within a building. Leaders who are able to demonstrate respect, strength, and vulnerability at the same time are able to strengthen adult professional culture (RBT, 2015, p.4). When asked about the behaviors of their former administrators, less than 10% of teacher leavers indicated that their principals were exceptional in expressing respect and appreciation for their teachers (Boyd et al., 2011). These same teachers expressed that their former administrators lacked in other significant areas, including providing constructive feedback and encouragement in the areas of pedagogy and assessment, working with staff to align the school’s mission, and encouraging professional collaboration.

Burke et al. (2013) refers to opportunities to participate in school decision making as “professional respect” (p. 265). This process is not the same in every building, and the degree to

which teachers are included in the decision-making process varies greatly. It is not surprising that elementary teachers in large schools tend to have less influence in school decision making (Boyd et al., 2011). Teachers value their input in the school decision-making process, so much so that they are willing to move to another school in which their input will be considered. Likewise, dissatisfied teachers who leave the profession indicate that a “lack of influence over school decision-making” had a significant influence on their decision to leave (Ingersoll, 2000). Yet, this varies from Boyd et al. (2011), who found that a teacher’s perceptions of teacher influence in the school is related to their likelihood to transfer but not to leave the profession.

Inclusion in the schoolwide decision-making process is not the only area in which teachers desire to give input and make decisions. Classroom autonomy provides teachers with strong influence on decisions made about what occurs within their classroom, including the development of curriculum, instructional strategies, student assessment and grading, etc. (Jumani & Malik, 2017). Teachers who are given more freedom to select curricular materials, incorporate instructional strategies, determine classroom discipline procedures and policies, and establish their own grading policies report lower levels of stress and job dissatisfaction than their peers with less autonomy (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). As a result, teachers who are granted higher levels of classroom autonomy have lower levels of attrition (Ingersoll, 2001).

Facilities. Physical characteristics of schools have been linked to teacher turnover. Both the physical spaces in which teachers work, as well as the resources available to them, can impact teacher morale and sense of efficacy (Boyd et al., 2011). When teachers have adequate resources and sufficient facilities, they feel more capable of doing their job, resulting in greater satisfaction and a decreased likelihood of leaving.

Paperwork and assessment. Kersaint et al. (2007) found that paperwork and assessment play a role in teacher attrition, particularly at the middle and high school level. Santoro (2018)

explains unprecedented expectations to collect, analyze, and maintain voluminous amounts of data and information and the effects on the teacher workforce. She describes this process of intensification as “the increased professional demands added to teachers’ workloads without concomitant time provided to incorporate new expectations or any reduction in previous duties” (Santoro, 2018, p. 28). While some teachers “may accept the intensification of their work when it is held out as a promise of professionalism” (Santoro, 2018, p. 28), others comply simply to avoid disciplinary action or poor performance evaluations. Regardless, when left to fester, intensification often results in increased feelings of job dissatisfaction and burnout.

Staff relations. Staff relations is defined as “teachers’ professional and social relationships with other teachers” (Boyd et al., 2011, p. 307). Positive staff relationships have been found to impact teacher turnover, with teachers being more likely to stay in schools in which they engage in positive relationships. Allensworth et al. (2009) further define positive relationships as those that are “trusting and working”, which allow teachers to feel comfortable engaging in discourse with their peers about their challenges and seeking advice from others.

Collegial support and relationships play an important role in teacher attrition (Burke et al., 2013). Collegial support refers to the level of support offered by other teachers within school, which is a great importance to teachers, particularly new and beginning teachers. Similarly, positive relationships between individuals who are involved in student learning or welfare allows for professional collaboration, which leads to higher levels of stability among a faculty (Burke et al., 2013). When either of these factors are missing, the likelihood of teachers moving or leaving increases.

Person-Environment Fit

Person-environment (P-E) fit is defined as the compatibility that occurs when individual and work environment characteristics are well aligned (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Extant

research on person-environment fit within the field of organizational behavior examines a variety of characteristics of both individuals and their environments, including personality match, vocational characteristics, organizational culture, group dynamics, and shared values (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). As fit refers to the relationship between person and environment, whose attributes influence outcomes, a principle concern of person-environment fit has been to identify the levels within an environment that fit occurs (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). These levels include person-vocation fit, person-job fit, person-organization fit, person-group fit, and person-individual fit.

Person-Vocation Fit

The highest level of fit occurs at the person-vocation (P-V) level. Holland's (1985) model of vocational personality types is one of the most prevalent theories cited in P-V research. He argues that individuals are attracted to career choices and work environments based on their personal interests. Holland presents six unique personality profiles of individuals and jobs: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. Each personality type has a range of careers with which it is most compatible. As it relates to the present study, P-V fit is indicated by an individual who is compatible with the vocation of education and teaching.

While widely cited, P-V fit research examining individual outcomes such as satisfaction has resulted in mixed outcomes. Anthony (1998) posited that a strong P-V fit was predictive of students' selection of a college major, while poor fit was indicative of higher rates of attrition from their field of study. Wille, Tracey, Feys, & De Fruyt (2014) found that P-V fit and job satisfaction were unrelated. However, their findings indicated that other levels of fit were more indicative of job satisfaction. Similarly, Shanafelt (2009) found that individuals are more likely to attrite from their profession when their values are not aligned with the expectations of their job and/or organization.

Researchers have also examined P-V fit among teachers. Perkmen, Cevik, & Alkman (2012) explored music teachers' levels of career satisfaction. They found that alignment of pre-service and early career music teachers' goals and values, and their perceptions of the teaching profession, were positively associated with career satisfaction. Additionally, Pithers and Sodden (1999) utilized Holland's personality and vocation types to determine levels of P-V fit. Their results indicated that teachers with low levels of P-V fit experience greater levels of stress and burnout.

Person-Job Fit

Closely related to person-vocation fit, person-job (P-J) fit refers to the compatibility of a person's characteristics with those of a specific job (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). DeRue and Morgenson (2007) referred to this relationship as person-role fit, as one's job is often the role a person plays within a group or organization. Within the vocation of education and teaching, "job" could be defined as classroom teacher, instructional coach, librarian, administrator, etc. One could also surmise that the job of classroom teacher could be further described by the designated grade-level, content area, class organization (self-contained vs. departmentalized), etc.

P-J fit research is somewhat limited (Ehrhart, 2006). Nonetheless, existing research has primarily focused on job attributes such as workload, job insecurity, opportunities for growth (promotions), and autonomy (van Vianen, 2017). Farzaneh, Farashah, & Kazemi (2014) found that an individual's self-assessed job fit was positively related to their level of organizational commitment. Likewise, Lin, Lu, & Yin (2014) found that levels of self-reported well-being and job performance is positively correlated to P-J fit. Starks (2007) reported that individuals in a job related to their college degree were less likely to attrite and more likely to experience vertical movement within an organization's structure. Research has revealed that high levels of P-J fit are

positively associated with organizational commitment and retention, while negatively associated with attrition, which is relevant for studies examining employee turnover (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

While limited in numbers, educational research has examined P-J fit and its association with job satisfaction (DeNobile & McCormick, 2008; Tickle, Chang, & Kim, 2011), principal leadership (Player et al., 2017) and retention (Kelly & Northrop, 2015). Player et al. (2017) indicated that a teacher's measure of person-job fit is predictive of mobility, including both exit and transfer attrition. Teachers who reported greater P-J fit were not only less likely to leave the profession, but also less likely to move to another school (Player et al., 2017). Kelly & Northrop (2015) examined P-J fit via career satisfaction, inquiring about teachers' levels of enthusiasm for teaching, manageability of workload, frequent challenges, and their likelihood of leaving the profession. Their findings indicated that career satisfaction has a strong positive correlation with retention in the profession, but no correlation with retention within an individual's school (Kelly & Northrop, 2015).

Person-Organization Fit

Person-organization (P-O) fit refers to the compatibility between an individual and the organization with which they are associated. Typically, the organization is represented as the collection of individuals within it, however on occasion the organization is represented as a distinct entity with its own characteristics (van Vianen, 2000). Chatman (1989) conceptualized fit as congruence between the values of a person and an organization. When considering the person to be a classroom teacher, the "organization" would likely be the school/building in which an individual works, although the school district could also be considered an organization.

As initiated by Chatman's (1989) seminal work in P-O fit, a significant body of P-O research has examined alignment of organizational values and the values of employees. This

research indicates that alignment of values are associated with high levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Cha, Chang, & Kim, 2014; Zhang & Gowan, 2011). Additional studies have operationalized three additional indications of P-O fit: shared goals, common preferences for routines and structures, and similar preferences for workplace characteristics (Grogan & Youngs, 2011).

Within educational research there are several studies that examine P-O fit as it relates to job satisfaction and retention. DeNobile and McCormick (2008) utilized data from elementary teachers to explore how various forms of professional communication impacted job satisfaction. Their results indicated that supportive communication from administrators had a strong association with teacher satisfaction. Open communication between teachers and building leaders also had a strong association with teacher satisfaction (DeNobile and McCormick, 2008). Grogan & Youngs (2011) utilized data from the 2003-2004 NCES SASS and the 2004-2005 NCES TFS to examine how P-O fit relates to attrition and retention. Their findings revealed that P-O fit was not a significant predictor of teacher retention among new teachers, but was a predictor of teacher turnover among veteran teachers (Grogan & Youngs, 2011).

Attraction-selection-attrition theory. Within the greater understanding of P-O fit is Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) theory. ASA theory focuses on "organizations as defined by the characteristics of the people in them" (van Vianen, 2017, p. 79). The ASA framework posits that individuals are attracted to, selected by, and remain in organizations that align with their personal characteristics. As a result, organizations are somewhat homogeneous entities with common needs, values, and personalities, which define their organizational climate and culture (van Vianen, 2017). Research studying each of the three stages (attraction, selection, & attrition) independent of one another demonstrated positive fit effects (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Conversely, Kristof-Brown & Guay (2011) found little

correlation between fit and job choice decisions, indicating that other factors influence these types of decisions.

Cooman et al. (2008) surveyed teachers in Belgium in an effort to determine if P-O fit varied over time, as well as to determine if teacher fit could predict retention. They discovered that the longer an individual remained in a particular school, the more their individual values came to reflect those of their coworkers. Researchers also found that low levels of P-O fit were related to attrition. Grogan and Youngs (2011) examined the relationship between teachers' level of fit and attrition. They measured fit as the alignment of an individual's professional goals, values, and teaching styles with those of the school as an organizational entity. Their research revealed that individuals with high levels of fit were less likely to leave their schools or the profession.

Person-Group Fit

Person-group (P-G) fit refers to the compatibility between an individual and a group of people within an organization. Van Vianen (2017) utilizes the term person-team fit to represent the “match between the person and their immediate coworkers in terms of demographics, values, goals, personality, and skills” (p. 80). Both P-G and person-team fit focus on the interpersonal compatibility between individuals and their peers, work teams, or colleagues. In a school setting, P-G fit may be representative of the relationship between an individual and their associated grade level team or department.

There is very little extant research investigating P-G fit. A small body of research has examined P-G fit as influenced by demographic variables (Ellis & Tsui, 2007; Riordan, 2000) and found that similarity of an individual's demographics to that of the group is a stable predictor of individual level outcomes. There is little research examining how interpersonal compatibility among colleagues influences individual outcomes. Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) found that P-G fit

was moderately related to individual job satisfaction, attitude, and workplace behaviors. Similarly, Johnson, Kraft and Papay (2012) emphasize the significance of colleagues in shaping professional satisfaction.

Van Maele and Van Houtte (2012) work with 2000 teachers in Belgium indicated that trust is a significant factor in teachers' relationships with their colleagues. They found that teacher-teacher trust had a significant influence on teacher satisfaction. Grogan and Youngs (2011) investigated the relationship between P-G fit and attrition by exploring teachers' professional networks. They found that in addition to aligning with the organizational attributes previously mentioned, having a close group of coworkers decreased the likelihood that an individual would leave the school or profession. Similarly, the same research study found that alignment of an individual's preferred instructional orientation with their group of close coworkers resulted in higher levels of P-G fit and decreased levels of attrition (Grogan & Youngs, 2011).

Person-Individual Fit

Person-individual (P-I) fit refers to the compatibility between an individual and another individual within their work environment, such as a supervisor, mentor, or coworker. While these dyadic relationships may occur between any two individuals within an organization, they are typically reflective of a relationship and fit between an individual and a significant other, such as a supervisor or a colleague that necessitates frequent interaction (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). Van Vianen (2017) describes person-supervisor fit as the match between an individual employee's characteristics and those of their supervisor. Not only do supervisors maintain the ability to reward and develop employee capacity, they also shape their employees' daily work environment and experiences through their own beliefs and practices. While a supervisor greatly

influences an organization, person-supervisor fit relates to the individual-level characteristics of the employee and their supervisor (van Vianen, 2017).

Several studies within educational research have examined P-I fit among teachers and their school administrators. Bogler and Nir (2014) found that positive relationships between an individual and their administrator increased the likelihood of retention in the school for that individual. Likewise, Van Maele and Van Houtte (2012) reported that trust is a significant factor in teachers' relationships with their administrators. The authors found that teacher-principal trust significantly impacted teacher satisfaction. Tickle et al. (2011) analyzed data from the 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) to identify factors related to job satisfaction and commitment. Their findings indicate that administrative support is a strong indicator of both teacher job satisfaction and teacher retention. Additionally, Vancouver and Schmitt (1991) posited that teachers report lower job satisfaction and engage in higher levels of turnover when they perceive differences in their priorities and those of their administrators.

Research Gaps and Limitations

Although there is a significant body of literature that addresses teacher turnover, several gaps and limitations remain. Studies of teacher turnover primarily focus on exit attrition, largely disregarding transfer attrition. With transfer attrition accounting for 50% of turnover of all teacher turnover, understanding the motivations for teachers transferring is imperative. While many studies have investigated the factors influencing exit attrition, there is little research that examines the internal processes that influence teachers' decisions to move. This information is imperative if there is a desire to shift from responsive behavior and policy to preventative intervention and policy. Additionally, extant research focuses heavily on new teacher attrition. There is also a moderate amount of research examining attrition due to retirement. This leaves a

significant gap in understanding the mobility of veteran teachers, who bring years of teaching experience and knowledge with them to their new workplace.

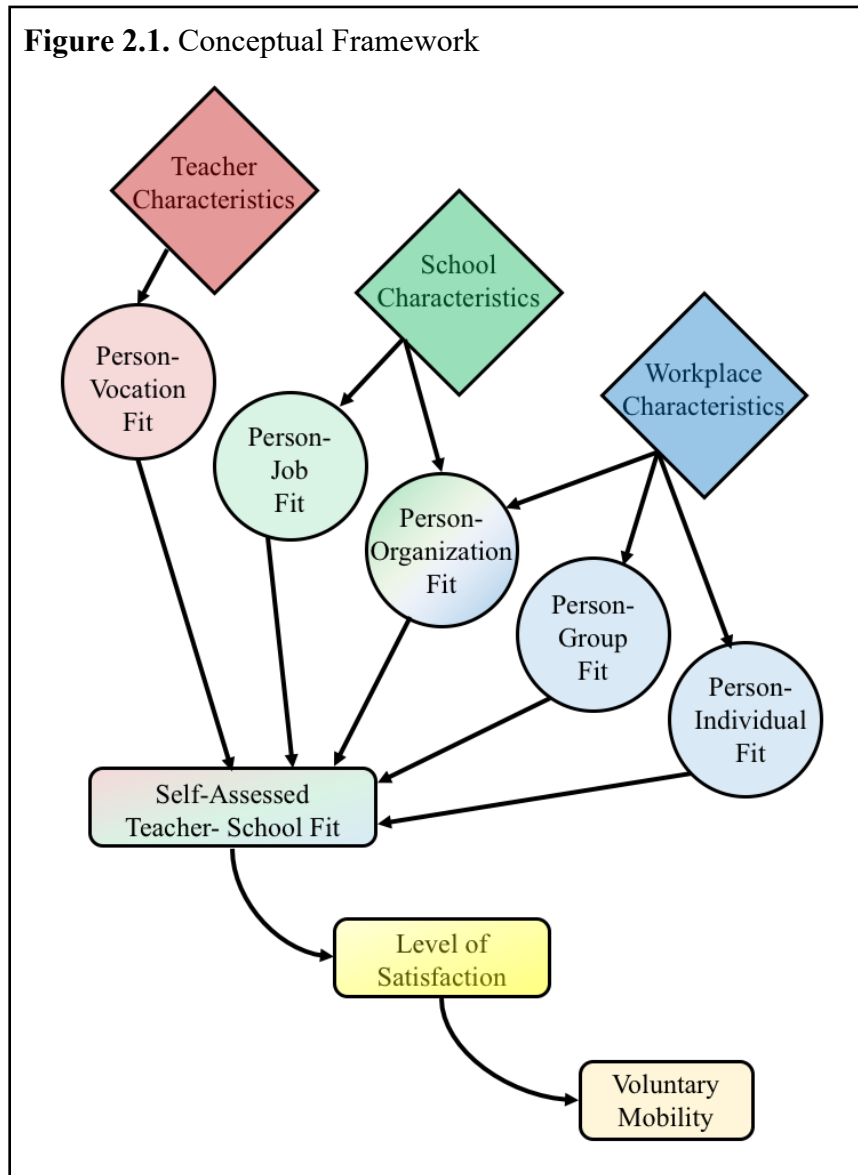
Regarding literature addressing P-E fit, very few studies have related person-environment fit to teachers. While there may be similarities between teachers' work environments and those of other professions, there are also many characteristics that make teachers' work environments unique, such as the teacher-student relationship. Teaching is unique in that it charges its employees with the care and education of the same group of children for seven hours each day for nearly a year. Therefore, studies of P-E fit specific to teachers may provide understandings distinct from studies of P-E fit in other professions.

Finally, the majority of P-E fit research examines each level of fit independently. Yet, it is unlikely that these relationships exist in isolation of one another. For example, a teacher may feel that they do not fit in well with an organization as a result of a group of people within the organization, yet feel that they have a strong fit with their supervisor. These variations of fit at different levels within the same environment may impact the outcome of concern. As a result, conclusions drawn from studies that examine individual levels of fit in isolation should be viewed in light of this limitation.

Conceptual Framework

In this study I propose a framework that is influenced by literature on teacher turnover, determinants of attrition, and person-environment fit. This framework consists of the following: groups of factors known to influence attrition, coupled with the level of person-environment fit that each group reflects, and related to a larger category of characteristics found to determine attrition; teachers' self-assessed fit and level of satisfaction; and teachers' voluntary mobility. In this section I briefly describe each component and present the framework in Figure 1.

Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework



This framework reflects three categories: teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and workplace characteristics, which are presented in existing research to be determinants of attrition. I assert that each of these characteristics influence one or more levels of P-E fit for an individual. Consequently, the five levels of P-E fit shape a teacher’s self-assessed level of fit within the school in which they teach. The perceived level of fit influences the teacher’s level of satisfaction, which ultimately leads to their decision to stay at their school or leave.

The first portion of this framework illustrates the characteristics of teacher, school, and workplace. Based on existing literature, teacher characteristics are unique in that there are no descriptive groups of factors that influence them. Due to the personal nature of teacher characteristics, influential factors that fall into this category can all be described as characteristic of the individual. The factors examined as teacher characteristics can influence fit for an individual at the P-V and P-J level.

School characteristics can be grouped into external and internal influences. External influences include factors that cannot be altered, such as student demographics. Student demographics are a significant characteristic of the school as an organization, therefore influencing individual fit at the P-O level. For example, prior research illustrates high rates of teacher turnover in high-poverty and high-minority schools, thus reflective of a misfit at the P-O level. Internal influences include factors that are flexible in nature and can therefore be altered through policy, such as school organization and schedule, expenditures, and class size. These factors can be associated with either P-J fit or P-O fit, depending on how the specific factor influences the individual. For example, a teacher is happily employed as a fifth grade science teacher in an elementary school that has grade level departmentalization in fourth through sixth grade. The job of teaching fifth grade science is a positive fit at the P-J level for this individual.

In a similar manner, workplace characteristics can be further grouped into descriptive groups, such as building leadership, staff relations, and teaching conditions. Building leadership is represented by the influence of the school administrator(s) on workplace characteristics such as fostering a professional culture, having realistic demands and expectations of teachers, and supporting teachers in a variety of ways. The compatibility of a teacher and their administrator determines fit at both the P-I and P-O levels. Staff relations are illustrated by collegial relationships and support provided by teachers for teachers, as well as some aspects of

professional culture within a school. While staff relations may be reflective of P-G fit, it is possible that an individual within the staff could strongly influence a teacher's experiences, therefore impacting fit at the P-I level. Teaching conditions include factors such as school safety and facilities. These factors can reflect both P-I fit, as well as P-O fit, depending on where the responsibility and ability to influence these factors lies.

The three categories of teacher, workplace, and school characteristics each contribute to one or more of the five levels within P-E fit. Each of the five levels of fit (P-V, P-J, P-O, P-G, and P-I) influence an individual's self-assessment of how well they fit in their current placement. This self-assessment directly influences their level of satisfaction. Finally, the framework indicates that the level of satisfaction directs the individual's engagement in voluntary mobility. I suggest that an individual's levels of fit and satisfaction has an inverse relationship with voluntary mobility. As a result, higher levels of fit result in higher levels of satisfaction and decrease the likelihood of voluntary mobility, while lower levels of fit result in lower levels of satisfaction and increased likelihood of voluntary mobility.

Summary

Teacher turnover is a challenge that public schools in the United States have faced since their inception and has been documented for nearly a century. While there have been pockets of time in which the teacher workforce appeared secure and committed, the picture presented from a century long perspective shows a concerning trend of instability as turnover rates have continued to increase over the last 30 years. Consequently, teacher turnover has been the focus of a significant body of research.

Examined as exit and transfer attrition, researchers have aimed to understand the factors that influence a teacher's decision to leave the profession altogether, to move within the system, or to stay in their position. While these individuals' decisions are likely complex and intricate,

prior research has primarily focused on identifying determinant characteristics of the individuals who attrite, the schools from which they leave, and the qualities of those schools as a workplace. Existing research has largely focused on understanding exit attrition, and specifically that of teachers new to the profession. Additionally, while primarily quantitative in nature, the majority of extant research has utilized theories of burnout and human capital to understand and explain teacher turnover.

This research extends the existing literature by employing qualitative case study to examine the voluntary mobility of seven veteran teachers who were deeply invested in the schools they left. By applying person-environment fit theory, this research adds to the limited body of work that has related P-E fit to teachers. The research design allowed for an in-depth understanding of the perspectives and personal experiences of each participant in both their old and new schools. The following chapter (Chapter Three) details the methodological research design for this study. Also included are extensive descriptions of each participant. Chapter Four presents the findings of this research, examining both motivations to move and experiences in a new school. The final chapter of this dissertation (Chapter Five) examines and analyzes the seven cases collectively in order to extend implications for teachers, administrators, and school districts.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction and Research Question

In this chapter, the methodological research design used in this study will be examined. Criteria for inclusion in the study, as well as a brief description of the individual cases, data collection procedures, and method of data analysis will be discussed in order to ascertain the parameters utilized for the study.

Methodology

The methodology used in this study was case study. Qualitative case study research is defined by Creswell (2013) as an “approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a *case*)... over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews...) and reports a *case description* and *case themes*” (p. 97). The researcher developing a descriptive case study “should focus on such issues as (a) the purpose of the descriptive effort, (b) the full but realistic range of topics that might be considered a “complete” description of what is to be studied, and (c) the likely topic(s) that will be the essence of the description” (Yin, 2014, p. 38). According to Merriam (2009), multiple case study is one in which more than one case is explored, then “data must be analyzed by looking at each case individually...and across cases...to provide a holistic picture and understanding of the case when multiple sites or cases are considered” (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014, p. 97).

Stake (1994) argues that case study is not a methodological choice but rather a deliberate selection of the object to be studied. “A case is a noun, a thing, an entity; it is seldom a verb, a participle, a functioning” (Stake, 2006, p. 1). Defining the case as “a specific, a complex functioning thing” with “a boundary and working parts”, he continues by stating that a case is “likely to be purposive, even having a self”, although the parts may not “be working well [and]

the purposes may be irrational,” it is an “integrated system” (Stake, 1995, p. 2). Stake further explains that each case is deeply rooted in its specific contexts, and, in order to truly understand the case, one must carefully examine the contexts in which the case is existing. This approach is particularly important when examining the motivations and experiences of teachers who change schools. Teachers’ experiences are strongly related to the contexts in which they work, and the ways in which they interpret the interactions within those contexts (Canrinus et al., 2011).

Additionally, Stake mentions four defining characteristics of qualitative research that apply to case study as well. These are holistic, empirical, interpretive, and empathic. *Holistic* refers to the necessity to consider the phenomenon within its unique context and as a unique entity. As a result, one should resist the urge to compare it to others. *Empirical* means that the researchers role is primarily field oriented and based on observations. He emphasizes that the researcher should seek to be naturalistic and noninterventionistic in their observations. *Interpretive* explains the dependence of the researcher upon their intuition and the constructivist view of researcher-subject interaction. Finally, *empathic* implies that researchers utilize an emic perspective when reflecting the experiences of the subjects they have studied, looking within the subject for understanding, rather than trying to explain it within their perspective as a researcher.

An instrumental case study is one that assists in understanding beyond the individual case; a “research question, a puzzlement, a need for general understanding” that may allow for “insight into the questions by studying a particular case” (Stake, 1995, p. 3). However, by selecting several cases to examine rather than just one, “each case study is instrumental to learning” about the research question, “but there will be important coordination between the individual studies” (Stake, 1995, p. 3-4). This type of case study is referred to as a collective case study.

Stake's defining characteristics of case study and epistemological commitments align with my values and are represented within this study. Consequently, to explore the motivations and experiences of teachers who change schools, this study was conducted as a collective case study. A collective case study is appropriate because my intention is to gain insight into a small, yet varied, representation of teachers who experienced a voluntary change in schools.

Researcher Positionality

Jones, Torres, & Arminio (2014) state "theoretical perspectives reflect an individual standpoint about the philosophical tenets regarding sources of knowledge and how this standpoint influences the way data are interpreted" (p. 55), which ultimately leads to deeper understanding of the subject by the researcher. In qualitative research it is important for the researcher to disclose their theoretical perspectives and positionality because he/she is the primary tool for collecting and analyzing data. I hold a constructivist perspective that clearly impacts the way that I interact with the participants, their experiences, and ultimately, my findings. Stake (2014) explains this perspective as "acknowledging multiple realities having multiple meanings, with findings that are observer dependent" (p.17).

Stake (1995) explains that a researcher engaging in case study will take on various roles throughout their research. The researcher may act as teacher, advocate, evaluator, biographer, interpreter, counselor, as well as many others. As teacher, the researcher has an obligation to the reader to maintain the qualities of an exemplary and passionate teacher, including anticipating what the readers will interpret, remember, and contest. As advocate, the researcher is "obligated to indicate how the findings might be extrapolated, how they could be interpreted in various circumstances, and how they accommodate theoretical discourse" (Stake, 1995, p. 93). However, Stake continues that researchers should do their best to convince readers to "believe what the researchers have come to believe" because "research is not helped by making it appear value

free” (p. 93, 95). As interpreter, the researcher acts as “the agent of new interpretation, new knowledge, but also new illusion” (Stake, 1995, p.99). The roles are flexible and fluid, with a researcher giving emphasis to each as needed throughout the course of the study.

The role of researcher as interpreter is critical and significantly impacted by one’s epistemological beliefs. Stake (1995, 2006) acknowledges an existence of three realities- an external reality, an experiential reality, and a rational reality; each having an important effect on the way an individual constructs experience and reality. Therefore, the researcher should place emphasis on providing a “thick description” of people, places, and events so that the reader can generalize and derive unique meaning from the final report.

Selection of the Cases

Purposeful selection of cases allows the researcher to “maximize what we can learn” (Stake, 1995, p. 4). While “balance and variety are important, opportunity to learn” is the most important criteria in selecting participants within the boundaries of the case (Stake, 1995, p. 6). Using critical case sampling, defined by Patton (2001) as “the process of selecting a small number of important cases; cases that are likely to ‘yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge’” (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006), seven veteran, elementary school teachers were purposively selected as the cases for this research. These individual cases were selected because they belong to a collection of cases, each sharing the common characteristic of being a “mover” at the elementary level in Oklahoma’s public schools.

Potential participants were initially solicited via social media and requests from the researcher to colleagues and educators to assist in identifying potential cases. (See Appendices C and D.) As a result, 16 potential participants contacted the researcher regarding participation in the study. A screening was conducted via email and phone to determine if each individual met all of the necessary criteria and fell within the boundaries of the case. Of the 16, eight individuals

met the criteria and were invited to participate in the study, however, one declined. The researcher did not have any previous relationship or knowledge of the participants prior to the data collection portion of this study. Additionally, school locale was not considered a boundary of the case and was not determined until after the participants agreed to participate in the study.

For the purposes of this study, each of the selected cases met the criteria of being a *mover*- a teacher who chose to move to another school prior to the start of the 2018-2019 school year. Given that the purpose of this research study is to understand the motivations of teachers who choose to move schools, having a voluntary move is critical to the boundaries of the case. By selecting cases who were moving at the time, this study allowed for data to be collected in the moments in which the moves were occurring, leading to greater authenticity than if the data had been collected after the fact. Additionally, each of the teachers must have been at their previous school for a minimum of three years prior to this move and have experienced no more than two moves prior to this move. These criteria were included to ensure that the cases were not habitual movers and were invested in the schools in which they were choosing to leave at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. Finally, each of the teachers had a minimum of five years of teaching at the time of the study. Years of service was included in the bounding of each case as existing research indicates that turnover is high among teachers who are in their first five years of teaching (Boe, 2008; Grissmer & Kirby, 1997; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Rinke, 2014) and among teachers approaching retirement age (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006), yet this research study aims to capture the teachers who fall within these parameters.

The cases also represent a variety of locale classifications as designated by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). These “general geographic indicators” categorize land areas in the United States as one of four types: City, Suburban, Town, and Rural (U.S.

Department of Education, 2018, p.1), with each type being further categorized into three subtypes. (See Table 3.1.) NCES locale classifications “enable a closer examination of physical features and social conditions that may affect education in each type of locale” and “understand relationships between educational institutions and the communities they serve” (U.S. Department of Education, 2018, p.1). For the purposes of this research study, locale classifications were identified in order to provide one method of classification of the schools in which each of the cases worked during the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years.

Table 3.1.

NCES Locale Classifications and Criteria

Locale Classification	Code	Descriptor
City- Large	11	Territory inside an Urbanized Area and inside a Principal City with population of 250,000 or more
City- Midsize	12	Territory inside an Urbanized Area and inside a Principal City with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000
City- Small	13	Territory inside an Urbanized Area and inside a Principal City with population less than 100,000
Suburban- Large	21	Territory outside a Principal City and inside an Urbanized Area with population of 250,000 or more
Suburban- Midsize	22	Territory outside a Principal City and inside an Urbanized Area with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000
Suburban- Small	23	Territory outside a Principal City and inside an Urbanized Area with population less than 100,000
Town- Fringe	31	Territory inside an Urban Cluster that is less than or equal to 10 miles from an Urbanized Area
Town- Distant	32	Territory inside an Urban Cluster that is more than 10 miles and less than or equal to 35 miles from an Urbanized Area
Town- Remote	33	Territory inside an Urban Cluster that is more 35 miles from an Urbanized Area

Table 3.1. (cont.)*NCES Locale Classifications and Criteria*

Locale Classification	Code	Descriptor
Rural- Fringe	41	Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an Urbanized Area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an Urban Cluster
Rural- Distant	42	Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an Urbanized Area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an Urban Cluster
Rural- Remote	43	Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an Urbanized Area and also more than 10 miles from an Urban Cluster

Note. Adapted from “Locale Boundaries File Documentation, 2017,” by D.E. Gevert, May 2018, *Education Demographic and Geographic Estimates (EDGE) Program* (NCES 2018-115), p. 1-2. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

The Cases

The cases selected for this study include seven veteran elementary school teachers. While all of the cases are Caucasian females, diversity is represented in both their years of experience and the types of moves that they experienced. The cases also represent a diverse group of elementary schools, ranging from small rural schools to large urban schools, as well as diverse demographics. Participant information is presented in Table 3.2. The following subsections provide a thick description of each case included in this study. While the information included in each description is specific to the individual case, the purpose for including the description was to allow the reader an opportunity to become familiar with each case. Additionally, because cases are deeply rooted within the context in which they exist, the descriptions allow the reader to develop an understanding of the context of each of the participants.

Table 3.2.*Participant Information*

Name	Age	Years of Experience	Years in Leaving School	Type of Move	School Locale Classification (Code)	
					Leaving School	Receiving School
Teri	54	19	9	Interdistrict	Town-Distant (32)	Suburb- Large (21)
Cathy	57	21	6	Intradistrict	Suburb-Midsize (22)	Suburb- Midsize (22)
Molly	55	24	13	Interdistrict	City- Large (11)	City- Large (11)
Gail	59	28	27	Interdistrict	Rural-Distant (42)	Suburb-Large (21)
Rachel	39	13	12	Intradistrict	Rural-Fringe (41)	Rural-Fringe (41)
Beanie	62	9	7	Interdistrict	Rural-Distant (42)	Rural-Remote (43)
Nicole	31	10	6	Interdistrict	City-Large (11)	Suburb-Midsize (22)

The Case of Teri

Teri is currently in her 19th year of teaching at the elementary school level. During the 2017-18 school year she taught fifth grade in a moderate sized school in a small town that served students in grades five through eight. Although she had taught in the district for nine years and had deep ties to the community, Teri decided in December 2017 that “enough was enough. I’m not coming back next year. I don’t know what I’m going to be doing, but I’m not coming back

here. I just won't" (interview, July 16, 2018). Within a week of submitting resumes in districts near her home, she was offered a position teaching fifth grade in large suburban district.

Teri married her high school sweetheart and began having children in her early 20s. When her children began school, she decided that the time was right for her to go to school as well.

I was a mom when I started college. I think being a mom shaped me wanting to be a teacher. I had an interest and where I was going to school and what my options were, it was the best option for me. (interview, July 16, 2018)

Teri began her teaching career teaching kindergarten in a prestigious, rapidly growing suburban school district. Although she was aware of the high expectations of parents, staff, and administration, she credits her early successes to her being supported by her colleagues and administrators.

I had a great team of veteran teachers that had been there 30 to 40 years. Working with teachers who have much more experience can go either way. They can choose to take you under their wings and help you and share their experience, or they can be like 'You don't know that?' They were really helpful and sweet. District expectations, parent communication, things like that- they were really helpful. I had a lot of ideas as well, and they allowed me to share some of the that with them as well (interview, July 16, 2018)

Teri also had a positive relationship with her administrators. She described her first principal as "incredible" and "a really great guy" (interview, July 16, 2018). Both the principal and assistant principal were supportive and provided teachers with a great deal of classroom autonomy. "We knew what to do and we did our thing. We didn't see administration a whole lot, but they were supportive. I never felt like I needed more support than what I was getting" (interview, July 16, 2018).

Over the course of the next eight years, Teri taught both third and fifth grade in the same school. While she enjoyed teaching and her experiences were positive, she began to explore options outside of the classroom. At the end of September, Teri received the call she had been waiting for. She was offered a position as a regional consultant to cover 15 states for a major textbook company. While she was excited about the opportunity, making the decision to leave teaching was not easy.

I had a wonderful class. They were so sweet. I remember towards the end, maybe even my last day, I went into the ladies' room in the teacher's lounge and sat on the floor and bawled. I wasn't sure I was doing the right thing. It was a hard decision- it was very hard to leave my class. (interview, July 16, 2018).

Teri spent ten years as a consultant for several textbook companies before deciding she was ready to retire and spend time with her first grandchild. After two years of taking care of her three times a week, Teri's daughter announced that she was pregnant with her second child and was going to stop working to raise both kids. "There went my babysitting gig. I couldn't sit still. I needed something to do. I wanted to go back to teaching, but it had been so long" (interview, July 16, 2018). After substitute teaching for several months, Teri took the leap and applied to several surrounding districts, as well as several smaller districts within 30 miles of her home.

I still swear to this day that I did not apply, but the principal called me and said that ' _____ gave me your application and that I should call you.' She talks really fast and to this day I have no idea who she said gave her my application. It was such a long drive. I interviewed with the principal and loved her. I accepted the position- she's the type of administrator you would do anything for. (person communication, July 16, 2018)

While Teri was excited to be teaching again, her first year back in the classroom provided many challenges. "I wanted to be in a Title One school working with kids who I could make an

impact for. I really thought I was prepared for working with that type of community, but I was not” (interview, July 16, 2018). 100% of the students enrolled in the school were eligible for free/reduced lunch. In addition, the school had a student mobility rate of nearly 50% (compared to a state average of 10%). “The poverty we dealt with. It was an alarming experience for me. I learned a lot about kids that year. I also learned a lot more about the world that I thought I knew, but I didn’t” (interview, July 16, 2018).

Teri credits her survival that year to her third-grade teammates. “We ate lunch together everyday. We would just support each other. Some days we wouldn’t talk about anything related to school” (interview, July 16, 2018). Her team worked closely together to develop lessons and share ideas. They became close friends and Teri teared up recalling their time spent together. “If you needed a shoulder to cry on. If you were upset about something at 7pm, you could call someone. The support was so important that first year” (interview, July 16, 2018).

As for her administrator, Teri’s initial impressions were accurate, and she thoroughly enjoyed working with and for her. “You could go into her office anytime. There was no judgement. You didn’t ever feel like if I was a better teacher, I wouldn’t be having this problem” (interview, July 16, 2018). Teri taught for that same principal for three years before she was promoted within the district and left Teri’s school.

Teri put everything she had into teaching in her new school and district. “I felt like I was a very good teacher. My test scores were really good, which is of course what they judge you by, but I felt like I was effective in doing what was best for my kids” (interview, July 16, 2018). She focused on building relationships with her students, their families, and the community. She and her husband recognized the significance of youth football in that area and began attending her students’ football games.

We would go to every single game for my fifth graders and usually we would watch fourth, fifth, and sixth [grade games]. That was every Saturday in football season. It didn't matter where they were, we went to every single game. We even bought trophies for the end of the year banquet. The last three years my husband supplied and cooked all the food for the banquet for several hundred people. We were very involved, and we didn't live there, but we both felt like we needed to be invested in the community and it really helps to build those relationships. (interview, July 16, 2018).

Teri's investment in the community didn't stop with football. She was assigned to a community task force in the district and volunteered at every community event that she could. She and her husband made the effort to make the 45-minute drive into the town several times a month to have dinner so that they were visible and accessible to members of the community.

It was this deep-rooted commitment that made her decision to change schools and districts so painful. While Teri and her husband were investing themselves physically, emotionally, and financially in the district, significant changes were taking place in the district. Due to shortages in funding, buildings were closed, positions were eliminated, and the school week was modified. In addition, Teri's school experienced four administrative changes over the course of seven years. Many of the teachers that Teri had grown close to had moved to other buildings or districts. "All of my friends had left. I was the only one that stayed. In our building last year there was only myself and three support staff that had been there the year before" (interview, July 16, 2018).

The 2017-18 year proved to be a turbulent one for Teri. The district adjusted the grade levels being taught within each building, placing fifth through eighth grade in one building. They hired another new, first-year principal to run the building. A bell system was put in place, but schoolwide expectations on transitioning between classes was not. Student behavior was out of

control. “Even as a teacher I didn’t want to walk down the hall. It was hell” (interview, July 16, 2018). According to the 2017 School Profile, there was one suspension (of ten days or less) for every 3.5 students, compared to a state average of 15.4, as well as one suspension (of more than 10 days) for every 46.9 students, compared to a state average of 183.2 (OEQA, 2017).

Given that this was her first year as a principal, so she was learning, the best she could, I guess. She was very much a micromanager. She did things I thought were so unprofessional. She was a bully. You never knew what direction she was coming from. For the most part it wasn’t directed at me. The general culture and feeling of the building was just awful. We were a small building. We had four teachers in fifth grade and four teachers in sixth grade. We had eight leave last year. Two went to another building and six left the district. I was really sad. I told [my former principal] that it would take a lot for me to leave, and that was a lot. I was frustrated enough at the way things were handled and wondered if [district administration] didn’t see what was going on, so I decided to look elsewhere. (interview, July 16, 2018)

Teri submitted applications for the 2018-19 school year to only two districts. She knew that she wanted to teach either third or fifth grade, and definitely in an elementary setting. She also preferred something closer to home than her previous school. When offered a fifth-grade position in a school just 30 minutes from home, Teri happily accepted the position. “I think I will be very supported. The morale is completely different. Everyone talks so highly of everyone. I feel so welcome. I have no regrets. Being treated like a professional has made a huge difference” (interview, July 16, 2018).

The Case of Cathy

Cathy is currently in her 21st year of teaching at the elementary school level. During the 2017-18 school year she taught reading to students in kindergarten, first, and second grade in

large school in a midsize suburban area, where she had taught for six years. When the principal announced that she was moving to another district for the 2018-19 school year, Cathy waited patiently for the district to announce who the new principal would be. “The [district] administration were kind of dragging their feet in telling us who was coming to replace her. During the walkout this new job just kind of fell in my lap. It’s literally two minutes from my house” (interview, July 17, 2018). Cathy accepted the new position and is now teaching kindergarten in a large school in the same district.

Cathy has always loved working with children, so choosing to become a teacher seemed very natural to her. Although she was successful in her undergraduate program, Cathy’s student teaching experience left a lot to be desired.

The teacher I did my student teaching with would not relinquish any control until the two weeks that she absolutely had to. She wasn’t very positive and had me grade papers most of the time. It was a very difficult class. The very first minute she left the room I had a kid throw a desk at me. Little did I know that would come in handy later on. (interview, July 17, 2018)

As a result, she decided to wait a year after she graduated to apply for a job. Finally, with encouragement from her roommate who was also a teacher, Cathy applied and was hired for a second-grade position in a small district.

She taught in that same school for seven years and describes fond memories of her experiences there.

Our administrator was like another mother. She was wonderful. She was very guiding. She would give me suggestions, and if I did something wrong, she didn’t scold me. She was very helpful in showing me what I should have done instead. She was like that with everyone. Everybody loved her. It was wonderful. (interview, July 17, 2018)

Her administrator trusted Cathy with developing a transitional first grade program that was in place for nearly 15 years. Once that program was well established, Cathy taught kindergarten for two years before her husband was transferred out of state and she had to resign.

Shortly after moving, Cathy became pregnant with her second child. Although she did some substitute teaching, Cathy chose to take a break from teaching full time in order to stay home with her children until they were old enough to go to school. Several years and another move later, her third child was old enough to enroll in kindergarten and Cathy decided to apply for a position in the local district. “I was hired as a class-size reduction teacher and assigned to a school. The principal had no say, no choice- he was stuck with me” (interview, July 17, 2018).

Cathy was placed in a kindergarten classroom and quickly gained the respect of her principal. “He was awesome. He was very encouraging and pushed me to be a leader in the building and the district” (interview, July 17, 2018). Cathy was asked to sit on district advisory boards, and her classroom instruction was videotaped and used as a positive example for other teachers in the district.

While the district benefitted from her presence, Cathy feels that she benefitted tremendously from the eight years that she was in the district. “I had over 1,000 hours of professional development. I learned a lot. I had a tight group of colleagues. We still keep in touch and get together when I am in town to visit” (interview, July 17, 2018).

After her husband lost his job and was offered a new job in Oklahoma, Cathy and her family relocated. She applied to several districts and interviewed with six schools before she was offered a kindergarten position. She quickly accepted the position, “because no one had [offered me a position] and I was excited. I had no idea what I was getting into” (interview, July 17, 2018).

The first day I thought, ‘What have I done? This is nuts.’ We had an open school and there was nothing to keep those five-year-olds in the room. I had three or four of them take off the first day. I thought, ‘These people are never going to know that I can teach because I can’t teach with these things going on.’ It was crazy. The next year we were in an enclosed room. (interview, July 17, 2018)

After two years in kindergarten, Cathy looped to first grade with her students and remained there for two years before being offered the opportunity to teach reading to kindergarten, first, and second grade.

Cathy admits that the teaching environment in her former school was extremely challenging.

The kids were just so much- there was just so much trauma. There were so many outside influences affecting these kids and they are so far behind. It’s hard to teach when you have that in your classroom, it affects all of them. [The faculty] had to stick together. (interview, July 17, 2018)

While Cathy describes most of the teachers as being pretty close, there was high teacher turnover each of the six years that she was there. Including Cathy, there were 22 new faculty at the school her first year, as well as a new principal and a counselor. “A friend of mine who had been there for two years before me said, ‘It’s not a career school. You can’t stay here your entire career. It will burn you out.’ She was right” (interview, July 17, 2018).

Although she wasn’t actively looking for a new position, Cathy was tired. “I figure I have about six more years until my daughter is out of college and I can retire. I just didn’t know if I had six years more [of that school] left in me” (interview, July 17, 2018). When a friend suggested that she contact the principal at the school in her neighborhood, she sent her an email

“and didn’t think much of it”. 24 hours later, Cathy was sitting in the principal’s office at what would become her school for the 2018-19 school year.

The anticipation of her new placement has provided Cathy with some anxiety. Although in the same district and just a few miles away, her former and new schools couldn’t be more different. While nearly 90% of students at her previous school were eligible for free/reduced lunch, only 20% of students at her new school are eligible for free/reduced lunch. Similarly, at Cathy’s previous school, over 40% of students in kindergarten through third grade received reading remediation in 2017, while less than 10% fell into this category at her new school. Finally, at Cathy’s previous school, there was 1 suspension (of 10 days or less) for every 17.6 students, while at her new school there was 1 suspension (of 10 days or less) for every 75.8 students (OEQA, 2017).

There were plenty of times at my old school when I thought to myself ‘I can’t do this. I can’t give these kids what they need.’ This new school is going to be difficult too though. I’m not quite sure I am ready for that. I’m going from a severely traumatic school to the polar opposite. These kids have so many opportunities. I’m going from a place where if I said something they didn’t like, they may punch me, to a place where they may sue me.
(interview, July 17, 2018)

The Case of Molly

Molly is currently in her 24th year of teaching at the elementary school level. During the 2017-18 school year she taught third grade at a small school in a large urban district. During her 13 years in that school, Molly worked for several administrators and observed increasing division among the faculty. Experiencing self-described burnout, Molly began searching for something new, eventually securing a job teaching second grade in a large school in an urban district slightly closer to her home.

Molly got married in her early 20s and although she knew that she wanted to be a teacher, she placed the pursuit of her career on hold temporarily. Several years later she was able to complete her degree in education. Molly and her husband had two children, one of whom had a neurological disorder. It was her son's struggle that inspired Molly to begin work on a Masters' degree in Special Education. Just two courses shy of completion, she and her husband divorced, leaving her in a situation where she had to, once again, put her personal goals on hold temporarily. Molly became a single parent with two young children to raise, so she applied for teaching positions in the surrounding districts.

Molly was quickly hired and began her teaching career in early childhood education. She was tasked with starting a new program in collaboration with an existing state funded early childhood initiative. Her responsibilities included ordering all materials, including furniture, needed to operate the program. "I walked into an empty room, was told I had \$60,000 and two weeks to start the program. It would have been overwhelming for anyone, much less a brand-new teacher" (interview, July 25, 2018).

In addition, challenges arose from the partnership with the existing state program. "I was supposed to have assistants from [the state program] with me every day, and at least two days a week they wouldn't show up" (interview, July 25, 2018). Being by herself with 18 three and four-year-olds in her classroom took its toll. "I didn't get a plan time. We had naptime, but that was a lot of physical work. I was tired and I couldn't get things accomplished the way I wanted to" (interview, July 25, 2018).

While she describes it as a rocky start, Molly successfully opened the program and was the lead teacher for the next three years. However, there were long lasting effects of the demands of the job.

I was pretty much doing everything, so I was exhausted all the time. The person who was in charge of our program at the district level told me I wouldn't be able to continue working on my Masters' program. I only had 2 classes left. I was frustrated because I wanted to finish. I made two attempts before it was too late, but I just couldn't get through it because I was so exhausted. (interview, July 25, 2018)

Despite her exhaustion, Molly found joy in her work with her students. "I was happy. I enjoyed going to work, even though I was dealing with all that extra stuff" (interview, July 25, 2018). She was optimistic that as she continued teaching, her joy would supersede the challenges. In those first few years, she never questioned her commitment to teaching, but she realized that with two children of her own to raise, she couldn't continue in the position she was in.

After I got my tenure, I left that program and moved to another school in the district. It was better. It was a huge school and I started teaching kindergarten. All I had to focus on was my teaching. (interview, July 25, 2018)

Although the workload was less than what she had previously experienced and provided some welcome relief, over the next seven years, Molly's school began to change. "For a few years, every year we had a new principal...there was no consistency" (interview, July 25, 2018). While there was a lot of turnover on the administrative side, the teachers worked together as a faculty. "We had a lot of work to do, but everyone treated each other with respect" (interview, July 25, 2018). This continued until an administrator with a vision was put into place.

They were trying to have a new direction- making changes- and that didn't always go smoothly. There were a lot of jealousy issues [among the faculty]. There was a lot of disrespect and people weren't collaborating together; they weren't really working to see

what's best for kids. It was more like a piranha effect where they would come and devour people. It was very hard. (interview, July 25, 2018)

When the assistant principal at Molly's school became the principal at a small school nearby, she sought out Molly and asked her to come teach kindergarten. Molly accepted the position and moved to the small neighborhood school where she taught for the next 13 years. For the first few years, her experience was positive. She was given leadership opportunities and was the coordinator for the afterschool program. Teachers were recognized with a one-time financial bonus after their student's scores on the state test went up and the school received an *A* on the state report card. "Things were going well. There was a bit of that cliquey drama stuff [among the faculty], but it was tolerable" (interview, July 25, 2018).

A few years after Molly began at this new school, there was a principal change. While Molly described her as a micro-manager, she appreciated many qualities of her leadership.

She was a teacher. She taught us. It was a lot of work, but I learned a lot from her. She was really about all the changes in education- incorporating more technology, getting kids to collaborate, think more critically, a rigorous curriculum. (interview, July 25, 2018)

As can happen with any change in building leadership, there were challenges in getting everyone on board with the new expectations. "She used our strengths, but there were issues with people coming together. She was observant and she noticed the issue. She tried, but eventually it just continued" (interview, July 25, 2018).

After two years, that principal was replaced, and a new principal was brought in. In addition, there were significant administrative changes at the district level. Once again, Molly and the faculty were inundated with changes in expectations.

There was a lot of inconsistency. A lot of changes in the curriculum. It was just frustrating. It was like my brain couldn't take it anymore. I felt very overwhelmed. I felt like I was treading water all the time. Anytime I was caught up, something else was thrown upon us. My joy just went away. I never felt that until the last few years.
(interview, July 25, 2018)

Another source of frustration was the growing division among the faculty. "We had a severe clique issue with a group of young teachers. They controlled the school" (interview, July 25, 2018). While Molly described a lot of "passive aggressive behavior" and "cattiness", there were also several major confrontations that left her feeling very uncomfortable. However, Molly did not feel that she could approach the principal to discuss her concerns. "She was really hard to communicate with. She was indifferent. She played favorites unfortunately" (interview, July 25, 2018).

While her goal was to remain calm in the storm, just before Spring Break of 2018, the situation became unbearable. Molly began searching for a new job and decided that she needed to look at schools outside of the district that she had taught in for 23 years. She applied in districts closer to her home and waited nearly a month before she got a call. While her first interview didn't go as well as she had hoped, her second interview went well and she was immediately offered a job teaching second grade. "I started crying and said 'Yes!'" (interview, July 25, 2018).

Although Molly was excited to make the change, she experienced mixed emotions about the move. "I am afraid because the demographics are different. The parents are more involved. The students are going to know more" (interview, July 25, 2018). Molly's former school had a student population that was primarily (77%) Hispanic and 84% of students were eligible for free/reduced lunch. Additionally, 40% of students in grades kindergarten through third grade

received reading remediation. Molly's new school was primarily (59%) Caucasian with only 18% of students eligible for free/reduced lunch and 13% of KG- 3rd graders receiving reading remediation (OEQA, 2017).

I am hoping that this district has it more together. It'll be interesting to find out. So far, I've been in my classroom and everyone's been nothing but helpful. I am feeling some insecurities from what I experienced. I gave up 20 years. I'm nervous, but I am trying. We will see. (interview, July 25, 2018)

The Case of Gail

Gail is currently in her 28th year of teaching at the elementary school level. During the 2017-18 school year she taught fifth grade in a small school in a rural district. After a heartbreaking turn of events, Gail was not sure if or where she would be teaching during the 2018-19 school year. When a former administrator offered her a position teaching fifth grade in a brand-new building, she accepted, resulting in her move to a new school in a nearby suburban district.

Growing up Gail never imagined that she would one day become a teacher. Her memories of elementary school are not positive. "I was extremely shy. I would not talk, I would not raise my hand, I wasn't confident. I didn't believe that I could do the work" (interview, July 27, 2018). Her favorite subject was math, which she claims "got [her] through elementary school" (interview, July 27, 2018).

Thoughts of her third-grade teacher bring chills to her, nearly 50 years later. Comparing her to the Wicked Witch from the Wizard of Oz, Gail explains that this particular teacher had taught all six of her older sisters prior to Gail being assigned to her class for third grade.

I went into third grade knowing all of my multiplication facts. She handed me a multiplication table, which I had never seen before, and told me to go fill it out. All of the

answers were there, but not in the correct place. She said, really loudly so everyone in the class could hear, ‘So what you know your multiplication facts, you didn’t do your grid right’. Eventually I got over it. Having other teachers who believed in me helped. I would finish math first and the teacher would ask me to help other students, and I would help them figure it out. (interview, July 27, 2018)

Gail did not complete high school but went back to get her General Educational Development (GED) certificate so that she could get a job. She married and had children, then found a job working as a mapper for an oil company. Bored with the mundane work, she “needed something that would keep [her] mind occupied and going all the time” (interview, July 27, 2018). She began taking college classes at night, after working for the oil company during the day, slowly working her way towards a college degree.

She and her husband, an Active Duty member of the United States Air Force, moved frequently. When given orders to a place that she couldn’t transfer her job to, Gail took a job at a local daycare. She explains, “I really loved it. I liked doing it because I liked when the light would go on in their eyes. Their eyes just beam when they finally understand what you’re talking about or trying to teach them” (interview, July 27, 2018). Witnessing those moments of enlightenment were what inspired her to become a teacher and caused her to focus her college coursework on getting a teaching degree.

After graduating with her degree, she was hired at the school where she completed her student teaching. Initially offered a temporary contract to fill a position for a teacher that was on maternity leave for the second half of the school year, Gail spent the next 27 years teaching in that same building. Recalling her first years as a teacher she reminded me that she was older than most new teachers, not having started her teaching career until she was in her mid-thirties.

I remember telling my sister ‘I just can’t believe that I’m a teacher, it’s so awesome.’ I couldn’t wrap my brain around the fact that I was a teacher and that I was helping these kids. It was just so awesome to me. I was still nervous though. I wanted everything to be perfect. I spent a lot of time planning and coming up with new ideas and new things to do with my students, but it just came natural to me. (interview, July 27, 2018)

When asked what prompted her to leave her position, after 27 years in the same building, Gail’s demeanor changed immediately.

My parents passed away and I went to spend the summer taking care of that situation.

When I came back, we had gotten a new principal. He was not the same kind of principal, but he was really nice the first year and didn’t change much within the school. His second year was a totally different experience. (interview, July 27, 2018)

Although the building administrator said that he wanted teacher input and collaboration on school decisions, his actions did not match. During the last teacher work day of the school year, Gail and her team met with principal over concerns about the upcoming school year. There were rumors about a lost allocation and changes, but previous requests for information had been ignored. Wanting to prepare over the summer, the team was hoping to get some idea of any changes that may affect them.

We were all there, but I was leading the conversation, giving him an overview of the way that situations had been handled prior to him coming there. He just stopped and said ‘I am in control of this school. I am the principal and you’re not going to tell me what to do. I make that decision, and if you don’t like it, there’s the door. There’s plenty of people here to come and take your job.’ He just blew up. (interview, July 27, 2018)

Embarrassed by the way that her principal had yelled at her and threatened her in front of her colleagues, Gail took the opportunity and left. “I walked out and began packing my stuff”

(interview, July 27, 2018). Despite her solid resolution to leave, it was an emotional process and she admits that she did have reservations about leaving her former school.

Feeling like I had to let go of a place that I had loved and been at for such a long time, I cried and cried. When I cleaned out my room, I thought I was going to be ok with it. I started walking out of the building; no one was around, and the tears just started coming down. At that point it wasn't about what the principal had done, it was the school and the tie to all of the kids I had there. Remembering the student who had been living with his grandma because his mom had died, and how when his grandma died he asked me if he could call me grandma because he had no family left. It was the connections that I was having to let go of that hurt the most. (interview, July 27, 2018)

Gail put in applications in surrounding districts, and districts closer to her home. She hand delivered applications and resumes to many schools, but none of them felt quite right. As she prepared for a long-awaited vacation with her family, she came across a Facebook posting by her former principal. His departure from Gail's first school was the reason that the current principal had taken over.

I am hardly ever on Facebook, so it was weird that I even saw his post, but he was looking for a teacher to teach third or fourth grade at his new school. I did a double take. I knew the school. It's awesome. He had [previously] given me a tour around it. To have a chance to work for him, in a school like this? I replied and told him I was interested. He asked me to come in the next day. I didn't think he was serious, but I went just to see if he was serious. (interview, July 27, 2018)

Gail admits that the conversation the following morning could hardly be considered an interview. "He said 'I can't believe you want to be here. If you're serious, I want you here. The job is yours. I want you here.' That was enough for me" (interview, July 27, 2018).

The transition to her new school happened quickly. Upon returning from vacation, she was in-processed by her new district and started school just a few days later. Even with very little time to acclimate to the expectations of a new district, principal, and grade-level team, Gail felt the transition was smooth. “Moving here I was totally confident. When [my current principal] said ‘I want you here’, that made a world of difference” (interview, October 20, 2018).

The Case of Rachel

Rachel is currently in her 13th year of teaching at the elementary school level. She spent 12 years at the school she left at the end of the 2017-18 school year. While she had considered leaving prior to the 2017-18 school year, she decided to go through with the move for the 2018-19 school year and moved to another school within the same rural district.

Becoming a teacher was not part of Rachel’s original career plans. She was a business major and almost finished with her undergraduate degree when she had an interaction with an Economics professor that resonated with her. “We were in class and he said, ‘Don’t hire women during childbearing years’, which goes against everything I believe in” (interview, July 26, 2018). It bothered Rachel so much that she decided to change her major. “I already had student loans and I knew I had to do something, so I ended up going into elementary education and loving it. I can’t imagine doing anything else” (interview, July 26, 2018).

Once she had completed her degree, Rachel did not immediately pursue a teaching position. “I didn’t even try the first year. It was 2003 and that was kind of when it was crazy and you couldn’t get a job” (interview, July 26, 2018). Although she had worked as a bank teller throughout college, she wanted to do something different until she could secure a teaching position. “I worked at a company here [in the town I live] in customer service. I did that for two years and then told them that ‘I either get a teaching job this year or I am staying with you guys’”

(interview, July 26, 2018). That year she was hired in the local school district to teach fourth grade.

Rachel described her first year of teaching as “amazing”. She worked with a team of two other teachers in her grade level and was supported by other teachers in the school as well.

It was really good. I had a really great team of mentor teachers. I was one of the lucky ones. I was guided. I was shown everything. I always say how lucky I was because I never felt like I was let go or that I didn’t know what I was doing. I had amazing people behind me. (interview, July 26, 2018)

Rachel credits her success that year to her mentor teachers. “My first year I had 100% [of my students] pass [the state tests]. I don’t know how that happened, but I was given everything I needed- support, lesson planning, time” (interview, July 26, 2018).

While she was optimistic that she would be rehired for a second year, the district was undergoing major restructuring.

The second year we got a new superintendent and she kind of just tore the place up. Everyone on temporary contracts were told they didn’t have a job. It was a big scare tactic. We lost a lot of good teachers. It was really ugly. I stuck it through, but... (interview, July 26, 2018).

Part of the superintendents plans to overhaul the district included complete restructuring of the building configurations. Existing schools were changed into grade level centers, serving all students across the district. Elementary students and teachers were grouped into sites that served pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, first and second grade, third and fourth grade, or fifth and sixth grade. Each site had an administrator and an average of eight teachers on each grade level team.

The transition to centers was rough. No one was happy about it. We got moved. One of my teammates from my first year transferred to pre-k and the other quit. We got a new principal and a new everything and everyone scattered everywhere. They thought everyone would work together, but you can't work with a team that large. We tried to tell them, but you know, we don't know what we are talking about. (interview, July 26, 2018)

The teachers were not the only stakeholders concerned with the transition to centers. Divides within the community became evident. Community members were "outraged in different ways. There were articles in the paper about how certain teachers at certain schools didn't want to teach certain kids" (interview, July 26, 2018). Many parents perceived the teachers concerns about the transition as a desire to avoid having to teach kids from different neighborhoods. "It was just really ugly. We had to do a lot of team building to make the kids feel safe and comfortable" (interview, July 26, 2018). While the transition was not an easy one, the centers have now been in place for over a decade. "I don't think anyone likes it. It's never going to go back, but at least it's not the issue of neighborhood schools anymore though" (interview, July 26, 2018).

Rachel taught fourth grade in the third/fourth grade center for eleven years. During that time, she worked for four principals, as well as four superintendents. With so much turnover, Rachel committed to focusing on her students and providing them with the highest quality instruction that she could. "I know my skills and I know how to teach them. I'm really good at building relationships. My kids know that I am not going to let them fail" (interview, July 26, 2018). Her hard work and commitment continued to pay off and was evidenced by her superior evaluations, as well as her students' scores on the annual statewide assessments.

Six years into her teaching career, a series of events with district and building level administration left her questioning her commitment to the profession. "I was like, 'I think this is

it. I'm done.' I was looking; actively pursuing something else. I was going to get out of education" (interview, July 26, 2018). That summer she looked for, but was unable to find, a job outside of education. She reluctantly returned to her position teaching fourth grade. A few months into the school year she went on an out of state professional development trip with her building administrator. After returning from the trip she was called into his office, where he apologized for how difficult things had been. "Everything got better at school and I couldn't find anything, and I was just like 'Ok, I am staying.' I've been here ever since" (interview, July 26, 2018).

Several years later, Rachel's building experienced another change in leadership. Although she had good relationships with her students and her colleagues, she did not have a great relationship with her new principal. "I'm not sure I'm ever going to love a principal, but she's not my favorite" (interview, July 26, 2018). When asked what an ideal principal might look like, Rachel stated "I feel like definitely more support and not scare tactics. I feel like that's kind of what she likes to use" (interview, July 26, 2018).

It was during this same period of time that Rachel began working in the district's afterschool program. She began to develop a relationship with Tammy, a principal from another grade level center. "She's the director and I'm the site coordinator [of the afterschool program]" (interview, July 26, 2018). Over the course of the last two years, Rachel and Tammy worked closely together.

She always pulls me up. We go to meetings together and she's always like 'Rachel this' and 'If I didn't have Rachel.' It's just so nice to have someone pulling you up and not pushing you down. She makes me feel appreciated. She makes me feel like I can do anything. I learn from her and she includes me. She guides me and I really do like that.

We have a pretty good relationship and I wanted to try working under her. (interview, July 26, 2018)

Rachel considered moving to Tammy's school for the 2017-18 school year, but she couldn't bring herself to leave her team. Of the team of eight teachers that she taught with during the 2016-17 year, five of them had left, leaving only Rachel and two others. "I couldn't do it to the rest of my team. I couldn't leave my team. I just couldn't do it to the two who were staying" (interview, July 26, 2018). While she stayed for the 2017-18 school year, it was only a few months into the school year that Rachel began to regret her decision and committed to leaving at the end of the year.

I think finally in December I was like, 'Ok, I am done.' I told my principal and she said she wasn't surprised. 'I've been expecting it really. I'm going to hate to lose you. I need you to write down everything you do for everyone.' I was like, 'Nope.' I wasn't being ugly, but I wasn't going to do that. (interview, July 26, 2018)

Rachel approached Tammy, who had no trouble placing Rachel in a fifth-grade position in her building for the 2018-19 school year. "I will have some of the same kids. They are so excited. I will do math and science. Last year I [taught] reading. I'm excited to get back to math" (interview, July 26, 2018).

Rachel also looked forward to having fewer responsibilities, such as being the team leader, within the building. Although she stated that she does not want to become a principal, Rachel began working on a master's degree in administration during the summer of 2018.

With me going back to school, I can't handle all of that. I do want to step back. I am also really cognizant of the fact that I need to sit back. This is their school. I need to listen and do their things. But I also have knowledge and experience that I can either share, or I can go shut my door and do what's best for kids. (interview, July 26, 2018)

The Case of Beanie

Beanie is currently in her ninth year of teaching at the elementary school level. During the 2017-18 school year, Beanie taught third grade in a small, rural school. Although she was deeply committed to the students at her school, there were several events in her district related to the teacher walkout in April 2018 that left her feeling uneasy. “I saw the proverbial writing on the wall and started looking” (interview, July 30, 2018). 22 resumes and one interview later, Beanie was hired to teach fourth grade in a small, rural school in a different district for the 2018-19 school year.

Beanie always wanted to be a teacher. She frequently played school in her room at home. Among other things, she credits her positive experiences in elementary school on her desire to become a teacher.

I had the same teacher for second and third grade. It was a split class and there were 40 to 50 kids in that room. This woman wasn’t even five feet tall. My goal was to be as tall as she was. She had the most impact on me becoming a teacher. She ruled her class with an iron fist encased in a velvet glove. She was tiny, tiny, tiny, but she was mighty, mighty, mighty. (interview, July 30, 2018)

Although she wanted to be a teacher, life had other plans for Beanie. She got married, had children, and worked in a variety of positions and jobs through the years. She also helped her husband, who owned his own business. In her free time, she found herself frequenting the kindergarten classroom of her dear friend. “I began by decorating bulletin boards and such,” recalled Beanie (interview, July 30, 2018).

Over time I got more and more involved in her classroom. She always let me teach in her classroom. I dressed up as characters and went to the school library. I was Mother Goose and the Cat in the Hat. I’d do library hours in the afternoon with the kids. I’d start talking

about the moral of the story. I wasn't sure the librarian wanted me to, but the next hour she asked me if I was going to talk about the moral again, so I knew I was doing something right. (interview, July 30, 2018).

When her friend was forced to medically retire, Beanie felt like she had lost a piece of herself. "I started crying thinking about that I wasn't going to be able to teach anymore" (interview, July 26, 2018). She quickly realized that she could go to school and become a teacher.

It felt like a hand was placed on top of my head. The feeling went in the top of my head and out the tips of my toes. It was like God was telling me, "Yes, this is what you need to do." (interview, July 30, 2018)

At the age of 57, Beanie enrolled in an undergraduate teacher education program. She graduated four years later at the top of her class with a 4.0 grade point average.

After graduation, Beanie was hired to teach first grade in a PK-8 school with less than 100 students. "It was a country school. My room was out away from the main building and I would open the windows and doors" (interview, July 30, 2018). Beanie found the job to be incredibly rewarding, but she struggled with the poverty that the community faced. "I rode the bus routes and saw where they came from. They lived in places that humans shouldn't be living in" (interview, July 30, 2018). Unable to change their living conditions, Beanie did what she could to make the most out of their time at school. "I decorated for every holiday and we celebrated being together every day" (interview, July 30, 2018). She was heartbroken when her contract wasn't renewed for the following year due to budget cuts. "I was off for a year. I beat the bushes looking for a job but just couldn't find one" (interview, July 30, 2018).

The next year Beanie got a call from the principal at a rural school with just under 200 students in prekindergarten through fifth grade. She made the 45-minute drive to interview with

the principal, who offered her a position teaching third grade. Five days later, Beanie began her second year of teaching.

The year prior to her beginning, the school had only 23% of students pass the state reading test and 26% pass the state math test. “I walked in on a plan of improvement for the school, which is no fun. I worked 7 days a week. There were mornings I got there at 4:30, and I stayed every evening until at least 6:00” (interview, July 30, 2018). Her hard work paid off, as she had 56% of her students pass the state reading test that year. “That doesn’t sound like a lot, but when you’ve seen how far they’ve come, you’re doing flips down the hall. Every year I had more and more pass” (interview, July 30, 2018).

Aside from challenging her students academically, Beanie was committed to building lasting relationships with them.

When you’re in a small school, you wear so many hats. You’re not just their third-grade teacher, you are the be all, end all to these kids. You watch them grow and you worry about them. You don’t quit worrying about them. The worry just doesn’t go away. My worst fear is something happening to my kids. (interview, July 30, 2018)

Beanie teared up recalling an interaction with a student last year. Six years prior, when the student was in Beanie’s third grade class, the student’s home had burned down, and her father put in jail after he drove the family car into the home out of anger. The same student, now in ninth grade, sought her out one morning last year after her brother was killed in a car accident the night before.

Once again, I was in the role of being her security. That’s what you go through with your kids. It’s like you bleed when they bleed. I’m not a very stoic person. I get very involved with my kids. They’re my babies. That’s been the hardest part about leaving. (interview, July 30, 2018)

After seven years in the same school and district, Beanie became concerned when conflict arose in her district during the teacher walkout in April of 2018. She began observing an unsettling trend with her colleagues whom she had come to consider as family. “My principal resigned. The teacher in the room next to me resigned. Another took early retirement. During the month of May, four more were hired in [another district]” (interview, July 30, 2018). By the end of the school year, 15 teachers including Beanie, had resigned.

The decision to move schools did not come lightly to Beanie. “It’s been a big thing for me to move. I was invested in the community. I did a little bit of everything. But for my peace of mind, I had to” (interview, July 30, 2018). Beanie was hired as a fourth-grade teacher for the 2018-19 school year in a rural school that serves just over 225 students in prekindergarten through eighth grade.

In some ways I wasn’t ready for a change, but in some ways I am. This has been a good thing. I’ve been told the people in the community are ready for a change. I’ve been told that the parents are ready for their kids to be learning. I’m a teacher. I teach. That’s just me. (interview, July 30, 2018)

The Case of Nicole

Nicole is currently in her tenth year of teaching at the elementary school level. During the 2017-2018 school year, she was teaching reading to students in grades kindergarten to sixth. After being notified that her position was going to be eliminated due to a lack of funding, Nicole actively sought employment for the 2018-2019 school year in a range of districts within an hour commute of her home. She interviewed for a variety of positions in three different districts, before being offered, and accepting, a position teaching third grade at a K-5 elementary school in a nearby district.

In alignment with her childhood dreams, Nicole received her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. "I knew I'd wanted to be a teacher throughout [my childhood]. I liked my teachers, they were fun, they made school fun, and I think it's just something I always wanted to do" (interview, July 18, 2018). However, once in the classroom, Nicole felt "really, really, really overwhelmed" and had "no idea what [she] was doing. I just didn't feel like college prepared me very well for being in the classroom all day and dealing with all of the things that come with being a teacher." Adding to the stress, Nicole spent her first-year teaching first grade, which focuses almost entirely on teaching fundamental reading skills. "I had no idea how to teach reading; I didn't feel like there was a ton of help... there wasn't anybody that I felt like I could go to; I just constantly felt like I was drowning" (interview, July 18, 2018). She admits that there were some supports in place, such as an assigned mentor teacher within her building, as well as a University representative whose job it was to provide support to recent graduates, but the help was inconsistent and did not address the areas that she felt she needed help in. Reflecting on her early teaching experiences, Nicole stated "I think that's just part of teaching your first few years; you're learning and growing a lot, but I feel like if there was more support maybe it could have been better" (interview, July 18, 2018).

After completing five years in the classroom, Nicole successfully pursued a master's degree in Reading and Literacy, allowing her to move into a Reading Specialist position that opened in her building, which is the position she held during the 2017-2018 school year.

I definitely knew more what I was doing. I had an awesome relationship with my principal- loved him, totally respected him. Great relationship with my assistant principal. Felt totally involved in what was going on at the school. I felt like I knew what I was doing and knew what I was doing was effective. I was really happy with my job. I loved

going to work every day, really helping kids. Coming home I was happy, waking up I was happy. (interview, July 18, 2018)

At the end of April 2017, Nicole's school was notified that they would have to allocate their Title I money in specific ways, none of which included the ability to support a Reading Specialist. Although she considered staying in her building and moving to a grade-level classroom position, she had conflicted feelings. The building Principal was retiring, and the Assistant Principal was being moved to another building, which meant that two new administrators would be in place for the 2017-2018 school year. Additionally, Nicole was concerned that her moving back into a grade level position would force a teacher out of the building (due to allocations and seniority). "It's just not me. I couldn't do that" (interview, July 18, 2018).

As previously mentioned, Nicole pursued and secured a position teaching third grade in a nearby district; the same district that she attended school in from first grade through high school. She was confident in her choice, as several of her friends had previously worked with the administrators in her new building and had "great things to say about the principal" (interview, July 18, 2018). Nicole was also looking forward to having a veteran teacher, with ten years of experience teaching third grade, on her grade level team. "I am really excited to work with her and lean on her experiences... she is part of the reason I took the job" (interview, July 18, 2018).

When asked about her experiences during the 2018-2019 school year, Nicole began to cry. "It really sucks to go from being so confident in what I was doing and loving what I was doing to not [being] sure I'm doing the right thing every day and hating going to work" (interview, October 19, 2018). Although not entirely certain, she ascertains that her decrease in confidence and negative experiences are the result of several factors, the most significant of which being a lack of direction from administration.

Data Collection

Data collection took place at each of the cases' respective school sites or a mutually agreed upon, neutral place. Given that "the interview is the main road to multiple realities", a series of 60 to 90-minute, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the participants over the course of the school year (Stake, 1995, p. 64). This style of interview requires the researcher to ask open-ended questions that allow the participant's reconstruction of their "unique experiences, special stories to tell", and "description of an episode, a linkage, and explanation" (Stake, 1995, p. 65). In order to understand the contexts in which each case is operating, the interviews focused on each of the case's life histories as related to becoming a teacher, details of their teaching experiences during the years prior to the current school year, their move to their present school, and their experiences during the 2018-2019 school year (see Appendix A for interview protocol). The same interview protocols were used with each case for reliability and validity purposes. (See Appendix E).

All interviews were recorded and transcribed for key ideas. This resulted in 1,187 minutes of audio recordings and 747 pages of transcription. Immediately following each interview, I recorded audio field notes in an effort to capture initial thoughts and ponderings about the interview. These audio notes were also transcribed for key ideas and resulted in 54 minutes of audio recordings and 29 pages of transcription. Stake (1995) states that "getting the exact words of the respondent is usually not very important, it is what they mean that is important" (p. 66). In order to add to the completeness of each description and the reliability of the data, follow-up conversations were conducted over the telephone as needed. These conversations allowed me to clarify information that was provided during the interviews, as well as provided insight into the participant's experiences, interactions, and dispositions for the time period immediately following their interview and prior to the next scheduled interview.

In order to provide insight into the contexts in which each case operates, the 2017 School Profile, issued by the Oklahoma Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, was examined to gather information about the student population of each case's former (2017-2018) and current (2018-2019) school sites. The School Profile has data organized into three categories: Community Characteristics, Educational Process, and Student Performance. For the purposes of this research, primary attention was given to the information provided within Community Characteristics, which includes demographic data from the school, as well as the most recent U.S. Census for persons living within the boundaries of the school district. The data is organized into three areas: Socioeconomic Data, U.S. Census Data, and Preparation, Motivation, and Parental Support. While all data within Community Characteristics were reviewed for the former and current school sites of each case, only data that was significantly different between the two sites was noted. Presumably, similar characteristics between sites would have minimal impact on the motivations and experiences of the cases and are therefore excluded from the description of each case.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data began as it was being collected, as coding categories were determined prior to data collection (Stake, 1995). Categorical aggregation is the process of identifying and examining instances that are part of larger categories as one moves through the data, therefore interpreting in the moment, rather than waiting to interpret until all data has been examined (Stake, 1995). Interview transcripts were initially coded to reflect instances of the purposes of this study; motivations for changing schools and experiences related to that change. A second round of coding analyzed transcripts to identify determinants of attrition, including teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and workplace characteristics, within each case. A third round of coding was conducted to identify evidences of person-environment fit, specifically

the five levels within the environment: person-vocation fit, person-job fit, person-organization fit, person-group fit, and person-individual fit. Additional rounds of coding were conducted to identify new patterns and consistency across those patterns called correspondence (Stake, 1995). A final, formal round of coding was conducted, specifically to identify single instances that provided significant meaning and understanding of an individual case and/or the collective case. Field notes were analyzed utilizing the same process.

Chapter Four: Presentation of Findings

The purpose of this research was to develop an understanding of why veteran teachers choose to leave a school in which they were invested and what their experiences were in their new school. The findings for this study were based on a series of interviews with seven participants, beginning in July 2018 and continuing through February 2019. The interviews were semi-structured in design, allowing the participants to reconstruct and describe their unique experiences.

This study aimed to address the following questions: What are the motivations of veteran teachers who voluntarily seek a teaching position in a different school? What are the experiences of these teachers in their new workplace? Therefore, this chapter includes data related to the participants' motivations to move, as well as data related to the participants' experiences in their new schools. In presenting the data, an effort was made to maintain the voices of each case as much as possible. As a result, findings are presented primarily through the use of direct quotes from each case.

In order to more clearly identify the factors that impact their motivations and experiences, the data were examined through the lens of person-environment (P-E) fit theory. Among the participants, there were indications of P-E fit at the person-vocation (P-V), person-job (P-J), person-organization (P-O), person-group (P-G), and person-individual (P-I) levels. While the following presentation of findings is categorized into levels of fit, it is important to note that in many ways the motivations and experiences of the participants are naturally and inextricably intertwined. The dynamics of a teacher and the school in which they work are unique. Many teachers hold their professional identity as a teacher so closely to their personal identity that their experiences at school impact their lives in a way that many other professions do not experience.

Motivations to Move

In order to more clearly identify the factors that impacted each participants' motivations to leave a school in which they were significantly invested, the data were examined through the lens of P-E fit. Understandably, iterations of stress within the relationship(s) would be indicative of potential misfit within a specific level of fit. While examining the data related to the participants' motivations to move, there was evidence of P-E misfit at the P-O, P-G, and P-I levels.

Person-Organization (P-O) Fit

P-O fit refers to the compatibility between an individual and the organization with which they are associated. Typically, the organization is represented as the collection of individuals within it, however on occasion the organization is represented as a distinct entity with its own characteristics. Within education, both a district and a school could be considered distinct organizations dependent on the size and structure of the district. While examining the data related to P-O fit, three areas of concern were identified. These included school organization and schedule, district level acknowledgement of faculty concerns, and accessibility of student support.

School organization and schedule. For a variety of reasons, including financial strain and reduced funding, many districts and schools in Oklahoma have undergone significant changes in recent years. As Teri described, "The last couple years within the district I have seen a lot of change" (interview, July 16, 2018). Buildings were closed and grade levels within existing buildings were adjusted. "Reconfiguring everything just didn't make sense in anybody's world. It just didn't make sense" (interview, July 16, 2018). Teri's building was adjusted from hosting third through sixth grade, to hosting fifth through eighth grade. This adjustment brought together teams of elementary teachers and middle school teachers into the same building.

There were issues because the middle school team was very much ‘We are middle school’, and we were very much elementary school. There were just two different philosophies that clashed. I am not a middle school person. [Our principal] insisted that we run a bell system. Those damn bells went off all the time. The seventh and eighth grade were on one side of the building, but we (fifth grade) were the only ones who did a structured rotation. We walked our kids in a line, but the older kids were running around in the halls. The hallways were just awful. (interview, July 16, 2018)

As part of the bell schedule, a new attendance procedure was put into place. “We had to take attendance every hour, even though I had my kids for a four-hour block” (interview, July 16, 2018). While the bell system was disruptive, having to stop instruction in order to send electronic attendance four additional times each day provided Teri with additional and unnecessary frustration.

Acknowledgement of concerns. One area of concern raised by several participants was related to the ways in which the school district did and did not acknowledge the concerns raised by teachers about building leadership. For example, Teri did not initially plan on leaving the district that she was so deeply invested in.

I had talked to the principal at the [primary] building. She and I taught together in fifth grade years before. She said, ‘Come on over.’ That was my initial plan, I was going to drop down and go to the other building. (interview, July 16, 2018)

However, she became increasingly frustrated by the school district’s lack of recognition of the problems at her school. Teri stated, “I think I was frustrated enough at the way things were handled and wondered how [the district] didn’t see what was going on, so I decided to look elsewhere. I really thought [they] would start to see pieces” (interview, July 16, 2018). Despite unusually high levels of turnover in faculty and numerous complaints from parents and teachers

about the building leadership, the district rehired the principal and did not acknowledge the concerns that had been raised by the faculty.

Accessibility of student support. Another concern raised by participants was their ability to access support for their students. While supports mentioned ranged from having a school nurse to having an art and/or music teacher, several participants mentioned access to support services for the students who's needs they felt they were unable to meet. Cathy described her concerns and frustration with being able to access the appropriate supports for students in need.

When you have a 5-year-old threatening to bring a knife and cut out everyone's kidneys and sell them on the black market, there are just not enough ways that I can help that child. That child needs something else. But the hoops that you have to jump through to get that child help are so frustrating. I think that may be one of the things that drives a teacher out of the profession. You know that kid needs help. You know from your years of experience and dealing with children that this kid is in serious trouble and needs serious help, but you can't get them that help because of all the red tape. That is very sad and frustrating. (interview, July 17, 2018)

Person-Group (P-G) Fit

P-G fit refers to the level of fit between an individual and a group of people. In a school setting, a group could be defined in several ways. While an external characteristic of schools, the student population of a specific school can be considered a group. Additionally, the faculty of a school can be viewed as a group, as can a grade-level or content area team of teachers. While examining the data related to P-G fit, three areas of concern were identified. These included the student population, faculty relations, and school climate.

Student population. The demands of working with a specific student population can vary greatly for a teacher. The level of demand at Cathy's leaving school was very high. While she felt a special connection to students in need, after years of working in such a stressful environment, the impact of the stress intensified through the years. Cathy explained, "From the minute you walked in that door you were on point. You never knew what happened to that kid prior to them coming to school. It is that bad. It can be that hard" (interview, July 17, 2018). While some of the students' needs manifested as emotional outbursts, others manifested as physical outbursts.

One day [a student] snapped and destroyed my room, then started making his way to other classrooms. I finally got him contained in the office. This past year, as a fourth grader, he punched a school employee who had to be sent to the hospital. He would just snap at any given moment. Things like that [were] going on all the time. (interview, July 17, 2018)

For Cathy, the needs of the students seemed unrelenting. "You were walking on eggshells all the time, especially if you had one of those kids in your classroom, and I've had my fair share" (interview, July 17, 2018).

Faculty relations. One area of concern discussed by participants were related to the ways in which the faculty group at their leaving school interacted. Teri described her perceptions of the faculty group in her building last year as lacking cohesion. "We had this whole group from the junior high who felt like they were together. Then we had the fifth and sixth grade hall, and most of them were new because of turnover" (interview, July 16, 2018). Although this was a common feeling within the building, "there were no opportunities [to come together]. It's not like we had potlucks. There wasn't the opportunity, and I think that was really needed. Overall [the faculty] was very divided" (interview, July 16, 2018).

Teri also mentioned that although the faculty was not united, some teachers were able to bond. “I had one teacher that I had worked with for a while but didn’t really know him. We had bus duty together and so we would commiserate. He was very supportive. So [the situation] brought small pockets together” (interview, July 16, 2018).

Molly also experienced a great deal of stress within the faculty at her leaving school. Within the faculty, there was “a severe clique issue. It was a group of young teachers. They controlled the school. The clique is still there. They are still strong. I don’t think it’s going to change” (interview, July 25, 2018). Molly explained how the clique impacted the faculty.

We’ve lost a lot of teachers who were treated unfairly. At carnival if they didn’t like you, they would give you a bad job to do. There was a teacher who had MS (multiple sclerosis) and they wouldn’t help accommodate her. Teachers would watch other teachers through the door and take notes, then talk about them.

I remember they had a wave they would give people they liked, and they had a salute they would give to people they didn’t like which meant ‘F-U, bitch.’ Someone told me about it, and I was like ‘Oh, they give that to me all the time.’ It was just stuff like that; how they would treat people, comments they would make. They would roll their eyes or just completely ignore you. A lot of mean cattiness, a lot of gossip, things like that.

(interview, July 25, 2018)

Molly described her negative experiences with this group of teachers as pervasive and ruthless. “It was just pick, pick, pick all the time” (interview, July 25, 2018).

School climate. School climate is commonly described as the general feeling within a building. Several of the participants mentioned concerns related to the climate of their leaving school. Molly described the climate in her leaving school as depressing. “The teachers were unhappy. There was a lot of negativity. There was a lack of compassion” (interview, July 25,

2018). Teri described the climate of her leaving school as awful. “It was just the general feeling in the building. It wasn’t a fun place to learn” (interview, July 16, 2018).

Rachel described the climate in her building as tricky. “There is dissention, but not within the teams” (interview, July 25, 2018). The faculty at Rachel’s school had weekly meetings on Friday afternoons. These meetings are described as professional learning communities (PLCs), “but everyone hates it.” Rachel stated,

It’s the worst day of your life because you’re just being bitched at, being told all the things you’re doing wrong, all the things you need to be doing. And then it’s like 3:40 and time to go home for the weekend, even though I just gave you all this that you have to do, so.... (interview, July 25, 2018)

Rachel explained that the weight of those Friday meetings was felt throughout the next week. “You always felt like you just couldn’t do anything right” (interview, July 25, 2018).

Person-Individual (P-I) Fit

Within P-I fit, the participants described experiences with individuals who were either district or school administrators or an individual teacher within their school. The experiences with building leadership manifested in a variety of ways, including displays of professionalism, valuing previous experiences and knowledge, supporting teachers with discipline and school policies, instilling a professional culture, and encouraging professional growth. Experiences with other staff members manifested as relations and interactions with an individual.

Administrative professionalism. Several teachers indicated concerns about the level of professionalism displayed by their school administrators. Although these concerns were primarily related to interpersonal interactions with their administrators, there were also concerns raised about being publicly reprimanded, as well as a general lack of trust. Teri explained about her principal:

She did things I thought were so unprofessional. For example, there was an inventory due for Chromebooks. A day or two after it was due, she sent out an email to everyone in the building calling out four people who had not turned in theirs saying ‘Where is it? This was due Monday and you have not turned it in.’ You don’t do that.

She did that once with me at the first of the year. Several of us had the new attendance, where we had to take attendance every hour, even though we had our kids for multiple hours. She sent out an email to maybe ten of us saying who didn’t take attendance each hour. You just don’t do that. I went up there during my lunch break and said, ‘I have taken attendance, please show me what I haven’t done.’ I told her she needed to make sure everyone knows how to use the new system before she called them out on it.

(interview, July 16, 2018)

Teri described the impact of these interactions. “Feeling like you were respected was gone. You weren’t talked to respectfully. You weren’t approached respectfully. You didn’t feel like a professional, you didn’t feel appreciated” (interview, July 16, 2018).

Rachel felt that the principal at her leaving school often handled situations “more personally than professionally. I didn’t think she was very objective” (interview, February 4, 2019). Concerns related to her professionalism also arose when she chose to engage other teachers in a conversation in which she spoke negatively about Rachel.

At the beginning of the year, the new teachers had a meeting and the team leaders were supposed to be there, but she didn’t tell me about it until after. The new teachers told me that she was talking ugly about me to them during the meeting. They were mad. It was terrible. They were like ‘I don’t know why she would say things about you when she doesn’t even know.’ I was thinking, ‘You (the principal) just turned people away from you.’ (interview, July 25, 2018).

This incident affirmed for Rachel what she already suspected about her principal. “She would tell me things about others, so I knew if she was talking about them, she was probably talking about me too. I couldn’t trust her” (interview, February 4, 2019).

Likewise, Gail’s experience with her principal during a grade level meeting at the end of the school year was undoubtedly what led to her decision to leave her school. Prior to that incident, Gail had not considered leaving. Gail shared,

I expected to retire from there. Even though everything had changed so much, I wasn’t even looking for another job. I’m not going to work for somebody that raises his voice and yells at me and tells me I can find the door. I wasn’t respected. I wasn’t wanted.

For being in the education business, there sure is a lack of knowing how to treat people. It shouldn’t be ok for administrators to be so unprofessional. If there were an issue, if I had overstepped my boundaries in some way, and I had upset [my principal], there were so many other ways he could have handled it. It was just so unprofessional. (interview, July 27, 2018)

The effects of that experience on Gail were profound. “It was awful. It absolutely destroyed me” (interview, July 27, 2018).

Administrative value of teachers’ experience. Another concern expressed by several participants was how administrators value the experience and knowledge of their veteran teachers. Gail shared, “I had 20 plus years of experience and was National Board certified, but to him I was dispensable. I had no idea how little my experience mattered to him” (interview, July 27, 2018). What made the situation even more frustrating for Gail, was that she “had almost twice as much time in [the field of education] as he did” (interview, July 27, 2018).

Like Gail, Teri described a situation in which her principal made it clear to her that her experiences in the building prior to that year were not going to be valued or considered as contributive.

At the very beginning of the school year, during one of our professional days, we were in a faculty meeting. I don't know what we were even talking about, but [the principal] asked for ideas and I said something like 'Well last year we...' or something like that. [The principal] whipped around and said, 'Do you know how many times you've said this is how we did it last year?' (interview, July 16, 2018)

At that moment Teri understood the expectation of her principal. "I didn't say anything else for the rest of the meeting" (interview, July 16, 2018).

Adding to her feeling that her experience did not matter, later that year Teri was made aware that a new hire in her school, whom she had been asked to mentor, was going to be given the Reading Specialist position for the following year. The situation left Teri feeling hurt and angry.

I felt like I had been slapped. Not only had she been there literally two weeks in our district and had received a promotion for something she wasn't qualified for, and I wasn't even considered. Nobody was considered. There were people in the district who had their master's in reading that would have been much more qualified. (interview, July 16, 2018)

That incident proved to be a tipping point for Teri. "That was it. I went back to my room. It was during my planning and the teacher across the hall that I planned with, I told her 'That's it. I'm done.'" (interview, July 16, 2018).

Similarly, the actions of Beanie's district superintendent indicated to her that he did not value the knowledge and experience of the teachers in the district.

[He] came in and told everyone he'd have the school changed within the next five years.

As time went on, we started to wonder who was next because the teachers were dropping like flies. It's hard to believe that one person can come into a district where you've been a family and totally tear the family apart. When you have 15 people leave at the end of the year; most of them didn't leave because they wanted to, they left because they knew. You could see his motives. You could see why. (interview, July 30, 2018)

Beanie made the decision to leave in anticipation of eventually being on his 'target' list. "I was forewarned about him, that he goes in with an agenda. I got a message today congratulating me that I had escaped him. He's evil" (interview, July 30, 2018).

Administrative support. Several teachers expressed concern about the lack of support provided by their building administrators. These concerns included general support of teacher concerns, support on issues related to student behavior and discipline, and support for enforcement of policies.

Molly shared how she felt a general lack of support from the administrator at her leaving school. "I'm not saying she treated me badly, she just didn't treat me. She put me in charge of a lot of things and she would support me, and then she wouldn't support me. She didn't listen to me" (interview, July 25, 2018).

Several teachers indicated concerns about the ways in which the building administrators did not provide adequate support regarding issues of student behavior and discipline. Cathy shared,

There were times, like when I had a student get into a knockdown drag out fight and then [the student was] allowed to participate in the Christmas program. It felt like there were some kids who, regardless of why they were sent to the office, were treated differently

than other kids. There were volatile kids having a meltdown who would go to the office and come back with a stuffed bear and a lollipop. (interview, July 17, 2018)

Cathy felt that the lack of support with discipline impacted instruction in her classroom and shared, “I feel like if [the principal] had kept them a little longer or something, when we couldn’t function at all as a class, it would’ve made a difference” (interview, July 17, 2018).

Teri became frustrated by what she felt was a double standard that was in place with regards to school policies and their enforcement at her school. She recounted, “[The principal] would tell us to make sure our kids were uniforms. It got to the point where fifth grade was the only grade who was enforcing uniforms, but she didn’t do anything to the seventh or eighth graders” (interview, July 16, 2018). Teri also believed that the students were aware of the double standard which made things more challenging for teachers. “[The principal] wouldn’t enforce anything, so the teachers couldn’t enforce it” (interview, July 16, 2018). Teri also expressed frustration because she felt that teachers would “get called out on what [the] kids were supposed to be doing. It was tough” (interview, July 16, 2018).

Administrative visibility. An additional concern discussed by participants was the visibility of administrators within their building. Cathy acknowledged that the administrators in her building spent a significant amount of time dealing with situations that required immediate attention. “I know there was more to it. Some days the office was a revolving door. They’d put out one fire, then another would pop up. All day long- dealing with parents, dealing with the kids, dealing with situations” (interview, July 17, 2018). Regardless, Cathy felt that the administrators should have had greater visibility in the building and shared, “When you have kids asking if you’re the principal, that’s a problem. That’s something [the principal] could have done differently. Her presence in the building would have helped” (interview, July 17, 2018).

Professional Culture. Several participants discussed their concerns about the ways in which their school administration established and encouraged a professional culture within the school. These included supporting instructional and curricular needs, respecting the professional and personal needs of teachers, and including teachers in the decision-making process for things that directly impacted them or their students.

Rachel expressed that she did not feel like her principal was able to effectively support her pedagogical or curricular needs. “I couldn’t go to her and ask her for help in teaching something,” acknowledged Rachel. “She would just say, ‘Make it work.’ It was constantly, ‘You’re doing everything wrong, but make it work.’ She couldn’t tell you what was wrong or help you fix it, but it was wrong” (interview, February 4, 2019).

Similarly, Molly expressed concern about the professional culture that was being fostered and the professional behaviors being modeled by the administrator in her leaving school. “There were a lot of issues and the principal didn’t really help. She was so focused on the academics, but people are important too. If you want teachers to be effective, they have to have rest” (interview, July 25, 2018). When asked to elaborate, Molly stated,

A lot of our planning time we didn’t have it. We’d lose it [to meetings or to cover classes]. I was lucky to get one planning time a week. It was awful. We were overworked. The drama, the expectations. Really, I think the principal added to it, and it was petty things. Trying to keep up with paperwork. Here’s the data, we don’t need to make all these index cards and color things [to track student progress]. (interview, July 25, 2018)

Molly felt that her administrators were “focusing on things that didn’t really matter. We needed to teach. We needed to focus on the kids” (interview, July 25, 2018).

Likewise, Rachel felt that her administrators could have improved the professional culture at her school by including teacher input in the decision-making process. She was frustrated that important decisions were being made solely by administration that impacted both teachers and students.

[The principal] had decided that this year our kids were going to be [receiving remedial reading instruction] by the PE coach, the music teacher, and someone else, but it was our job to tell them what to do. Give them plans and materials and tell them what to do- for someone who doesn't even know how to teach that subject. I mean, I don't even know what to do with them. I teach fourth grade and they're on a first-grade reading level.

That's way above my pay grade. That really pissed me off. I was pissed because this was the most ridiculous thing because I [couldn't] understand. I don't even know how to do RTI. We have a reading specialist, why isn't she doing it? (interview, July 26, 2018)

Furthermore, Rachel was later reprimanded by the principal for asking questions during the faculty meeting "because other team members were looking at me as to how to act. So, I said, 'You're telling me, in fancier words, that I can't ask questions in meetings?' And she said, 'Yes'" (interview, July 26, 2018).

Encouraging professional growth. Three participants discussed feeling that their administrators did not support their desire to grow as professionals. One example came from Teri, who was in the final semester of earning her master's degree in Administration.

For my portfolio I had several things I had to do, like sitting in on a discipline meeting. I had to observe a teacher observation and some different things like that. When [my new principal] was hired, I sat down with her and said 'Here is my portfolio. There are some things I'm going to need some help with.' She was really supportive at first, but when it came time, she wouldn't even help me. It got to the point it was obvious.

My portfolio was due at the end of the first semester and I had to do the teacher observation [component]. She said ‘No problem, I’ve got several to do this week. I’ll come by and get you and we will have [someone] cover your room and we will get that done.’ It never happened. Then she said, ‘I’ll come by and get you on this day and time’ and I was waiting. I saw her and said, ‘Let me grab my note pad’ and she said, ‘I just finished.’ (interview, July 16, 2018)

While she was able to successfully finish her program, it was without the support she needed from her building administrator. As a result, Teri felt she was left with no option but to compromise her integrity. “I just wrote up something on TLE. I just fudged. I had to” (interview, July 16, 2018).

Staff relations. While several participants indicated tension or less than ideal relationships with a member of the faculty, the significance of these recountings varied among participants. Molly described a series of events involving another teacher and herself that left her feeling disrespected. Describing the majority of the interactions as involving passive aggressive behavior, several incidents involved direct confrontation and Molly described one such incident. “I was late getting to an assembly. We (the class) were hurrying down the hall and this teacher was yelling at me because we were late” (interview, July 25, 2018). Rather than responding with empathy, the teacher was confrontational. “She was not kind, and instead of trying to understand or ask how she could help, she was [verbally] jumping on me in front of my kids” (interview, July 25, 2018).

The situation escalated when the teacher’s daughter, who also worked in the school, got involved. “She was talking about me; going around saying things about me.” Tearfully, Molly continued. “She was quite mean to me and I was uncomfortable. During a training a few weeks later, she literally got in my face and started telling me off. I was so surprised that she [got] in

my face. Unfortunately,” Molly explained, “that wasn’t the worst of it. I’ve dealt with worse” (interview, July 25, 2018).

Experiences in a New School

In order to more clearly identify the factors that impacted each participants’ experiences in their new school, the data were examined through the lens of P-E fit. Positive experiences are indicative of a suitable fit within a specific level of fit. Likewise, iterations of negative experiences are indicative of misfit within a specific level of fit. Among the participants, there were experiences manifested in levels of fit at the person-vocation (P-V), person-job (P-J), person-organization (P-O), person-group (P-G), and person-individual (P-I) levels.

Person-Vocation (P-V) Fit

P-V fit relates to the compatibility between an individual and their career choice. In this study, P-V fit is exemplified by a participant’s commitment to the profession of teaching. Two of the participants had negative experiences in their new schools that made them question their commitment to teaching. Nicole explained how the challenges she faced have impacted her commitment. “This year has made me consider leaving teaching. It’s just been a rock and roll kind of year and that’s just not the kind of person that I like to be. So, I don’t really know” (interview, February 15, 2019).

Similarly, Molly’s experiences in her new school caused her to question her commitment to the profession as well. “I’m still tired. I’m still working all the time. I am questioning if I want to continue, but I just don’t know where else to go” (interview, October 23, 2018). Molly continued by explaining that teaching is not the source of her frustration.

I love what I do, but I just want to have more time to teach and get excited. There’s just so much I want to do that I can’t because I have to do what I’m told to do, which is always changing anyways. It’s just so different from the past. I remember a long time ago

walking in my room everyday just happy, feeling I just love what I do. I didn't feel that pressure. I had time to do my job. I had autonomy. I could teach how I wanted to teach. (interview, October 23, 2018)

Molly had hoped that her experiences in her new school would be different. "I thought maybe a different district it would be different, but it's still the same. Nobody knows what direction they're going; they're constantly making changes. I just don't know how much longer I can teach like this" (interview, October 23, 2018).

Person-Job (P-J) Fit

P-J fit describes the compatibility of an individual's characteristics with those of a specific job. Within the field of education, these jobs can be described by the grade level, content area, and/or role within a school. Participants that experienced a change in their job as part of their move shared how the job change impacted them.

When Nicole left her school at the end of the 2017-18 school year, she left because her position as a reading specialist was being eliminated. She sought a similar position in several districts but was unable to secure a job as a reading specialist. Feeling pressure to secure a position, she accepted a position as a classroom teacher in a third-grade classroom in a different district. After being back in the general education classroom for just over six months, Nicole shared,

I really want to go back to being a reading specialist. After being out of the classroom and then back in, I really have come to realize that the classroom isn't really where I want to be. I feel like I've been drowning all year long. It's just not a fun feeling. (interview, February 15, 2019)

When asked about her thoughts for the 2019-20 school year, Nicole said, “I don’t know. I really want a reading specialist position. So, if that doesn’t happen- if a reading specialist doesn’t happen; I just really don’t know” (interview, February 15, 2019).

When Rachel changed schools at the end of the 2017-18 school year, she also changed grade levels and content areas. After teaching fourth grade for 12 years and reading and language arts for the past three years, she was tasked with teaching fifth grade math and science during the 2018-19 school year. While her experiences at her new school were overwhelmingly positive, Rachel had to adjust to the new content she was responsible for teaching. “I don’t like not knowing my standards and having them memorized because I did, so that’s been hard for me to deal with. It felt like I was constantly reevaluating what I was doing” (interview, October 23, 2018). In spite of the challenges, Rachel recognized that her investment in learning new standards would pay off in the long run. “Next year it’ll be a lot better because I’ll know what I’m looking at. Even right now I feel much better than I did the first month. It’s finally coming together” (interview, October 23, 2018).

Person-Organization (P-O) Fit

P-O fit refers to the compatibility between an individual and the organization with which they are associated. While examining the data related to P-O fit, themes relating to fit at both the district and school level were identified. These themes included professional culture, organizational expectations, the organization and schedule of the school, and organizational values.

Professional culture. While commonly defined as the ways in which an organization behaves professional culture refers to the ways in which an organization treats their employees as professionals. Several participants described how the professional culture in their new placement impacted their experiences. For example, Molly found that her new district extended a level of

respect and trust to its' teachers that she had not experienced in her previous district. "We have a key to the school, a [security] code, and a key to the classroom. We can come up anytime. That's wonderful" (interview, October 23, 2018).

Organizational expectations. Learning the expectations within a new school can be challenging for any teacher, including those with years of experience. Teri shared her experience with beginning in a new school and district. "It's a huge learning curve simply because they are just, they have their way of doing things. It's not necessarily a bad way, you just have to learn how to do it their way" (interview, October 17, 2018). Teri quickly learned that "their way" involved more documentation than what was expected in her previous school.

It's a lot to keep up with. That has been my greatest challenge- just keeping up with all the record keeping and assessments- there's always something I have to get entered in and done. There are definitely more expectations. In the old district it was more like we trust that you know what to do, so go in and get it done. We would look at our benchmark data and get to it. Here there is more emphasis on the data, so there's more to keep up with. (interview, October 17, 2018)

Similarly, Beanie struggled to meet the expectations of her new district superintendent's grading policy. While Beanie acknowledged that the intention of the policy was to hold teachers accountable, in reality, it was too much.

[We] are required to take three grades per week for each of six subjects. That's 27 kids times three times six. That's 450 grades per week. It's really hard on us. And we have progress reports every three weeks. I'm constantly on the trail of grades. (interview, October 27, 2018)

In addition, a school-wide policy was implemented at the end of the first nine weeks. “Now I have to give them the opportunity to redo any assignment below a 60 percent until they get 80 percent. It’s just impossible” (interview, October 27, 2018).

School organization and schedule. Although all of the cases were situated in an elementary school, the structure of each participant’s school day varied greatly. Some of the participants experienced less structure than their previous school, while others have had to adjust to more dictated schedules than they previously experienced. Molly has struggled to understand the demands of her new school’s schedule. “I don’t feel like I have enough time in the day to achieve what they want me to achieve. The expectations are too high” (interview, October 23, 2018). Weekly schoolwide initiatives and activities take away several hours of instructional time, with grade level activities requiring even more time away from the classroom. “It’s just a lot of stuff. If you think about how many hours I actually got to teach effectively today, it’s just not enough. It’s like this every week” (interview, October 23, 2018).

In addition to affecting classroom instructional time, Molly’s new school has expectations of how teachers spend their non-instructional time. “They want [our grade levels] to meet together and have lunch together every day, but I’m like, ‘I have things I need to get done.’ We also have PLC twice a week during our plan times” (interview, October 23, 2018). After several months of eating lunch with her team, Molly grew frustrated with their use of time to socialize, rather than plan and collaborate. As a result, she decided that she needed to take advantage of that time to work in her classroom.

I finally told the lead teacher that I need to work during my lunch time. She said, ‘Just pop in for 10 minutes and then go.’ So, I started doing that. I go in, catch up, and then tell them I have a lot to do. It’s like planning time for me. I always have a lot to do.
(interview, February 18, 2019)

Organizational values. The values of an organization are reflected in the ways that it acts and the implementations of its policies. These extend beyond the district or school’s vision, permeating the areas of pedagogy, curriculum, and teacher autonomy. Several participants indicated that their personal values aligned well with the values of their new organization. For example, Teri indicated that there was tremendous cohesion in her new building, which she attributed to a clear vision. “Everybody really is here for the kids. You get that sense from everything” (interview, March 1, 2019). When asked to elaborate, Teri stated, “It’s a commitment that is carried on throughout the building, but the administration has set the expectations. They lead and guide what that looks like.”

Unfortunately, not all of the participants experienced a positive fit with the values of their organization. Nicole explained, “When I interviewed, I was asked what learning would look like in my classroom. I said that it would be hands-on, collaborative, and active” (interview, October 19, 2018). However, once she began, she realized that there were different expectations. “Now I am expected to make them sit and do workbook pages all day because that is the curriculum” (interview, October 19, 2018). Nicole further explained that what she knows to be quality literacy instruction, which she took great pride in, was not allowed in her new building. “What I know to be effective and engaging aren’t welcome here. I bring up ideas and am told ‘that’s not a part of our curriculum’ or I just get shot down. I wish I would have known that coming here” (interview, October 19, 2018).

Person-Group (P-G) Fit

P-G fit refers to the compatibility between an individual and a group of people. While examining the data related to P-G fit in the participants new schools, five themes were identified. These included the student population, faculty relations, school climate, professional culture, and staff (grade-level) relations.

Student population. Five of seven participants moved to a school with a significantly different student population for the 2018-19 school year than their previous school. Two participants mentioned how the different population impacted their experiences in their new school. Teri experienced challenges in working with the student population at her new school, which was distinctly different from the student population at her previous school. “The hardest thing to get used to is working with my ELL (English language learner) kids. Of my 22 students, 17 are ELL; all at different levels of ELL” (interview, October 17, 2018). While Teri was aware of the ELL population prior to accepting the position, she was surprised at how it impacted her experience. “Coming into this district I expected the kids to be higher. I don’t feel fully equipped to work with these kiddos” (interview, October 17, 2018).

Although she found working with a high ELL student population challenging, Teri also developed a new appreciation for her students. “The kids themselves, I just enjoy and adore them so much. I have a whole new respect for what they’ve gone through as a learner” (interview, October 17, 2018). Working with ELL students also provided Teri with a unique opportunity to build relationships with them.

My kids are teaching me Spanish. I told them I wanted to learn and one of them gives me a list each week of things to work on. I had my first test last week on the days of the week. Now we are working on colors. It’s been kinda fun. It’s also been really eye opening to me, because if I can’t get my colors down, how do they come from another country and learn English like they do? It’s hard. They are so patient with me. (interview, October 17, 2018)

Teri also decided to seek out opportunities for her to grow her skillset so that she can better serve her students. “I have made the commitment to get my ELL certification” (interview,

October 17, 2018). As an added incentive, Teri's new district offers a one-time \$500 bonus for teachers who take and pass the ELL certification exam.

Cathy also experienced challenges in working with the student population at her new school. Cathy left what she described as a *Title (one) school* to teach at her new school, which she called an *entitled school*. "That's exactly what this is. It's definitely the entitled bunch" (interview, October 5, 2018).

I miss the kids [in my old school]. The ones I had before needed me to just love them. They needed more hugs during the day than this bunch. These kids are different. This bunch can be more whiney. Everything is done for them at home. I'll ask them to put their backpack away and they look at me like, 'What you're not going to do it for me?' I say, 'Nope, you're going to do it yourself.' It's a different kind of need where everything is done for them. I'm used to the kind of kids where nothing was done for them, so they are more independent because they are used to having to do it themselves. (interview, October 17, 2018)

Cathy also mentioned how the difference in resiliency in her former and new students affects the way that she interacts with them. "The littlest of things will send [my new students] into; a tiny drop of blood is traumatic. My other kids would wipe it on their pants and go on with their business" (interview, October 5, 2018).

Faculty relations. Each of the participants shared their perceptions of how the faculty in their new school interacted as a group. Rachel was struck by how different the faculty relations were in her new school compared to the school that she left. "The culture is totally different. Everyone is just like how can we help you rather than how can you change everything? I know I am taken care of. I know I'm backed" (interview, October 23, 2018). "I am so happy with my choice. I just really love it," Rachel shared (interview, February 4, 2019).

Teri also experienced a complete shift in the culture of her new building compared to the building that she left.

I think I was even surprised at how much the culture of the building- how much of a difference that could make. Everybody pitches in- for duties. We all have an afterschool duty. I have bus duty which takes 10 minutes, but then we go to car duty and help out there. It's amazing. It was pouring down rain the other day- a monsoon- and we were all out there with a smile, just soaking wet. (interview, October 17, 2018)

In addition to the collaborative mentality of the faculty, Teri noticed that the faculty in her new school was committed and invested in developing relationships with one another. "Each month as a staff we do something. Last month we did a Pinot's Palace at school and our art teacher led it. It's really fun to have a group that socializes. I haven't had that in years" (interview, October 17, 2018).

Cathy's experience with the faculty in her new school was quite different than Rachel and Teri's experiences. Most of the faculty in Cathy's new school had been working in the building for several years; out of nearly 60 teachers, only six of them were new to the building for the 2018-19 school year. "It's a little cliquy," stated Cathy. "Due to the time constraints of the day, you don't see a lot of other people. I don't feel like I fit in anywhere, even with my team." Cathy expressed that this was one reason why she felt lonely and disconnected. Tearfully, Cathy shared, "I am missing my old school. We met [recently] for dinner, a bunch of us, and I miss the familiarity. I miss the connection. I don't know why I'm getting emotional. You become a family" (interview, February 3, 2019).

School climate. Several of the participants described how the climate in their new building impacted their experiences. Rachel and Teri both experienced a notable difference in the climate of their new schools. Rachel stated, "It's just a happy, joyful place to be. I don't ever

hear the negative or complaining. It may happen, but I heard it all the time last year” (interview, October 23, 2018). Similarly, Teri shared, “The general atmosphere is just completely different. That’s one of the things I am just so happy about. I look forward to going to work every day” (interview, October 17, 2018). Teri continued,

I recognized the negativity in my other building and wanted to get away from that in something different, but I’m just surprised at just how much it impacts everything. It seems weird, but the building just feels different. Just going down the halls, it feels different. It makes a huge difference. It has to make a difference to the kids. As a staff if we’re that happy, then we’re not walking into the classroom carrying that negative with you. (interview, October 17, 2018)

Teri’s sentiment was confirmed as the year progressed. “I just can’t imagine going backwards now, I just couldn’t do it” (interview, March 1, 2019).

Professional culture. Each of the participants mentioned how some aspect of the professional culture in their new building impacted their experiences during the 2018-19 school year. Specifically, participants discussed the recognition and appreciation of individuals’ strengths and experiences, as well as collaboration, or lack thereof.

Once she was situated in her new building, Gail worked to find her confidence again. It helped that she was viewed as an asset by the administration and other faculty. “The principal has come in my room and watched me teach. Later I’d get other teachers coming to me and asking for me to show them how to do something or to help them plan a lesson” (interview, February 20, 2019). She did not hesitate to share and assist as needed. “I want to help. I want to be a part of making things better” (interview, February 20, 2019).

Gail also benefitted from the collaborative mentality of her grade level at her new school. She freely shared that she struggles with technology and would be content not using it, but she

knows that it's a necessity at this point. "I'd be dead in the water if I didn't have someone to help me with technology, and that's what my teammates did. They helped me where I was weak and I helped them" (interview, October 20, 2018).

Rachel's new fifth grade team was comprised of nine teachers, with four teaching math and science. Her content team met twice per week during their planning period. "We discuss what we are teaching. We made a scope and sequence because that had never been done. Now we are typing up lesson plans and we make copies for each other. It's working out" (interview, October 23, 2018).

In early January 2019, Rachel slipped and fell, breaking her leg. While she was out of school for over three weeks, she was overwhelmed with the amount of support and compassion shown by her teammates. "People were making copies for me, putting my lesson plans in, teaching lessons for the sub so that the kids were getting what they needed. It's not something that happens normally; even my principal said that it isn't normal" (interview, February 4, 2019).

Unfortunately, not all of the participants experienced the same collaborative mentality with their new grade level team. Cathy shared her frustration with her new team. "They say they plan together but they meet and all they do is complain. I want to know what they are doing for curriculum and ask questions when I need assistance. They aren't forthcoming with anything" (interview, October 5, 2018). Despite her teammates lack of input, Cathy continued to offer ideas and information. "I'm always willing to share. I always say this is what I'm doing. Here it is if you want to use it" (interview, October 5, 2018). After several months, Cathy became discouraged. "I like to feel like I am contributing and am part of something. I don't feel like that anymore. I felt that at my old school, but I don't here" (interview, February 3, 2019).

Cathy felt that not only did the team not want to engage in authentic collaboration, but in some ways, it appeared almost as if they felt no obligation to help one another in any way. "The

team isn't really a team. It's more like every man for himself. I feel like I'm on an island all by myself" (interview, October 5, 2018). Cathy provided an example;

I was gone out of town when we had rainy day dismissal for the first time. We had our second rainy day dismissal the other day and I had no idea what to do. I asked one of [my teammates] what I needed to do and she said, 'Oh you haven't done this?' and then walked off. I was pretty frustrated at that point and almost in tears. I brought the kids back in [the classroom], regrouped, and then flagged someone down to help me and got [the students] all where they needed to be. (interview, October 5, 2018)

Although it is not what she preferred, Cathy decided that if her team did not desire to work together or support one another, she would focus on what she could control. "I've decided that I just have to do my own thing. I'll make it work on my own. There's only so much you can do" (interview, February 3, 2019).

Molly experienced similar challenges with her new grade-level team. "We are supposed to be collaborating, which I appreciate, but it's more of 'This is the way we've always done it'" (interview, October 23, 2018). She found that her pedagogical values varied greatly from those of her teammates. She commented:

I want to be able to do what I think is right. I just have so many disagreements with how things are being done. There's no engagement in a lot of what [the other teachers] want to do. It's for show. I want to make [my students] think. (interview, October 23, 2018)

Despite her attempts to share ideas and instructional strategies, her team has not been receptive. According to Molly, "They're not open to change" (interview, February 18, 2019).

In addition to not embracing a collaborative relationship, Molly felt that her team did not value or recognize the more than 20 years of experience that she brought with her, even though she has been teaching longer than any other member of her grade-level team. "I've taught before.

I know what I'm doing. They act as if I don't know what I am doing" (interview, October 23, 2018).

Nicole had hoped for an experienced grade level team in her new school that she could collaborate and work closely with, particularly since she would be teaching a grade level that she had not previously taught.

Part of the reason that I took the job was because when I interviewed, one of the team members had been teaching third grade for ten plus years. I was really excited to work with her and lean on her experiences because I had never taught third grade before.

(interview, October 23, 2018)

However, when the school year began, Nicole was disappointed to learn that the teacher had taken a job at another school. "When school actually started and I found out my teammates were a second-year and third-year teacher, I was like 'You've got to be kidding me?'" (interview, October 23, 2018).

Although not as experienced, Nicole and her team did work together. "For the most part we plan together, which is one of the things I wanted" (interview, October 23, 2018). Nicole was transparent during the interview for her current position. "When I was interviewing, I was like 'I don't know what I'm doing, I want a team that plans together'" (interview, October 23, 2018). However, as the year progressed, she began to feel constricted by the expectations of what that looked like. "I kind of question that now. If I want to do something different, I'm not really allowed to. I'll share an idea with my team and get shot down. They tell me, 'Well that's not part of our curriculum'" (interview, February 15, 2019).

Staff (grade level) relations. Several participants experienced positive relationships with the members of their new grade level team. Although apprehensive at first, Rachel stated, "It's going great. We work well together. They've been accepting" (interview, October 23, 2018).

Nicole also experienced some apprehension at the beginning of the year with her new team. “They are really friendly, and we get along well. I just didn’t know in the beginning if I could trust them or if they would go tattle on me or talk about me to the rest of the building” (interview, October 19, 2018). Unlike the relationships she had with her colleagues at her previous school, Nicole did not develop friendships with her colleagues at her new school.

They are nice and I don’t feel like an outsider, but I don’t talk to them or hang out with them outside of school. You know, I’m really busy, and I don’t like my job, so why would I want to go hang out with them after work? (interview, February 15, 2019)

As Cathy described the experiences with her new teammates, she became visibly saddened. “My team isn’t a team at all, except that we have matching t-shirts.” As she spoke, tears filled her eyes.

Some days it’s so obvious. They all walk by in the morning and pick one another up to head to the gym. Never, not one time, have they stopped by to pick me up or ask if I was going. It’s been a lot of little things. (interview, October 5, 2018)

Although she would have preferred a team that worked closely together and ideally, would have a social relationship as well, Cathy recognized that the members of her team were not as close as she originally thought. “They are kind of aloof and don’t even relate to one another too much. I’ve caught them multiple times talking about one another behind their back and wondered what they say about me” (interview, February 3, 2019). However, as the year progressed, the lack of interaction and relationship with her teammates began to wear on Cathy. “I’m lonely,” she shared (interview, February 3, 2019).

Person-Individual (P-I) Fit

While examining the data related to P-I fit in the participants new schools, the participants primarily described experiences with individual school administrators. Within P-I fit,

six themes were identified. These included administrative professionalism, administrative value of teachers' experience, administrative support, administrative visibility, professional culture, and encouragement of professional growth.

Administrative professionalism. The majority of the participants described their new administrators as highly professional and had few, if any, concerns about their level of professionalism. Although true for most of the participants, Beanie's experiences were quite different. The principal in Beanie's new school was a first-year principal and new to the small, rural district. Over the course of the school year, Beanie began to feel that the principal was trying to build a name for herself. "The thing she is most concerned with is whether or not she looks good" (interview, October 27, 2018). In Beanie's estimation, some of the principal's concern about her image manifested in tolerable ways, such as requiring her staff to dress professionally for inner district professional development (while teachers from the secondary building were allowed to dress casually). However, a situation in Spring 2019 raised significant concerns for Beanie. Late one Friday afternoon, Beanie received an email from the district superintendent. The email encouraged teachers to contact their legislators about an education related bill that would be up to vote in the state senate the next week. The following Monday morning, during the weekly schoolwide assembly, Beanie's principal announced that the faculty was to "get it done by ten o'clock. She came room to room to make sure we sent it. She stood there, watching over my shoulder, to make sure I sent it" (interview, February 23, 2019). While Beanie had some interest in teacher activism, she did not feel that she should be forced to email her legislators about anything, nor be forced to do so under the watch of her principal. The situation caused Beanie to "[lose] all respect for her. It was so unprofessional" (interview, February 23, 2019).

Administrative value of teachers' experience. Most of the participants described how their administrators made them feel valued and appreciated what they had to offer. For example, Rachel felt that teachers in her new school were genuinely respected and valued. "I don't feel like it's heavy from the top down." Rather, Rachel felt that the administrators wanted to work collaboratively with the faculty to address concerns. "It's not as much as, 'You have to do this' as it is, 'What do you think is going to work? Let's all work together and figure out how are we going to get to this target?'" (interview, October 23, 2018).

Administrative support. Several of the participants indicated that they were fully supported by their new administration. This included support with parents, students, and with their needs as teachers. For some, this was very different from their previous experiences.

Cathy noticed a significant difference in the level and type of support she was given by the administrators in her new school. "I have several kids who are major behavior issues and they've been very helpful and supportive. I really liked my other principals, but I wouldn't have gotten that same support there" (interview, February 3, 2019). She recounted a particular incident in which she felt not only supported, but also respected by her new administrators.

There was one day this year that a student had a little tantrum and made a mess. They made him ask me if he could come back into my room. I've had a kid try to rip my shirt off and hit me [in my previous school] and I was never asked if I was ready for them to come back. (interview, February 3, 2019)

In contrast, Beanie did not receive the behavioral and disciplinary support she had hoped to receive from her principal this year. "I was given this grade level because I have a reputation for being strong in classroom discipline" (interview, July 30, 2018). With 27 students in the class, and 15 of them receiving support through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Beanie had been warned that this group of students had some major behavioral issues. In addition, of the

27 students in her class, only one had passed the third-grade state reading exam the previous year, while three had passed the third-grade state math exam.

Beanie stated, “The hardest part for me this year has been the discipline. I’ve never had a group of students this difficult” (interview, October 27, 2018). Regardless of the severity of the behavior, short of having a weapon or physically assaulting someone, Beanie’s principal would not “deal with discipline unless [Beanie has] contacted the parents three times.” She began to cry as she described an incident with a student whom she felt should have been sent home, but was instead, sent back to her classroom. In October 2018, Beanie was told that she could no longer send any student to the office, that she was to handle all discipline in her classroom. Despite her best efforts, it has taken a toll on her. “I am exhausted by the end of the day. It is constant. I am on my toes nonstop” (interview, February 23, 2019).

Nicole also experienced frustration at the lack of direction and guidance provided by her new building administrators.

Our principal has seriously never given us any sort of direction... We didn’t even get a [faculty] handbook. The first day of school I had no clue. What do we do for dismissal? What do we do for a fire drill? I’ve had to ask, ask, ask. They don’t have any structure. It’s all very last minute. ‘Hey, you need to get this done... today!’ I think just having that would have changed a lot. I would have wasted a lot less time. I would have been a lot less frustrated.” (interview, October 19, 2018)

Despite repeated attempts to seek guidance and support from any of the three building administrators, Nicole spent the first semester feeling “back to kind of lost. During planning time or lunch; before school, after school; they’re always busy with someone else, or a behavior problem, or they’re not in there” (interview, February 15, 2019). It wasn’t until the end of December, just before the holiday break, that she was able to seek support. “I sat and waited for

over an hour, until 4:30, outside of the [principal's] door, waiting for her to finish with someone else" (interview, February 15, 2019). When she was finally able to talk to her, Nicole was honest and transparent with her principal. "I was like 'I'm tired, I'm stressed, I need your help.' Her response? She said, 'We're never down there, do whatever you want.' Ok, well that's not helpful" (interview, February 15, 2019).

Administrative visibility. Participants mentioned varying levels of administrative visibility within their new building. Cathy shared how impressed she has been by the visibility of the administrators in her new building. "Their presence is known in that building. The kids know who they are; they know they're the principal. They're in and out of classrooms; in the hallways all the time. They are in front of students all the time" (interview, February 3, 2019). Likewise, Molly shared similar feelings about the visibility of her administrators. "They walk through every day. They might be in here for 5-10 seconds, sometimes longer. They are in here all the time, just randomly. Everyone knows who they are" (interview, October 23, 2018).

Conversely, Nicole has been troubled by the lack of a general presence of the building administration. "I feel like at some point you need to make time...Come into our classroom. [Say] 'Good Morning' once a week. Just a show of 'we care about you.' I mean, I have kids who don't know who the principals are" (interview, October 19, 2018). However, her concerns about administrative presence in the classroom were not limited to visibility for students.

The Oklahoma Teacher Leader Evaluation (TLE) process requires a minimum of six documented teacher observations by a trained TLE evaluator, which is typically an administrator, for the first two years for any non-tenured faculty member. Although the 2018-19 school year was Nicole's tenth year in the classroom, she was not tenured in her new district, as that requires two contiguous full years, plus one day, to attain. "I've probably had them in my room 3 or 4 times all year" (interview, February 15, 2019), not all of which were documented observations,

and none of which included a pre- or post- conference, despite two conferences of each type being a requirement of the TLE process. Knowing that future employers can attain her TLE score from the State Department of Education, Nicole was concerned that her score may not reflect an accurate portrayal of her abilities as a teacher because of the lack of time being observed. She was also concerned that her evaluation may be finalized and submitted without her knowing, which is a violation of her employee contract. This would also prevent her from being able to present evidence in objection to any of the evaluator's scores, which is a significant component of the TLE process.

Professional culture. Several of the participants noted the ways in which their administrators impacted the professional culture in their new building. Rachel appreciated the pedagogical and content knowledge that the principal in her new school is able to provide. "She comes to our PLCs. She doesn't micromanage, but she knows what we're doing and is there to give advice [when needed]. If she can't figure it out, she's going to find out and find a way to help" (interview, February 4, 2019). Similarly, Teri described her administrators as being approachable and easy to talk to. She admitted that her principal was very busy, and sometimes difficult to catch, but it did not prevent Teri from seeking guidance and support as needed. "I went to see her yesterday because I had messed something up and I felt bad for my kids. She gave me a suggestion on how to deal with it; that was easy enough. She's easy to work with" (interview, October 17, 2018).

Unfortunately, Beanie did not feel that she could approach her new principal with any needs or concerns. Although Beanie's students made tremendous academic gains in the first semester, she felt as though she couldn't do anything right. Having faced constant criticism and threats from her principal, Beanie resolved to avoid contact with her as much as possible.

I stay clear. I know what time she will be there. I get to school at six am so that I can get my copies made before anyone else gets there. I lock myself in my room and only leave to bring my kids to specials and to lunch. I just dread any interaction with her. (interview, October 27, 2018)

As the year continued, Beanie's situation did not improve. "I am so worried about getting in trouble, I walk on eggshells all the time. It makes for a very strained work environment" (interview, February 23, 2019).

Encouragement of professional growth. Four of the participants indicated that their administrators had encouraged their professional growth in some way over the course of the 2018-19 school year. Rachel felt that the administration in her new school was committed to growing and developing the faculty. One of the ways this was accomplished was through the use of instructional rounds, in which teachers observe other classrooms in a systematic manner, with clear objectives and criteria for the time there. Additionally, both administrators spend time in the classrooms each week. "I get feedback every time," explained Rachel. She also felt that a growth approach was applied to the observation and evaluation process as well. "When we went over my evaluation, it was more meaningful. She told me what she saw and asked a lot of questions. It wasn't just her telling me what my score was" (interview, February 4, 2019).

Teri also expressed that her administration was committed to encouraging and supporting the professional growth and development of their faculty. "My principal and I have talked about some leadership roles for next year. Our district has a leadership cadre that she is encouraging me to go through" (interview, March 1, 2019). Teri described that the observation and evaluation process "was different too. I am used to principals just going through the checklist, but with her it was a conversation. She wanted to know what my goals were. She's very goal oriented" (interview, October 17, 2018).

Summary of Findings

This chapter examined the motivations of seven veteran teachers who chose to move to a new school and the experiences of those teachers in their new schools. In order to identify the factors that impacted their motivations and experiences, the data were examined through the lens of P-E fit theory. Each of the participants in this study had motivations to move that were deeply integrated in the context of their workplace. With this in mind, the participants' motivations to move presented evidence of P-E misfit at the P-O, P-G, and P-I levels. Likewise, the participants' experiences in their new schools were also contextually dependent and were represented by levels of fit at the P-V, P-J, P-O, P-G, and P-I levels. The following chapter (Chapter Five) will discuss the participants' motivations to move and their experiences in their new schools, as well as implications for teachers, administrators, and school districts.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications

Oklahoma is currently facing a “critical teaching shortage” (Lazarte-Alcala, 2018, p. 31). For a variety of reasons, Oklahoma’s teachers have left the classroom at increasing rates. While many of these departures are from teachers in the first three years of their careers, the phenomenon is not isolated to new teachers. Experienced, veteran teachers are also leaving the classroom at alarming rates. While thousands of teachers in Oklahoma have left the teaching profession over the last five years, even more teachers have transferred to a new school and/or district within the state.

Extant research indicates that the impact of teacher turnover on students, schools, and districts is the same, regardless of if the exiting teacher is a leaver or mover. Nationally, it is estimated that the public school system spends as much as \$7 billion annually to replace classroom teachers (Muller et al., 2014; Synar & Maiden, 2012). Aside from the staggering financial costs associated with attrition, student achievement is also affected. Teacher turnover disrupts the continuity and integrity of both curriculum and instruction, resulting in lower student achievement on standardized tests (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). In addition, decreased student performance has been associated with the inexperience of teachers who fill the vacated positions (Rivkin et al., 2005). Finally, teacher turnover can result in disruptions within the school as a workplace, negatively impacting teacher collaboration, morale, and school climate.

This case study aimed to understand the motivations and experiences of seven veteran teachers in Oklahoma who were classified as transfer attrition at the end of the 2017-18 school year. Understanding each case’s perceptions of their personal characteristics and workplace environment are critical to understanding their motivations and experiences. As such, it is important to note that the participants in this study have a deep connection and commitment to teaching, as evidenced by their years of experience, as well as the passion and emotions revealed

during our time together. Intrator and Kunzman (2006) refer to this as being engrossed in the role as teacher. To be engrossed, an individual's energy is directed into the physical, cognitive, and emotional labors of teaching. Additionally, "an engrossed teacher has a sense of vigor marked by an enthusiasm for their work, a sense of dedication, and a feeling that the work is meaningful and important" (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006). In this chapter I aim to discuss findings in a manner that reflects these qualities in each participant. It is also my intent, through this discussion, to provide validation for other veteran teachers who may have had similar experiences, encourage teachers and administrators to reflect on their experiences and interactions with other teachers, and inspire future research that further examines the motivations and experiences of veteran teachers who change schools. This chapter includes five sections: discussion on the participants motivations to move, discussion on the participants experiences in their new schools, implications for teachers, administrators, and school districts, limitations, and possibilities for future research.

Motivations to Move

When exploring the participants' motivations to move, each case had unique experiences in their previous schools that led to them leaving. Nicole's situation was unique in the sense that she demonstrated a strong fit at the person-job, person-organization (school), person-group, and person-individual levels. She thoroughly enjoyed her position at her leaving school. Over the years she had developed a familiarity with the faculty, administration, students, and families. She had grown as a teacher and felt that she was effective in her position as a reading specialist. Nicole also felt a loyalty to the other teachers in her building, so when her position was eliminated, she chose to leave rather than cause disruption in someone else's career. Nicole had some underlying concerns with how the school district operated, as well as impending changes that had recently been announced. While these concerns had not manifested as a significant level of stress at the person-organization (district) level, they were a secondary factor in Nicole's

decision to change schools. While she would not have chosen to leave the district based solely on her concerns, once she was in a position to secure a new job, Nicole chose to pursue a position outside of the district in order to free herself from those concerns.

The other six participants' motivations to move involved a level of dissatisfaction that ultimately led to their decision to seek employment elsewhere. While the six participants shared a sense of dissatisfaction, the specific characteristics that influenced their perceived fit within their school varied. Participants experienced stress at the person-organization, person-group, and person-individual levels, yet, ultimately, each of the six participants attributed their leaving to an individual, all of whom were building or district level administrators. This is supported by extant research which indicates that "principal effectiveness has the strongest influence on teachers' decisions to stay at or leave a school" (Bogler & Nir, 2014; Fuller, Pendola, & Young, 2018; Player et al., 2017; Vancouver & Schmitt, 1991). As Beanie stated, "I may have been a team player, but I didn't like the coach" (interview, July 30, 2018).

The importance of administration and building leadership is not surprising. There is a strong body of research that indicates that leadership is important to teachers. Consequently, it makes sense that strong leadership is likely to result in greater levels of teacher retention and decreased levels of teacher turnover. For the cases involved in this study, strong leadership was described as demonstrating professionalism, establishing and maintaining a positive and professional culture within the building, and providing teachers with adequate support.

The present study found that principal leadership influenced several levels of fit, including person-individual, person-group, and person-organization. As such, there is a large research base that documents the widespread influence of principals on school operations (Boyd et al., 2011; Grogan & Youngs, 2011; Knapp, Copland, Plecki, & Portin, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2004). The principal in a building has direct influence on a multitude of administrative behaviors

that impact the school as an organization, as well as the faculty as a group (Fuller et al., 2018). These include, but are not limited to, creating a clear mission and vision for the school, employing routines and procedures to establish a predictable and stable environment, safeguarding teachers from outside influences that interfere with teaching, supporting and encouraging teachers, communicating clear expectations, prioritizing trust and respect, and including teachers in decision making (Boyd et al., 2011; Fuller et al., 2018). In addition, when a teacher experiences stress at the person-individual with an individual teacher or stress at the person-group level with a group of teachers, such as a grade-level team, the administrator has the ability to intervene and address the situation. The participants in this study who experienced this type of stress felt that the administrator did not do enough to address their concerns. Molly, who was being “bullied” by a group of teachers in her building, felt that not only did the principal not do enough to address the problem, but that she encouraged the behavior by sharing personal information about Molly with other teachers, which intensified the situation. This aligns with Van Maele and Van Houtte’s (2012) findings that trust is a significant factor in a teacher’s relationship with their administrator, and a lack of trust influences both teacher satisfaction and retention.

The present study reveals that both school culture and climate influenced P-E fit at the person-individual, person-group, and person-organization levels. Similar to many factors that influence P-E fit, building administrators have significant influence on the establishment and perpetuation of school culture and climate. However, school culture and climate are not the sole responsibility of the administration. Together, principals and teachers determine the culture and climate within a school. While oftentimes used interchangeably, culture and climate are very different. Culture is defined as how we behave, while climate is how we feel (Muhammad, 2018). Moreover, “school culture is the set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies,

symbols and stories that make up the ‘persona’ of the school” (Peterson, as cited in Muhammad, 2018, p. 20). School culture is “developed, enacted, and supported by both the principal and teachers” (Johnson et al., 2012, p. 30). While the principal may have expectations for teaching and learning, “unless the teachers do their part, it will be one that is run by rules, rather than shaped and sustained by norms” (Johnson et al., 2012, p. 30). As a result, school climate often mirrors the culture of the school.

Negative school cultures and climates are often referred to as toxic, as they are pervasive and harmful to all parties involved, including administrators, teachers, and students. As was true with the other five participants, Teri felt that the situation in her building was too far gone to repair or tolerate. In reflecting on her experiences at her leaving school, Teri pondered, “How do you RTI a building? How do you rebuild a culture so that you have a positive atmosphere and people want to come to work and help each other?”

It is interesting to note that none of the participants mentioned concerns of salary as a motivation to move, which contradicts much of the current rhetoric presented about why teachers are dissatisfied. Perhaps one reason pay did not play a significant role is the relatively standard pay scale across districts in Oklahoma, which has a minimum salary schedule that each district must adhere to. However, these findings align with those of the National Center for Educational Statistics (2014) that indicated only 3.5% of teachers identified salary and other job benefits as a primary reason for changing schools.

Experiences in a New School

In exploring the participants experiences in their new schools, acknowledging the context and perspective of each individual was significant. Of the seven participants, three had overwhelmingly positive experiences in their new schools. Two participants had a mix of both positive and negative experiences, while two participants had overall negative experiences.

Unlike the factors that influenced their motivations to move to a new school, the participants' experiences in their new schools were influenced by strength of fit at multiple levels, indicating that tolerance of stress in a new work environment may differ from that in a well-known work environment.

For the purposes of this study, person-job fit is described as the compatibility between an individual and their specific role within the vocation of education and teaching. As expected, and consistent with prior research (Grogan & Youngs, 2011; Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Player et al., 2017; Tickle et al., 2011), participants who experienced strong person-job fit displayed a strong commitment to staying in the teaching profession. These findings of fit and misfit at the person-job level can be connected to teacher identity, specifically to the notion of actual and designated identities. Sford and Prusak (2005) define actual identity as one's current identity, or the answer to the question "Who am I as a teacher?" In order to answer this question, an individual must be able to reflect on their present state and identify the characteristics that describe them as a teacher. Knowles (1992) states that it is important to have a clear, positive image of self as a teacher. However, it is often easier to identify the qualities that you do not want to possess than those which you do. This, in turn, leads to the question, "Who do I want to become?" The answer to this question requires an individual to determine what the essential characteristics of a good teacher would entail. These "ideals" then act as motivation for change and can direct personal goals for teachers who desire to move towards their "designated identity." It is important to note that an individual's image of an ideal teacher changes over time, based on their experiences and their context (Arnon and Reichel, 2007). Each of the participants that experienced strong person-job fit in their new school indicated that in their new context they were able to align these identities and "be the kind of teacher I had missed being able to be" (Teri, interview, March 1, 2019).

Conversely, Nicole, who experienced misfit at the person-job level as a third grade teacher, found great despair in the mismatch of her actual and designated identities. During our final interview she tearfully shared, “A lot of what I know I should be doing, I’m not.” The realization that she was unable to live up to her personal expectations as a teacher resulted in her questioning her commitment to the profession, which indicated stress at the person-vocation level. She continued, “This year has made me consider leaving teaching. I feel like a first-year teacher all over again. It’s not a fun feeling to be a veteran teacher, ten years in, and feel like you don’t know what you’re doing” (interview, February 15, 2019). Nicole’s experience aligns with the findings of Grogan and Youngs (2011), who found that for every one-unit decrease at the P-J level, the odds that the teacher left the profession at the end of the school year increased by 24.0%.

Notably, three of the participants indicated that their commitment to the profession was renewed and revitalized after establishing themselves in their new schools. Perhaps this is a result of each participant finding themselves in school in which their personal philosophies and values were aligned with those of the building administrator, as well as their colleagues, which is also reflective of a strong-fit at the person-organization level, described as the compatibility between an individual and the organization with which they are associated, such as a school or district. Hoffman-Kipp (2008) states that an individual is often “limited by the constraints of the ideologies of their superiors, mentors, students, communities, teacher education programs, and other constituents who see teachers in a particular light” (p.161). Studies exploring the effects of a misalignment of the ideologies of teachers and administrators found that internal tensions, when left unresolved, can have significant consequences, including one leaving the profession altogether (Alsup, 2006; Hong, 2010; Olsen, 2010; Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, and Fry, 2004). However, when placed in a context in which the surrounding ideologies are both

aligned and inspiring, teachers are no longer constrained. Rather, they can be restored and refreshed.

For the purposes of this study, person-group fit is described as the compatibility between an individual and a group of people, such as a grade-level or content-area team. Johnson et al. (2012) describe supportive collegial relationships as those which allow teachers to “learn from peers, solve problems together, and hold one another accountable” (p. 27). These relationships strongly influence the experiences an individual has within their workplace. The three participants in this study who experienced a strong person-group fit were the same three that described their overall experiences as very positive. Both of the participants who had a mix of positive and negative experiences and one participant who had overall negative experiences experienced a misfit at the person-group level. These findings are similar to those of Grogan & Youngs (2011), which indicated that group fit was directly related to a teacher’s likelihood to leave the school or profession. The final participant, Nicole, who described her overall experience at her new school as negative, indicated a somewhat neutral fit at the person-group level. While she and her grade-level team had pleasant interactions, their perspectives and approaches to teaching and learning were very different, which prevented them from engaging in true collaboration.

When moving into a new team, particularly one that is well established and has worked together in previous school years, it is common for the entering teacher to experience feelings of apprehension and reservation. As Cathy described, “Part of what has gone through my head- “Am I going to fit in? Am I going to fit into this established team?” (interview, July 17, 2018). As Hargreaves (2001) explained in his work on teachers’ emotional geographies, “people like to be liked” (p. 512). This desire for acceptance is particularly true in settings where the work is consuming and isolates individuals from developing and maintaining personal and social

relationships outside of the building. Many non-teachers find it difficult to fully grasp the demands of teaching in today's schools, which results in many teachers looking to one another for "acceptance, affiliation, help, and support" (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 512). Lortie (2002) suggests that "teachers turn to each other to compensate for the absence of a formal system of reassurance" (p. 196). Sometimes these opportunities for acceptance emerge out of a time of personal crisis, such as Rachel's broken leg, while others develop out of an acknowledgement of personal attributes, such as Gail's willingness to help other teachers.

It is important to note that a general need for acceptance, inclusion, and support is widespread among teachers, and reflects a desire for an experience of friendliness, more so than friendship. None of the participants in this study indicated that they had developed close friendships with their grade-level team. Yet, in alignment with Hargreaves (2001) and Lortie (2002), the participants who experienced high levels of fit at the person-group level indicated a common friendliness among their colleagues. Likewise, the participants who experienced a misfit at the person-group level shared that not only was there a lack of friendliness among their grade-level team, but that interactions with their grade-level teammates were consistently negative, exclusionary, and hurtful in nature.

An individual's desire to be liked, accepted, included, and supported is not exclusive to person-group interactions but is also applicable at the person-individual level, defined as the compatibility between an individual and a significant other in their work environment. Hargreaves (2001) explains that while "classroom responsibilities are at the core of teachers' work, it is teachers' relations with other adults that seem to generate the most heightened expressions of emotionality among them" (p. 506). In fact, while many teachers describe their work of teaching as a source of pleasure, negative emotions such as dissatisfaction, anger, frustration, and fear seem to surface more frequently when describing their professional

relationships (Hargreaves, 2001). The findings of the present study differ slightly from those of Hargreaves (2001). Each of the participants described in detail their interactions with individuals within their new building, primarily their building administrator. However, participants that experienced a strong fit with their administrators expressed positive emotions such as joy, happiness, and relief when describing their new professional relationships.

While most participants had positive experiences with their building administration, two participants, Nicole and Beanie, did not. It is common for teachers who have experienced conflict at the person-individual level to feel personally attacked (Hargreaves, 2001). A common response to such an experience is to mask their emotions, which may be enacted as keeping their distance from one another or avoiding interaction, as was the case with Beanie and her administrator. Another response is to engage in superficial politeness, as was demonstrated by Nicole towards her administrator. Interestingly, both of these participants indicate in our final interviews that they would not be returning to their new school for a second year. Nicole stated “I will not be returning to [this school]. I just don’t respect the administration” (interview, February 15, 2019). Once again, this aligns with the position of extant research that school administrators play a central role in teachers’ retention and attrition decisions (Bogler & Nir, 2014; Ladd, 2011; Player et al., 2017; Tickle et al., 2011).

Many of the participants expressed feelings that point to an expectation by administrators that “veteran teachers should have it all figured out by now. But even after 28 years I don’t have it all figured out. I need support too” (Gail, interview, October 23, 2018). Each of the participants identified that new challenges arose when moving to a new building, related to a range of factors. This should come as no surprise; “With experiences comes increasing awareness of how much more there is to learn” (Hansen, 1985, p. 113). Some districts have support systems in place for new teachers. Cathy shared that her district has a new teacher liaison

in every building whose role is to help with teachers new to the district. Cathy felt that this support would benefit veteran teachers who are new to the building as well. “I think it would help if there was someone in the building that could check in on you and you could go to when you had a question about something” (interview, February 3, 2019).

At the same time, building level support provided by administrators, affords teachers with the necessary guidance and feedback to set reasonable goals about who they are and who they want to become as a teacher. An individual must not only be aware of their own needs, but also the expectations set by their administration (Arnon and Reichel, 2007). Similarly, each participant expressed that having the support of their administration, in the form of open communication and being able to ask for and receive assistance when needed, played a significant role in their experiences at work.

The findings of the present study indicate that emotional support can also play a significant role in the experiences of a veteran teacher in their workplace. Assuncao-Flores and Day (2006) found that this type of care and emotional support impacts a teacher’s effectiveness and motivation to continue in their work. Lasky (2005) describes the school-related emotional experience as professional vulnerability. At its best, professional vulnerability facilitates learning and collaboration. Yet when not nurtured appropriately, this vulnerability can have long lasting, and sometimes career ending, effects.

Implications

Implications for Teachers

Teachers have an important role in the phenomenon of teacher turnover. On one hand, a teacher may be the one experiencing misfit at one or more levels and determine that they need to seek a better fit at a different school. On the other hand, a teacher may be on the receiving end of teacher turnover, with a new (to the school) teacher joining their faculty and possibly grade-level

or content-area. Both situations present teachers with an opportunity for growth when handled appropriately.

For teachers who are experiencing misfit and considering moving schools, it would benefit them to first identify what they value and prioritize in a school and workplace as a teacher. Individuals are able to embrace and tolerate various characteristics based on their personal needs and preferences. By clarifying these desired characteristics, an individual is then able to seek a school and workplace that is alignment with their values, priorities, needs and preferences. For example, Cathy greatly valued her autonomy and wanted to ensure that she would have autonomy in her new position. She stated, “I would like to be treated as an adult. I don’t need someone standing over me telling me every little detail. If there’s something you need me to do, let me take it and make it fit for myself” (interview, July 17, 2018). During her interview, Cathy shared this desire with her principal and was able to ascertain that they shared similar views on what teacher autonomy looked like. As a result, Cathy felt that, in this regard, she would be a good fit within the organization of her new school.

Teachers who are actively seeking a new position or school can further benefit from being involved in the interview process, rather than just being on the receiving end of questions. Teachers should ask questions about the characteristics of the school and workplace, as well as the values, priorities, needs, and preferences that they have identified as being personally significant. They may also want to inquire about teacher and principal turnover within the school, as this information can potentially provide information about the stability of the workplace environment, as well as the school culture and climate. Finally, by asking about grade-level interactions and expectations, a teacher can gain valuable information about potential fit within at the person-group level.

Teachers on the receiving end of a teacher who has moved have the ability to impact the daily experience of a teacher new to the building. As previously discussed, teachers have a need for general friendliness within their work environment. By the same token, Hargreaves (2001) stated, “Teachers cherish and sometimes crave appreciation and gratitude for their efforts and achievement” (p. 509). Surprisingly, that appreciation and gratitude is valued just as much, if not more, when it comes from colleagues than when it comes from administrators. As a result, teachers hold a powerful ability to create positive emotions for their colleagues. This power should not be underestimated, but rather taken with an acute awareness and sense of responsibility. As is commonly stated, words matter. With this in mind, teachers should use the power of their words to uplift other teachers rather than tear them down.

Moreover, teachers play a significant role in both the culture and climate of a school. Johnson et al. (2012) argue that one of the most significant ways in which teachers impact school culture and climate is by supporting their colleagues. This support can be displayed in a variety of ways, including establishing and maintaining a mutual trust and respect for one another, allowing individuals to feel comfortable raising concerns, and maintaining a commitment to helping students learn. Gail experienced a positive culture in her new building. “Everyone has so much respect for one another as a professional. We are all here for the kids and it shows” (interview, February 20, 2019). As Teri described, the climate within a building is important as well. “I really like the dynamics of the building. When you have that rarity where everyone fits and everyone gets along; there’s not the pettiness. I don’t want to lose that” (interview, October 17, 2018).

Implications for School Administrators

For the cases involved in this study, strong leadership was described as demonstrating professionalism, establishing and maintaining a positive and professional culture within the

building, and providing teachers with adequate support. As such, the following implications reflect those characteristics.

Administrative professionalism refers to the level of professionalism displayed by a school administrator in their daily and routine interactions within the school and district. Two areas of administrative professionalism that can significantly influence a teacher's experience, but can be fairly easily modified by an administrator, are interpersonal interactions and trustworthiness. Interpersonal interactions between administrators and teachers, particularly when related to conflict, must be carefully navigated. While somewhat surprising, there was a prevalence of impolite, disrespectful, and downright nasty statements and comments by administrators towards participants and/or their colleagues, all of which were considered to be unprofessional by the participants that shared them. While these statements and comments were likely emotional in nature, there is a widespread expectation that administrators should behave in a manner that is equal to, or even exceeds, what is expected by the teachers in their building. With this in mind, the participants who had been on the receiving end or had witnessed such behavior, were clear in communicating that if they were the one behaving in such a way, there would have been strong consequences, such as a written reprimand. As Gail stated, "If I spoke to [them] the way that [they] speak to me, I'd be reprimanded so fast" (interview, July 27, 2018). When conflict occurs within a relationship, its wounds can be profound and enduring (Hargreaves, 2001). As a result, while conflict within any relationship is inevitable, the ways in which that conflict is addressed and managed is important. Knowing that teachers have an expectation for building administrators to behave, at minimum, in the same manner that is expected of them as teachers, administrators would benefit greatly from carefully and deliberately choosing their words while interacting with faculty, staff, students, and parents.

Another concern within administrative professionalism is that of trustworthiness. Several participants indicated that on multiple occasions their administrators had breached their trust by sharing their personal information with other teachers or by talking about other teachers in front of them. While it seems somewhat obvious, there are no circumstances in which an administrator should disclose personal information about a teacher to another teacher. Likewise, engaging teachers in talk about other teachers either initiates or perpetuates gossip among the faculty, which is detrimental in many ways. As a result, administrators must not only refrain from talking about teacher to teachers, but they must also be cautious of engaging in friendships with teachers, as the boundaries between what can be shared with a friend versus what can be shared with a member of the faculty can easily become blurred.

Participants in the present study indicated that one aspect of strong leadership was the establishment and maintenance of a positive and professional culture. Research indicates that teachers not only value, but thrive, in a building that maintains a positive and professional culture (Muhammad, 2018). One component of a positive school culture is teachers' collegial interactions. While an administrator cannot force authentic interactions, they do play an important role in fostering the foundation on which such interactions can occur. This includes encouraging teachers to share what they know, as well as encouraging teachers to work together. Furthermore, teachers' collegial interactions are made possible by ensuring that teachers have dedicated time to work together.

For many veteran teachers, their years of experience carry a value that is meaningful and reflects a legitimacy of membership as a teacher. However, experienced teachers who move to a new building or district, bringing experience and knowledge with them to their new placement, are not always readily accepted into their new community. Wenger (1998) explains that this is potentially the result of identification being "not merely a subjective experience", but a socially

organized, dynamic, and generative process (p. 193). This identification process involves three unique, although not independent nor sequential components; engagement, imagination, and alignment. “Movers” may experience these components in the following way: a trial period in which identified teachers (those who have been in the building and whom have established identities within that context) observe and determine the competence of teachers new to the building; allowing themselves to connect to their new school while distancing themselves from their previous; and the alignment of their identities, efforts, and styles with those of colleagues in their new building.

Having explicit processes and procedures in place may help to minimize, expedite, and potentially alleviate, these experiences, resulting in a less traumatic transition process for all parties involved. Based on the experiences and suggestions of the participants in this study, these procedures and processes need not be elaborate. Steps to begin may be as simple as administration introducing teachers (who are new to the building) to faculty and staff during a campus tour, rather than during a mandatory, back to school faculty meeting. Additionally, having faculty-wide common agreements or “rules” in place, and regularly revisiting them, may help to establish and ensure a respectful and professional environment for all. Finally, taking time to observe from a distance, and intervening as needed, can ensure that all teachers are given the opportunity to have voice and contribute to collaborative process as desired.

Another important component of a positive and professional culture is regular recognition of teachers’ efforts. As previously stated, teachers have a strong desire for appreciation and acknowledgement of their efforts and accomplishments. Building administrators play a significant role in creating a sense of value and appreciation for their faculty. Administrators need to be acutely aware of how their teachers feel value and appreciation. For some, it is important to be acknowledged individually. “If they want me to be here and do my job, then they

need to care that I'm the one doing the job. I'm not just a warm body or a robot. I matter. Me!" (Nicole, interview, February 15, 2019). Individual acknowledgement is not to be confused with public acknowledgement, nor is it exclusive to outward displays or words of affirmation. As an illustration, value and appreciation can take the form of the gift of time and knowledge. As Nicole shared, "If they really had any appreciation for me and valued me as a teacher, they would listen to me when I say I need help" (interview, February 15, 2019). By investing the time to understand how their teachers feel appreciated and valued, a building administrator will have established one of the basic tenets of a professional culture within a school.

A positive and professional culture within a school provides opportunities for teachers to participate in the decision-making process. One way in which this can occur is to allow teachers to take an active role in recruiting and selecting new teachers to serve in their building. This is mutually beneficial because colleagues play an important role in teachers' growth and experience in a workplace. As suggested by Johnson et al. (2011), "care should be taken to assemble a staff of teachers who share core values and are intent on improving their practice, individually and collectively" (p. 33). Working together, principals and teachers "must ensure that prospective colleagues understand the demands of the work, know the supports they can count on, and realize the expectations that others will hold for them" (Johnson et al., 2011, p. 33-34).

Finally, participants in this study indicated that an important component of strong leadership was providing teachers with adequate support. While support can be provided in a multitude of ways and for a wide variety of needs, all forms of administrative support have three things in common- visibility, validation, and viability. Regardless of whether a teacher has needs related to curriculum, student behavior, or parent concerns, an administrator has the opportunity to provide basic level support to the teacher. This occurs by first making themselves available to hear the teachers concern, which is often all that a teacher needs to feel supported. However,

administrative support should also include an element of validation, which keeps the lines of communication open between the teacher and administrator as future concerns arise. Finally, administrative support needs to provide a viable solution to the teachers concern. This does not always mean that the administrator will always be the one to facilitate the solution, nor will the teacher readily accept the solution. However, by clearly communicating the reasoning for specific solutions, as well as allowing teachers an opportunity to share their ideas and/or concerns about the solutions presented, the teacher is likely to feel that they were given adequate support.

Implications for School Districts

While the findings of this study suggest that building administrators have significant influence on teacher turnover within their building, district level administrators and policymakers also have an important role in reducing teacher turnover. Teacher turnover is costly to schools and school districts (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Muller, Dodd, & Fiala, 2014; Synar & Maiden, 2012). In a time when budget shortfalls are pervasive, districts are incentivized to avoid the high costs of teacher turnover and therefore should examine ways in which they can actively address teacher turnover.

One way in which districts can seek to reduce teacher turnover is to proactively apply principles of person-environment fit into the recruitment and selection process of teachers. By investing the time and effort in understanding defining characteristics of jobs, schools as organizations, faculty and grade levels as groups, and building administrators as individuals, as well as understanding the personal values, needs, and priorities, districts can attempt to align potential employees with the environments in which they might be most successful. One manner in which this could occur is by utilizing mutual consent hiring policies for teachers, rather than forced placement. Mutual consent takes into consideration how well a potential employee aligns

with specific characteristics of a job, organizational values and goals, colleagues, and building leadership, and aims to place the teacher in the environment that would provide the best fit. Specifically, mutual consent hiring of a teacher requires the agreement of both the teacher and principal before a teacher is placed in a school. Some models of mutual consent hiring of teachers also include teacher representatives in the process. There is strong evidence that indicates both teachers and administrators find mutual consent hiring to be advantageous (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, Ronfeldt, & Wyckoff, 2010; Daly, Keeling, Grainger, & Grundies, 2008; Grogan & Youngs, 2011).

Additionally, districts can assist in reducing teacher turnover by recognizing the value of and prioritizing stable leadership within a school. Previous research has indicated that principal turnover is linked to teacher turnover (Fuller et al., 2018). Many of the participants in the present study experienced at least one, if not multiple administrative changes in the years prior to their decision to leave their school. In an already dynamic environment such as a school, frequent changes in building leadership has the potential to exacerbate existing or create new instability within the school (Fuller et al., 2018; Meyer, Macmillan, Northfield, & Foley, 2011; Stoelinga, 2010). Similar to teacher turnover, administrative turnover can negatively impact teacher collaboration, employee morale and work relationships, and school culture and climate. Additionally, changes in administration can disrupt cohesiveness in curriculum and instruction (Meyer et al., 2011).

High rates of principal turnover also contribute to the frequency of harassing supervision techniques, such as those utilized by several of the principals of participants in this study. According to Stoelinga (2010), “harassing supervision practices are characterized by the goal of making teachers uncomfortable in the hope that they will leave voluntarily” (p. 58). Harassing supervision approaches vary greatly, but include practices such as frequent, impromptu

observations, requiring excessive professional development, assigning teachers to a content or grade level for which they are not prepared or are uncomfortable with, or requiring a teacher to move into a room that is unsuitable or undesirable. Typically, harassing supervision is utilized when the principal sees no other viable option to remove a tenured teacher. Often the teachers targeted with such behavior have teacher evaluations rated at satisfactory levels or higher, as was the case with Teri, Rachel, and Beanie. As Teri stated, “I was a good teacher and doing what I needed to be doing. There wasn’t anything I could be disciplined or targeted for, but she made it rough.” Teri continued describing the principal at her previous school, “she was a bully. That’s really what it came down to. She really was a bully” (interview, July 16, 2018).

One implication of the findings between fit and teacher turnover suggests that school districts have the ability to mitigate the negative effects of principal turnover. This can be accomplished through the utilization of transparency, collaboration, open communication, and increased professional development for building administrators. One recommendation would be that districts announce anticipated administrative changes prior to the deadline for teachers to sign their contracts for the subsequent school year. This would allow teachers an opportunity to consider their options prior to making their commitment. As Cathy described, “the district was dragging their feet in telling us who was coming in to replace [our administrator]. Waiting so long and not knowing, they lost a lot of good teachers because of that” (interview, July 17, 2018).

Additionally, the findings suggest that districts may benefit from moving away from hiring school administrators through forced placement, and place greater emphasis on hiring through mutual consent practices. As previously mentioned, mutual consent practices have been utilized in the hiring of teachers, and evidence suggests that both teachers and administrators find this approach favorable and effective (Boyd et al., 2010; Daly et al., 2008; Grogan & Youngs,

2011). In the hiring of school administrators, mutual consent takes into account organizational (district and school) goals, the collective faculty at a school, and specific characteristics of the job. Mutual consent hiring requires the agreement of all parties (the district, potential principal, and the faculty) before a principal is placed at a school, increasing the likelihood of a strong fit. A collaborative process, mutual consent hiring practices may help support alignment of philosophies among teachers and administrators. Several participants in the present study indicated that stress occurred when their philosophies did not align with those of their building administrator. This supports Vancouver and Schmitt's (1991) findings that teachers are less satisfied and more likely to leave schools when their priorities are different from those of their principals.

The notion that principals drive school culture and climate and influence teachers working conditions is well supported (Edwards, Quinn, Fuller, & Pendola, 2018), yet when concerns arise, many teachers feel they have no way to share them with those who have influence to change the situation. Several participants in the present study indicated that their school districts were unresponsive to their concerns about the working conditions in their schools. In an effort to increase open communication between teachers and district level administration, districts might consider adopting and implementing teacher surveys that inquire about working conditions, including school culture and climate. Districts can then assist administrators in addressing areas of concern identified by the surveys (Fuller et al., 2018). It should be noted that these surveys must be administered to teachers anonymously. Similarly, when results are shared with building administrators, specific language or details that would allow for identification of individual teachers must be omitted.

School districts have a responsibility to develop their administrators as professionals, much in the same way that principals have an obligation to support the professional growth of

their teachers. Specifically, research indicates that principals who are provided with an experienced, well-trained mentor, engage in more effective leadership behaviors than those without mentors (Fuller et al., 2018). Additionally, districts can help minimize or alleviate the use of harassing supervision techniques by providing principals with training on teacher hiring and how to implement effective professional development (Stoelinga, 2010).

Finally, districts can assist in providing teachers with support through the utilization of designated personnel, such as content area specialists and coaches. Although typically focused primarily on providing content and didactical support, these individuals can also provide pedagogical support for all teachers, including those with many years of experience. “It’s important to know that there is someone I can call, who has a wealth of knowledge, and whose job it is to help me do my job better” (Gail, personal communication, February 20, 2019).

Limitations

While these results offer useful insights into the motivations of veteran teachers to move schools and the experiences in their new schools, as well as how levels of person-environment fit influence those motivations and experiences, one limitation of this study warrants mentioning. Understanding the motivations and experiences of veteran teacher movers is challenging because it is a subjective process. Having explored the experiences of only seven teachers, it is difficult to know if these cases are representative of other movers. Conducting a larger study that captures the experiences of numerous teachers would allow for deeper understanding of the collective experience of a veteran teacher mover.

Possibilities for Further Research

Moving forward, person-environment fit and teacher turnover warrant continued attention in educational research. While the present study contributes to the existing body of work, there are still few studies that examine teachers and schools through the lens of P-E fit theory, and

those that do, examine levels of fit in isolation of one another. More studies are needed that examine the complexity and interactions between levels of fit within an environment, and how those interactions complicate a teacher's sense of overall fit.

One major finding of this study was the significance of fit at the person-individual level, specifically with regards to teacher-administrator. Further research could focus specifically on the teacher-administrator relationship, and how fit or misfit at the person-individual level influences their daily experiences. Additionally, based on research that indicates that teacher turnover often follows principal turnover (Edwards et al., 2018), further longitudinal, qualitative research could explore the collective experiences of teachers in a school that had a change in building leadership.

While this study examined teachers experiences from various schools across the state of Oklahoma, research could be conducted to examine the experiences of veteran teachers within a single school. Doing this would seemingly eliminate the variance at the organizational and group level and would allow for multiple perspectives from the same environment to be explored. Similarly, in order to deepen the understanding of the phenomenon of chronic teacher turnover, a case study of a school that has experienced chronic teacher turnover would be advantageous. A study of this nature could provide additional insight into experiences of teachers in the school, as well as the factors that influence teachers to stay or move.

Conclusion

Teaching, by nature, is a fluid and dynamic profession. There are a multitude of factors that influence a teacher's daily experience in their school. Some of these factors are external, such as student demographics, while others are internal, such as professional culture, faculty interactions, and building leadership. As a result, the experiences of any teacher are multifaceted and contextually dependent. Specific to this study, the decision of veteran teachers to move

schools is weighty and influenced by numerous factors. Likewise, the experiences of these teachers in their new schools are complex and complicated.

The findings of the current study indicate that fit matters in teacher retention and workplace experiences. In many ways, this is consistent with findings from prior research of both teachers and non-teaching professionals which indicate that an individual's social experiences in the workplace influence their fit within the environment. Previous research found that person-job, person-organization, person-group, and person-individual fit can have simultaneous, independent effects on teacher satisfaction and turnover (Bogler & Nir, 2014; Cooman et al., 2008; Grogan & Youngs, 2011; Kristof-Brown et al., 2002). This is not surprising, as teaching and learning are highly social and contextual experiences. Teachers have selected a career in which social relationships are central; embodied by their interactions with administration, colleagues, and students.

Individuals vary in their expectations of the school environment in which they work. Some individuals place great value on the interpersonal relationships they have with other teachers and/or their administrator, while others desire a collaborative work environment that values the input and ideas of all teachers. Regardless, it is these personal values and needs that influence an individual's tolerance for stress at each level of fit within their work environment. While some stress is considered normal and perhaps even healthy, high levels of stress can have devastating and long-lasting effects on individuals, groups, and organizations. It is important to note that in a school setting, stress between a teacher and an administrator at the person-individual level is likely to be coupled with stress at either the person-group or person-organization levels, or both. This is understandable as school administrators have significant influence on the operations and interactions within a building.

Undoubtedly it would greatly benefit teachers who are experiencing a misfit at some level to be provided with interventions and appropriate supports to improve fit at their current school. However, it is impossible, nor would it be beneficial to eliminate all teacher turnover. Knowing that each individual is unique in their experiences, their perceptions, and their needs, it is difficult to develop a clear understanding of what can be done to ensure a positive experience for a “mover” in their new placement. As such, it is important to understand how levels of fit can impact teachers’ experiences at a new school. Certainly, the issue of teacher retention and attrition is a growing concern and the responsibility of resolving this problem does not lie solely with one individual, but rather, is a shared responsibility of all parties involved.

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Appendix A



Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects Approval of Initial Submission – Expedited Review – AP01

Date: May 09, 2018

IRB#: 9312

Principal Investigator: Mackinley Cross

Approval Date: 05/09/2018

Expiration Date: 04/30/2019

Study Title: Understanding the Motivations and Experiences of Teachers Who Change Schools

Expedited Category: 6 & 7

Collection/Use of PHI: No

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed and granted expedited approval of the above-referenced research study. To view the documents approved for this submission, open this study from the *My Studies* option, go to *Submission History*, go to *Completed Submissions* tab and then click the *Details* icon.

As principal investigator of this research study, you are responsible to:

- Conduct the research study in a manner consistent with the requirements of the IRB and federal regulations 45 CFR 46.
- Obtain informed consent and research privacy authorization using the currently approved, stamped forms and retain all original, signed forms, if applicable.
- Request approval from the IRB prior to implementing any/all modifications.
- Promptly report to the IRB any harm experienced by a participant that is both unanticipated and related per IRB policy.
- Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the HRPP Quality Improvement Program and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor.
- Promptly submit continuing review documents to the IRB upon notification approximately 60 days prior to the expiration date indicated above.
- Submit a final closure report at the completion of the project.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Fred Beard'.

Fred Beard, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board

Appendix B

Signed Consent to Participate in Research

Would you like to be involved in research at the University of Oklahoma?

I am Mackinley Cross from the Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum Department and I invite you to participate in my research project entitled Understanding the Motivations and Experiences of Teachers Who Change Schools. This research is being conducted at the University of Oklahoma. You were selected as a possible participant because meet the parameters of a.) being a public school teacher in Oklahoma, b.) you have been teaching five or more years, and c.) you had a voluntary change in placement between the 2017-2018 and the 2018-2019 school year. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study.

Please read this document and contact me to ask any questions that you may have BEFORE agreeing to take part in my research.

What is the purpose of this research? The purpose of this research is to understand why teachers move schools and their experiences surrounding their move.

How many participants will be in this research? About 5-7 people will take part in this research.

What will I be asked to do? If you agree to be in this research, you will be asked to participate in a series of private interviews over the course of the school year.

How long will this take? Your participation will take approximately 90 minutes per interview, with 4-6 interviews being conducted over the course of the year.

What are the risks and/or benefits if I participate? There are no risks and no benefits from being in this research.

Will I be compensated for participating? You will not be reimbursed for your time and participation in this research.

Who will see my information? In research reports, there will be no information that will make it possible to identify you without your permission. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers and the OU Institutional Review Board will have access to the records.

You have the right to access the research data that has been collected about you as a part of this research. However, you may not have access to this information until the entire research has completely finished and you consent to this temporary restriction.

Do I have to participate? No. If you do not participate, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the research. If you decide to participate, you don't have to answer any question and can stop participating at any time.

Will my identity be anonymous or confidential? Your name will not be retained or linked with your responses unless you specifically agree to be identified. Please check all of the options that you agree to:

I agree for data records to include my identifiable information. ___ Yes ___ No

I agree to being quoted directly. Yes No

I agree to have my name reported with quoted material. Yes No

I agree for the researcher to use my identifiable data in future studies. Yes No

Audio Recording of Research Activities To assist with accurate recording of your responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording without penalty.

I consent to audio recording. Yes No

What happens in the future? The researcher might like to contact you to gather additional data, recruit you into new research, or use your data again in other studies.

I give my permission for the researcher to contact me in the future. Yes No

I agree for the researcher to use my identifiable data in future studies. Yes No

Who do I contact with questions, concerns or complaints? If you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research or have experienced a research-related injury, contact me at (405) 759-8998 or Mackinley.Cross@ou.edu. You can also contact Dr. Stacy Reeder at (405) 325-1498 or reeder@ou.edu.

You can also contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) or if you cannot reach the researcher(s).

You will be given a copy of this document for your records. By providing information to the researcher(s), I am agreeing to participate in this research.

Participant Signature	Print Name	Date
Signature of Researcher Obtaining Consent	Print Name	Date
Signature of Witness (if applicable)	Print Name	Date

Appendix C

Participant Recruitment Social Media Posting

Social Media Posting (Facebook/Twitter):

Teacher friends! I am looking for teachers who are moving schools/districts/states at the end of this year to possibly participate with my dissertation research. Do you know of anyone? Would you mind putting me in touch with them? I'd be very appreciative. Thanks!

Appendix D

Participant Recruitment Email

Hi (potential participant). My name is Mackinley Cross and I got your contact information from (gatekeeper's name). I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Oklahoma, as well as an elementary school teacher. I am currently working on my dissertation which is exploring the reasons for and experiences of teachers who are moving schools between the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years. (Gatekeeper's name) mentioned that you are having a change in placement and I was wondering if you might be willing to discuss your experiences with me?

The process would involve several in-person interviews throughout the year. Each would last about 90 minutes and I would come to you or meet you at a location of your preference. There would also be several phone or Skype interviews throughout the year, each of those lasting about 15 minutes.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you-

Mackinley Cross

[Potential Participant Positive Response]

Fantastic! I appreciate your help. I will be in touch within the next 1-2 weeks to set up your initial interview. Do you have any questions for me? Thank you so much for your time.

[Potential Participant Negative Response]

OK, no problem. I completely understand. Would you like my contact information in case you change your mind? Thank you for your time!

Appendix E

Initial Interview Protocol

Face to Face, Semi-structured Interview:

The reviewer will start out by thanking the participant for coming, describing the focus of the study, and providing the consent form for the participant to sign. The tape recorder will not be turned on until the consent form is signed accordingly.

1. I'd like to begin by asking you to state your name, age, how many years you've been teaching, and how many years you were at school _____.
2. What are some of your memories from elementary school?
3. How did you come to be a teacher?
4. Think back to your first years of teaching. How would you describe yourself as a teacher during those first few years? What qualities did you possess as a teacher at that time?
5. What did you feel were your greatest strengths and challenges during those initial years?
6. How would you describe the emotions that you frequently experienced during your early years as a teacher?
7. How would you describe your level of effectiveness as a teacher during those early years?
8. In those initial years, how would you describe your commitment to the profession? Did you ever question your decision to become a teacher? (If yes) What influenced your decision to continue teaching?
9. Can you describe your journey from those first years of teaching up through last school year?
10. How would you describe yourself as a teacher at this time? What qualities do you feel you possess as a teacher at this time?
11. What do you feel are your greatest strengths and challenges as a teacher at this time?

12. How would you describe the emotions that you frequently experience as a teacher at this time?
13. How would you describe your level of effectiveness as a teacher at this time?
14. How has how you view yourself as a teacher changed over time?
15. How did you come to move from ____ school last year to ____ this year?
16. What factors influenced your decision of where to move? What factors have played into your experiences related to this move?
17. How would you describe your level of satisfaction with your choice to continue teaching but move to another school?
18. How would you describe your commitment to the profession at this time? Do you ever question your decision to become a teacher? (If yes) What has influenced your decision to continue teaching?
19. Thank you!

Subsequent Interviews Protocol

Face to Face, Semi-structured Interview:

The reviewer will start out by thanking the participant for coming and reviewing the consent form that the participant previously signed. The tape recorder will not be turned on until the case confirms that they are ready to do so.

1. This is the (2nd, 3rd, etc.) interview with _____.
2. (As needed) Before we get to our questions today, I want to follow up on something that you mentioned during our last conversation...
3. I'd like to begin by asking how you have been since we last met?
4. Can you describe your journey over the past ___ weeks?
5. How would you describe yourself as a teacher at this time? What qualities do you feel you possess as a teacher at this time?
6. What factors do you feel have the greatest influence on the way that you view yourself as a teacher?
7. What do you feel are your greatest strengths and challenges as a teacher at this time?
8. How would you describe the emotions that you frequently experience as a teacher at this time?
9. How would you describe your level of effectiveness as a teacher at this time?
10. How would you describe your level of satisfaction with your choice to continue teaching but move to another school?
11. Have any additional factors impacted your experiences related to this move?
12. How would you describe your commitment to the profession at this time?
13. Thank you!